



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*



**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

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ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
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DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 15, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

#### Portage District General Hospital Foundation

**Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie):** I beg to present the petition of William Hamilton, Hugh Owens, Jim Knight and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba pass an act amending The Act to Incorporate the Portage District General Hospital Foundation.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Flood Protection Studies

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

I would like to table copies of the report on Flood Protection Studies for Winnipeg, prepared by the KGS Group.

In 1997, we were fortunate that Winnipeg was spared the full force of the flood of the century, thanks to the foresight of Duff Roblin and the active partnership between the federal and the provincial governments 40 years earlier, which resulted in the construction of the Winnipeg floodway and other flood protection structures.

\* (13:35)

Although we were fortunate in 1997, the International Joint Commission warned us in their final 2001 report that we were within inches of having the dikes breached in Winnipeg. The IJC recommended that the City of Winnipeg, the Province and the federal government should co-operatively finance detailed feasibility studies of the two major

projects, the floodway expansion and the Ste. Agathe detention structure, that would protect Winnipeg against very large floods.

Following that recommendation, an independent engineering firm, KGS, was hired to study both projects in detail. A progress report was released by KGS in May, 2001 and the final report is being released to the public today. Probably the most significant finding in the report is that the risk to Winnipeg remains high and action is urgently needed to enhance flood protection for our capital. The risk is quantified at \$50 million to \$75 million per year should we do nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we will heed this recommendation and take a fast-track approach to improving flood protection for Winnipeg. We are already making improvements to the existing floodway, including today upgrading the gates and the notches that will increase the floodway's capacity. These actions have been undertaken with the co-operation and support of Minister Duhamel and the federal government. Further improvements in floodway capacity can proceed in the coming year as the larger flood protection projects move through the design and licensing stage. We will seek to build a broad public consensus in support of the larger project to enhance flood protection.

Today, I am informing the House that we will soon begin public hearings and consultation with the federal government on the contents of this KGS report. Starting today, the report will be available on the public registry and the Internet for review by interested citizens. Public hearings will be conducted by Mr. Terry Duguid of the Clean Environment Commission in early January, with separate hearing dates for communities of Winnipeg, Selkirk, Ste. Agathe and Morris.

It is our Government's intention to involve all members of the Legislature in the decision on

flood protection. I will ask the House leaders to establish an all-party committee of the Legislature to review the KGS report and the views of the public leading to a final decision on the proposed flood protection project. Once a project has been selected, we intend to move quickly and decisively. We will work in full co-operation with our federal and municipal partners to ensure that the best flood protection for Winnipeg is afforded to our residents with the least impact on surrounding communities.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, we pulled together as neighbours to protect our homes and our communities. We will continue to work together as neighbours for better flood protection into the future. Thank you.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** I would like to begin by thanking the Premier for his remarks and also for tabling this very important and significant document. I might say in the first instance that it will take some time to digest the information that has been provided. I would like to say that it was under our watch that we experienced the greatest flood of this century, and I think we should all take some pride in this Legislature and as Manitobans that during that period of time not a single life was lost. It was the co-operation of members of all parties in this House and indeed all Manitobans that that was accomplished.

I look at this report and I look at just the brief comments that have been made, and reference has been made to Duff Roblin. Indeed, the Honourable Duff Roblin was a visionary. We know that simply creating a ditch around Winnipeg would not have saved us in 1997, that indeed it was the broader view and the structures that were put on streams that lead to the city that indeed helped to avert that flood.

It is my hope that as we proceed here we will take some time to look at structures that could be put in place which could protect the city from flooding and which could be used in times when there is a shortage of water, because we know that in this province of Manitoba, and, for that matter, this country, there are times when there is a shortage of water. Indeed, we need to look at ways that we could assist and augment the flow of water in times when there is

a shortage by creating structures which would help irrigate the many diversified crops that our farmers are growing today, and at the same time help in protecting the people of the major city of our province, the city of Winnipeg.

\* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker, I certainly would look forward to the Premier establishing a group that is going to work very aggressively at finding solutions, not simply looking at a narrow-focussed view but indeed to look at a broader approach to how we can perhaps invest in this province and make those dollars produce more dollars at the same time. So we look forward to working with the Government in a co-operative way, because this is something that cuts across party lines. This really speaks to the needs that we in Manitoba have, and we will look forward to the work in the days ahead. Thank you very much.

### World Trade Organization

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement.

I have just returned from the World Trade Organization meetings in Doha, Qatar. I am very pleased to report to this House on some of the important outcomes of those meetings. Firstly, it was very reassuring to achieve the formal admission of China and Taiwan as members of the World Trade Organization. Both China and Taiwan are important trading partners for Manitoba, and they are major export markets for Manitoba goods and services.

Most importantly, I am delighted and relieved that the WTO member countries agreed to the launching of a new round of talks aimed at reducing trade barriers.

Of specific importance for Manitoba and prairie farmers in general were the concessions by the European Union to countries looking at phasing out the \$90 billion of farm subsidies they provide on an annual basis to their producers, as well as the \$49 billion in domestic support provided by the United States to their farmers. In comparison, Canada provides roughly \$3.5 billion in subsidization for

Canadian farmers. Success in this regard is absolutely critical for Manitoba, as we can no longer permit the rampant market distortion in an otherwise competitive industry.

I remind members of this House that OECD figures show that in 1999, Canada's cost of production for wheat was 21 percent below that of Germany and 30 percent below that of the United States. In the absence of government support, Canadian farmers have a huge competitive advantage.

While launching of the Doha round of talks is very promising news for Manitoba farmers, I must caution that the talks scheduled to begin by January 31 of next year and conclude by January 1, 2005, will be very difficult. Our farmers are up against an entrenched system of subsidization and, notwithstanding the agreement in Doha, it will not easily be dislodged.

We must all remain vigilant to ensure the negotiations with the federal government, from Minister Pettigrew on, continue to hear a consistent message from farmers. While the negotiations are going on, we will continue to push the federal government to address the farm income crisis that Manitoba producers are facing and look for new markets for our home-grown agricultural products. Nevertheless, I am pleased that issues that are critical to the sustainability of our agriculture industry, including subsidies and food safety, are in the process of being addressed.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Doha round will also focus on mitigating anti-dumping obstructions that have been harmful to the Manitoba economy over the past year. I am referring specifically to tariffs imposed on Canadian softwood lumber that have had a damaging effect on our forestry industry, particularly at the Tolko mill at The Pas. I am confident that the steps taken at Doha will eventually lead to a more productive trading regime that will be of significant benefit to Manitoba farmers and industry.

\*(13:45)

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** We thank the minister for the statement, and certainly welcome the news that the Doha round has in

fact succeeded in putting the whole trade issue and issue of subsidization of products on the agenda for the next round, and that India finally came on stream and agreed to sitting down and negotiating another round. I think that is good news, not only for the agricultural sector and the agriculture community, it is good news indeed for Canada and North America specifically.

We hope that cooler heads will prevail this round and that we will come to the conclusion that the economic downturn we are facing now is probably as a result of some of the inequities that have been created by large subsidies by European nations, the United States and other countries that have protected themselves with tariffs and not allowed goods to flow freely as they should under a truly free trading world that we in Canada would look forward to.

We believe that this Government of Manitoba has an obligation to the people of Manitoba to take action immediately that would ensure that we are not going to be faced with the same kind of economic downturn that others see, because the previous administration has worked long and hard to put in place practices and policies that have brought Manitoba to being one of the most economically run and, from an industrial standpoint, one of the most advantaged provinces in Canada. We hope, and I note the minister did not make mention of this, that this province will take action to ensure the economic downturns others are facing will not affect Manitoba as severely as it is affecting others.

We believe that Canadian farmers have been severely disadvantaged over the last couple of years by actions taken by Americans and Europeans. We believe that this province should have taken a much stronger stand in Ottawa to ensure that Ottawa would recognize its responsibility and that this Province of Manitoba would have recognized its responsibility to protect its farmers and farm community. We believe that supply management plays a significant role in the economy of this province. Milk processing and other processing, the poultry processing and many other processes are dependent on a stable supply of goods, and we believe that actions need to be taken immediately to secure the positions that we have held firm over the last decade.

We hope that this minister will take seriously her responsibility to ensure that Manitoba's position will be taken to Canada and that Canada will recognize the need for Manitoba and other western provinces to be dealt a fairer deck of cards than they have been dealt in the past. We hope that this minister will take that initiative very seriously and spend a significant amount of time with her department and her Premier (Mr. Doer), and that she will speak to her Premier and encourage her Premier to take action on behalf of Manitobans.

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

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

**An Honourable Member:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted. Was leave granted? Yes.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we can all be pleased with the progress that has been made at the World Trade Organization talks and that we should be hopeful that we can have some major advances in the reduction of global subsidies to the benefit of not only Canadians, but I believe people around the world.

I think it is also important to say briefly that although this area, which of course falls primarily in international trade, that is in the federal responsibility, that it is important that the Province does not neglect its areas of responsibilities, things like drainage, which are very important to supporting the agricultural community.

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Speaker:** Notices of Motions. Notices of Motions. Introduction of Bills.

**An Honourable Member:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Notices of Motions. The honourable Attorney General.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will revert to Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, these reports have been previously tabled. I am pleased to provide copies of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Quarterly Financial Report, May 31, 2001, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Quarterly Financial Report, August 31, 2001; Civil Legal Services Special Operating Agency Annual Report 2000-2001, Office of the Commissioner, Law Enforcement Review Agency Annual Report 2000, Justice, including Justice Initiatives Fund Annual Report 2000-2001, the Public Trustee Annual Report 2000-2001, Seizure and Impoundment Registry Annual Report 2000-2001, The Manitoba Law Foundation 15th Annual Report 2000-2001, Legal Aid Manitoba 29th Annual Report and Manitoba Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2000.

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** I am pleased to table the following reports for 2000 and 2001: the Annual Report for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, the Annual Report of the Community Support Programs, the Annual Report for Manitoba Sport, the Annual Report for the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, the Annual Report for Manitoba Arts Council, the Annual Report for Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation and the Annual Report for the Manitoba Film and Sound Development Corporation, copies of which have been previously distributed.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from John Taylor Collegiate, 64 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Frank Boehm. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau).

Also, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery,

where we have with us today, my brother, Harry Tootoo, from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut.

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

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### Counter-Terrorism Measures Federal Government Support

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, since September 11, 2001, the House of Commons and most sitting provincial legislators have stood and passed unanimously a resolution supporting the Prime Minister of Canada and the federal government's position against the fight on terrorism.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we presented in this Chamber a motion that for some reason the Doer government could not support. My question: Will the Premier stand today and say the Doer government supports the federal government and the 2000 Canadian men and women who are now fighting against terrorism?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I have one copy of the statement I made on October 7, and I will make the copy available to the member opposite, which just says exactly that.

### School Divisions Amalgamations

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Murray:** On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a new question.

\*(13:55)

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Premier of Manitoba stated that he would not force schools to amalgamate in any way, and I quote: It is not the Manitoba way.

He broke his promise. His own deputy minister put out a news release, and I quote from that news release: The bottom line is that there is no economic or educational rationale for proceeding on forced boundary revisions.

Has the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) had a change of heart, or the Premier? Does he disagree with her position that there is no economic, no educational rationale for forced amalgamation?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Again, I will provide Hansard starting in 1994, talking about the ability of getting co-operative agreements in a voluntary way with school divisions. Although the member will find in discussions and debate with the former member from Inkster, I clearly stated that if we were unable to get voluntary agreements, ultimately the Legislature would have to take a stand.

We have been critical of some parts of the former Norrie report. For example, the amalgamation of school divisions of quite a bit of distance, the Snow Lake, Flin Flon, The Pas proposal, we thought, was unworkable. We thought dividing up some of the divisions as recommended in some of the communities as unworkable.

But, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite forget that there were two parts of the announcement made last week. One part was to make reasonable, balanced decisions to amalgamate school divisions in Manitoba. The second part of the announcement was to ensure that the administrative costs of school divisions were capped so more resources could go back in the school room, as recommended by the Deputy Premier.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Manitoba way the Premier was referring to was the political drawing up of boundaries in his office.

Several members of the Doer government agree with the Deputy Premier and have clearly stated that forced amalgamation will not save money, including the Deputy Minister of Education who stated: Changing boundaries will neither save significant amounts of money nor

improve students' learning experience, but will involve substantial costs in time and energy.

Will the Premier today provide the evidence to prove them wrong and to support his claim that his first amalgamation will save \$10 million?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would recommend the member opposite read the FRAME report and he will be able to discern for himself a number of the divisions that are beyond the cap of administrative costs allowable. We have built in—*[interjection]* Well, when you go from two superintendents in my quadrant of the city to one, there will be some savings, but the members opposite, they want to build the Kenaston Underpass, they want to build the downtown arena on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, then they are opposed to it on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate the many people in education who have been very, very positive about the changes. If members opposite want to have one-school school divisions maintained throughout Manitoba, they are stuck in the past. We are moving to the future.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly the Premier has no evidence that forced amalgamation will save \$10 million. If the best rationale that this minister, the Premier, can say that cost savings will come from imposing caps on the administrative costs, why then did the Premier not just keep his promise and not force amalgamations and simply enforce the caps?

\*(14:00)

**Mr. Doer:** I am attempting to find the Hansard that accurately reflects the fact that, yes, we preferred to have voluntary decisions, and we did get some voluntary decisions. I spoke at the MAST convention and wanted more voluntary agreements than we had. I have Hansard going back to '94, saying ultimately this Legislature—if, for example, there are five or six single school

divisions and they do not want to do anything about it, then it would be in the best interests of students to have more choices, more opportunities, more curriculum available with less school divisions and strengthened resources. There will be more resources in the classroom, there will be less administrative costs, and that will be good for the students of Manitoba and for the future of Manitoba.

### **HOPE Learning Centre Funding**

**Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa):** The Provincial Auditor's Report on learning centres is critical of the Minister of Education for awarding a grant of \$625,000 to HOPE learning centre, owned and operated by the Orlikow family, because they previously used non-certified teachers at inappropriate facilities, had no materials in place to meet requirements.

Given these circumstances, knowing this, why would the minister award this grant to the Orlikow family learning centre when all of this evidence was before him?

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth):** I know all of us always enjoy ad hominem remarks in this House. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the adult learning centre program in the province of Manitoba was established by members opposite during their time in office without any controls, without any monitoring of taxpayers' dollars going into the adult learning centre system. In fact, one of the first things that I learned upon being appointed minister, that the adult learning centres as managed by members opposite were \$9 million over budget, 100% over budget. Members opposite could not manage a Popsicle stand in Arizona.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** This issue was referenced six times in the Auditor's Report, that the minister knew the circumstances around the Orlikow centre for HOPE, that they had uncertified teachers, they had no supplies, they had inappropriate space. Why, in his announcement, after he had changed the funding formula for learning centres, would he award this funding to them of \$625,000 knowing the difficulties, circumstances that were there?



**Mr. Caldwell:** Of course, members on this side of the House are very concerned that, both in the public school system, the post-secondary system in our colleges and universities and the adult learning centres that exist across this province, Manitobans have the greatest opportunity and availability of learning opportunities wherever they may be, from childhood until their senior years. We made decisions in response to the Provincial Auditor's Report, as well in anticipation of the Provincial Auditor's Report over the last two years, as the scope of the absence of management criteria as established in the program by members opposite became more and more to light to us.

So we are very proud of our record as a government on education issues. We believe in education, in providing quality education for Manitobans and will continue along that tack.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The minister is clearly avoiding the issue here. There is a double standard at work here. Why does the minister, in his Rambo-like fashion, trash a school division and the elected trustees, and on the other hand turn a blind eye to the Orlikow adult learning centre and all of the difficulties that they have had? Is this because they are friends of the Premier (Mr. Doer) and major donors to the NDP party?

**Mr. Caldwell:** As I mentioned in my first remarks, it is always a pleasure when ad hominem attacks come into this House. I think the member opposite elevates the level of debate in this province by doing such things. Certainly the provincial taxpayer should be concerned when the Provincial Auditor identifies \$2.5 million to \$4 million in mismanagement. This Government has taken action on that matter, something the members opposite should have anticipated when they set up a program with no criteria for management.

#### **Morris-Macdonald School Division Funding Mismanagement**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand the press release that was released by the Minister of Education regarding the firing of the Morris-Macdonald School Division.

In this press release, the minister says that the school division owes the province between \$2.5 million and \$4 million. In firing the board, he also indicated that they were either unwilling or unable to remedy the matter.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education exactly how many dollars the Morris-Macdonald School Division owes the Province of Manitoba.

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is certainly correct. There was gross mismanagement of public dollars in the Morris-Macdonald School Division. The Provincial Auditor in his report noted that the management of that school division should have known and should have taken action, obviously, to ensure that there were proper accounting procedures.

The Auditor also identified that the record keeping was so slipshod in that division that there could be no ascertaining in terms of his report as to precise amounts, but there was an amount between \$2.5 million and \$4 million.

I am confident that, over the course of the next number of months, as we begin to review in a detailed fashion the operations of the adult learning centre program in Morris-Macdonald School Division that a number will come to light, and that is what we are talking about right now.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, is this Minister of Education telling Manitobans that he has taken the drastic action of firing a school board without telling them exactly how much money they owed, without giving them the opportunity to put in place a mechanism to find out how much money they owed the Province of Manitoba?

Is that what he is saying to Manitobans?

**Mr. Caldwell:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose what I am saying in this whole sad affair is that the program that the members opposite were architects of and designed led to mismanagement of between \$2.5 million and \$4 million of taxpayers' money, in a program the designers of which sit opposite today, and that this Government on behalf of every taxpayer in the

province of Manitoba takes issues seriously and is cleaning up the mess left by the members opposite.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, is the Premier of this province condoning an action where a board duly elected by trustees, by ratepayers, has been fired by a minister when the minister did not reveal the exact amount of money that was owed and did not give an opportunity for that board to come up with a repayment scheme?

Is that what he is condoning?

\* (14:10)

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we accept the Auditor's Report. We accept the need for action.

#### **Morris-Macdonald School Division Funding Mismanagement**

**Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet):** The Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba just told the people that he accepts the Auditor's Report and he sees the need for action. That same Auditor's Report recognizes that the HOPE learning centre, owned and operated by friends of the New Democratic Party, was a major part of the problem with Morris-Macdonald School Division.

I want to ask this minister today: Is he going to recover, on behalf of Morris-Macdonald, the money that they misused according to that Auditor's Report?

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth):** The Premier indicated that we accept the Auditor's Report. Obviously we do, Mr. Speaker, and we will be working to recover taxpayers' dollars that went amiss based upon a program members opposite were the designer of.

**Mr. Praznik:** I ask this minister: Why, if that was his course, did he say to Morris-Macdonald School Division that they have 30 days to develop a plan to repay money, and when they came forward to identify exactly how much that was, he closed them down?

I want to ask why he treated them that way, so inconsistently, between his two statements.

**Mr. Caldwell:** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba taxpayers expect accountability and responsibility to be exercised. I am glad members opposite see the validity of that statement, because it certainly was nowhere apparent in the program that members opposite designed.

**Mr. Praznik:** I have one last question for this minister today and that is this. In his whole handling of this adult education centre issue, can he assure Manitobans that he and his department throughout this have acted in a consistent, open and honest manner?

**Mr. Caldwell:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Adult Learning Centres Funding Guidelines**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, as are many Manitobans, about the situation that the Minister of Education refers to as the grossest mismanagement and the grossest misuse of public funds. I have carefully reviewed the Provincial Auditor's Report, and I find very revealing the comment by the Auditor, and I quote: Changes as recommended by department staff in 1998-99 were not implemented in a timely manner.

I ask the Minister of Education: Why did the minister fail to introduce policy guidelines in standards immediately he became minister, in order to prevent the gross mismanagement he describes and the Provincial Auditor acknowledged and which largely occurred when he was minister?

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth):** Mr. Speaker, the Member for River Heights will recall that in 1998 the members opposite were in office. Perhaps he will recall that, at any rate, and perhaps he will recall that this Government came into office, in fact I was appointed minister in October '99, so he probably does recall that.

When we entered government and the Deloitte and Touche audit made us aware as a government that there was 100% over-expenditure in the adult learning centre programs as designed by members opposite, we immediately took action in freezing the amount

of dollars dedicated towards the adult learning centres in Manitoba and putting into place a review to find out exactly why that was occurring. All the way along in this issue this Government has been very consistent in representing the best interests of the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba and the learners in the adult learning centres in this province and in the adult learning centres across this province. I found it astounding that the member opposite would be suggesting that somehow \$2.5 million to \$4 million of taxpayers' money gone astray should be broken down in quibbles.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I recognize the minister may put some of the blame on the previous government.

I would ask the minister, since the Auditor's comment clearly indicates that the information was present to act immediately he became a minister: Will the minister accept responsibility for his failure to act immediately he became a minister, so he could prevent this gross mismanagement and gross misuse of public funds?

**Mr. Caldwell:** Mr. Speaker, of course, we did take actions, reduced funding in the next budget, put into place policy guidelines that were program-based to ensure that students were receiving the best quality of education in the adult learning centres, put into place a policy that unlike members opposite when they designed the program, give us a list of numbers and we will give you a cheque, we want to ensure program quality, excellence in our adult learning centres and guarantee adults in the province of Manitoba receive the best quality education possible.

Having said that, we also want to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are accounted for, something that does not seem to concern the members opposite, including the member from River Heights.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I ask the Minister of Education to admit that bad systems create bad situations and that he must accept some of the blame for not putting in place immediately when he became a minister the policies and standards which the Auditor said were not there and were not put in place quickly enough to prevent this problem.

**Mr. Caldwell:** Mr. Speaker, I can only assume that the member was not aware that most of the Provincial Auditor's recommendations were put into place far before the Auditor's Report was released. We have taken a very proactive approach on this issue from day one, from the point we were made to understand that there was a 100% overexpenditure on this area under the members opposite. We got to the bottom of why that overexpenditure existed, because there was no accountability for the programs offered or checks on the enrolment figures provided by trustees.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we can only assume that members opposite oppose the dismissal of the board and appointment of an independent trustee, and I guess they are okay with this sort of scam being perpetrated on the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba.

#### **Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Administrative Costs**

**Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday in this House, the MLA for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) once again put selective information on the record regarding health care expenditures.

Could the Minister of Health explain to this House whether the administrative costs at the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority were reduced?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, if the Member for Charleswood had read into the record the rest of the report that she quoted from, she would have noted that that same report that she quoted from dealt with administrative expenses and said they were down approximately \$1.5 million in the year she was quoting from. She would have also noticed, if she had not put selective information on the record, that the expenditure line she was looking at included primary care, mental health and other programs, including public health officials that were transferred from the City of Winnipeg to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, if the member had not used selective numbers and selective information she would not have left the wrong impression for the people of Manitoba, as

constantly happens in this Legislature from that member.

\* (14:20)

### **Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Administrative Costs**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** On September 1, 1999, during the campaign at Crossways church, the Minister of Health said, and I quote: The Government is spending at least \$5 million on bureaucrats at the WHA and the Winnipeg long-term care authority, and we are saying that is a wrong expenditure of funds. Of the \$5 million that goes to bureaucracies, we are going to at least slice that in half, maybe more.

Can the minister confirm that promise?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, before, 14 vice-presidents, after, 5 vice-presidents; before, 2 CEOs, after, 1 CEO. The numbers speak for themselves.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Just for clarification to the minister, he has mentioned 10 vice-presidents before. Now he has jumped up to 14. I do not know where he gets that from.

Can the minister explain why those costs have skyrocketed to \$11 million a year instead of going down to the \$2.5 million as he promised? He promised that that number would decrease to \$2.5 million. Why did he not keep that promise?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the previous question of the member, the numbers the member was using, the number the members used yesterday and today were not the administrative cost, firstly.

Secondly, if the member, in the numbers she pulled selectively out of the report, had read the rest of the report of this public document, she would have seen that 1999 compared to the year 2000 saw a decrease in administrative costs of about \$1.5 million.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I would like to ask the minister when he made that promise during the election to decrease the expenses of the WRHA from

\$5 million to \$2.5 million, what kind of information then did he use to make such a simplistic promise? What was his promise based on?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, that promise was based on the premise that the Government set up two health authorities in one city, two health authorities, two CEOs, 12 vice-presidents in one city. There were more vice-presidents than virtually any corporation in this city or this province. We were told by nurses, we were told by doctors, we were told by patients there was too much bureaucracy, so we slashed it. We have no apologies for taking two authorities, melding it together and, by the way, saving millions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

### **Crime Rate Homicide Statistics**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, can this Justice Minister confirm that last year, under this minister's watch, Winnipeg had the highest homicide rate of any city in Canada?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member would be well advised to look at the homicide rates and many, many other crime rates over the last number of years, particularly while the former government was in office and had watch over the Justice portfolio.

I might remind the member, as well, that homicide rates do go up and down. It is always a rate that is too high.

### **Auto Theft Statistics**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, can the Justice Minister confirm that last year, under this minister's watch, Winnipeg had the highest car theft rate of any city in Canada?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, it was under the watch of the former government that Manitoba saw an increase in car thefts, which was absolutely phenomenal, very unfortunate. Starting in 1993, this province began to lead the country in auto thefts. That is why we have announced a five-point strategy to deal with auto

thefts, working with MPI, working with law enforcement, working with citizen patrols, working with Neighbourhood Watch. We are bringing to bear a different approach, because under their watch there was a problem created. It is no simple solution, but we are working hard for Manitobans in this regard.

### Violent Crime Statistics

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, can the Justice Minister confirm that last year, under this minister's watch, Winnipeg had the highest violent crime rate of any city in Canada?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, as I reminded the member yesterday, it was under the former government where unfortunately this province recorded the highest violent crime rate ever recorded of a Canadian province in Canadian history. The good news is the violent crime rate appears to be decreasing, but it will continue to require vigilant action. It will require new partnerships and innovative programs. I look forward to working with the member opposite in the delivery of some of those programs in the course of this session.

### Sexual Assault Statistics

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, on a new question. Can the Justice Minister confirm that last year, under this minister's watch, Winnipeg had the highest sexual assault rate of any city in Canada?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, in many classifications of crime, unfortunately, the western provinces have historically had disproportionately high rates. Under the former government, indeed we did achieve unfortunately the highest violent crime rate in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the rates are starting to decrease somewhat, not enough, and that is why it takes concerted action. It takes innovative policies. It takes energy and commitment, which is what we bring to this.

### Robbery/Mischief Statistics

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Can the Justice Minister confirm that last year, under the minister's watch, Winnipeg had the highest robbery rate and the highest rate of mischief in any city in Canada?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I just am not quite clear from the question if the member opposite is attempting to fix blame at some partners in the justice system. Is she blaming Winnipeg police by looking at Winnipeg? Is she blaming all the Citizens on Patrol out there who volunteer day in and day out? Is she blaming the Neighbourhood Watch people? Is she blaming the people involved in crime prevention?

Mr. Speaker, we have been suffering from unfortunate crime rates in this province. We are starting to see some positive trends, and if she thinks that the crime rates can be turned around in one year, then I am afraid she just does not understand the dynamics of crime and the multifaceted approach that has to be brought to bear on that challenge.

### Minister of Justice Crime Rate Initiatives

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Can the minister confirm that he is in charge of the justice system for the province of Manitoba?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker, and we will work with new partnerships. We will work with the citizens of Manitoba. We will work with families. We will work with our schools. We will work with police. We are engaged in the rolling out of many new initiatives including the Lighthouses, Neighbourhoods Alive. Even when it comes to child care and our investment there, that does have an impact on crime.

We are doing our best to reduce the despair that is suffered by too many Manitobans. At the same time, we are strengthening the justice system for a more effective response.

\* (14:30)

### Fiscal Stabilization Fund Usage

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, today in this House we have the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) playing fast and loose with the numbers. Yesterday on a local radio station we have the Premier playing fast and loose with the numbers. Maybe we can get an answer from the Minister of Finance.

I would like to ask him if he informed his Premier that, in spite of accepting a \$507-million increase in federal transfer payments in the year 1999, 2000, he still had to take \$185 million out of the rainy day fund because his ministers overspent the Budget by \$548 million.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** What I can confirm is, upon coming into government, we found that the previous Budget of the former government had drawn \$185 million out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and had overspent the Budget by \$337 million, and that half-a-billion-dollar gap was one we had to make up in our first Budget.

**Mr. Loewen:** Well, now we have the Minister of Finance playing fast and loose with the numbers. He overspent. Well, this year did the minister not inform his Premier that he was going to have to withdraw \$60 million from the rainy day fund just to meet the overexpenditures of this year's Budget?

**Mr. Selinger:** Yes, I can confirm that in our first Budget we had no draw from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and indeed placed \$41 million into that fund. In addition, we foresaw a \$60-million draw in this Budget with the result of the economic slowdown that we are now experiencing.

**Mr. Loewen:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance was budgeting \$60 million before he recognized an economic slowdown. I would like to ask him how much more he is going to have to take out of the rainy day fund, how much more than that \$60 million, as a result of downgrading the growth rate from 2.4 to 1.7 percent. How much is he going to take out this year?

**Mr. Selinger:** Obviously, the member from Fort Whyte did not read the Budget. We had an economic forecast that went from over 3.4% growth to 2.4% growth and a \$60-million draw from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The amount that we will take this year depends on how hard it rains by the end of the year.

### Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council Membership

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism.

Back this year, April 9 of 2001, the minister announced a new multicultural council being formed, a 21-member agency. I was wondering whether the minister could update the House as to who the members are and whether the members have been chosen yet.

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister responsible for Multiculturalism):** Mr. Speaker, yes, we had a very successful election that was held by all the communities, the ethnocultural communities in the province. Sixteen members of the Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council were chosen by ballot by the community at large and five members are being selected by the Government to make up the 21-member council. I am pleased to announce that very shortly we will have that official result of the 21-member council.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, just shortly after the announcement, the minister also on May 14 introduced the new multicultural bill. That bill indicated they would be meeting at least six times a year and twice with the minister.

Is the minister now saying that the five members that were supposed to be appointed by the Manitoba Government have not been appointed yet and that they will be shortly appointed, and if she can supply those names?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, the names of the 21-member council will be available very shortly.

**Mr. Reimer:** The member has referred to the 16 members who were already selected by the ethnocultural community.

Can those individuals be identified, and, also, when can we expect the final 21 names to be submitted?

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is very important that we announce the entire 21-member council, because the entire 21-member council will be selecting its own chair. The entire 21-member council will be providing advice and advocacy to the Government. I feel it is important that we make that announcement of the entire 21-member council, and that will be happening very shortly.

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

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### North American Indigenous Games

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** I rise before you today to speak about the upcoming 2002 North American Indigenous Games to be held in Winnipeg this summer. The 2002 North American Indigenous Games are being heralded as the largest games of their kind and will see some 7000 First Nation, Métis, Inuit and native American athletes participate between July 25 to August 4, 2002.

The 2002 North American Indigenous Games will feature 16 events, 3 of which are traditional Aboriginal sports. Competition is open to all North American indigenous youth between the ages of 13 and 22. The games were originally created as a one-time replacement for the 1999 games which were cancelled due to the heavy flooding of 1997. However, the games have become a regular event because of their past success.

I would also like to bring to the attention of the Assembly the recent announcement by the games host society of three new corporate sponsors, the Eagle Sponsors, namely, those which provide significant financial or service support, including the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Red River College and Manitoba Hydro. Each

corporate sponsor has committed \$150,000 in financial or service support to the games. Notwithstanding the generosity of the latest corporate donors, the host society needs another \$600,000 to meet its fundraising target of \$1 million, and the society is hopeful this recent display of support will urge other businesses to contribute to the games.

Therefore, on behalf of the entire Legislative Assembly, I would like to express my thanks to all those organizers, volunteers and corporate sponsors who have taken it upon themselves to support the 2002 North American Indigenous Games, and I urge others to join in the spirit of co-operation and provide assistance to our athletes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Volunteer of the Year Awards

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a number of individuals who were nominated for the Tuxedo constituency Volunteer of the Year Award. I was pleased to host a recent event where their contributions were recognized. These individuals included: Marion Jenkyns, Erin Friesen, Joan Rettie, Doreen Barrott, Gloria Matskiw, Margaret Koniuck, Deb McCreanor, Joseph Doran, Jane White, Joanne MacKinnon-Hunt, and Christine Bannerman.

As has often been said, the world is divided into people who do things and people who get the credit. These volunteers and countless others like them are members of the former camp. They know how to get things done, yet they do not seek recognition for their selfless efforts.

Manitobans, by volunteering their time, energy, ideas and financial resources, make significant contributions toward improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the neighbourhoods and communities they call home.

Indeed, according to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 36 percent of Manitobans were volunteers and 84 percent of Manitobans made donations to charities and non-profit organizations.

I would like to extend my thanks to all Manitobans who give so freely of their time, talent and other resources to enrich our quality of life. I want to also send a special thanks to those who have been nominated for the Tuxedo constituency Volunteer of the Year Award and indeed to all those whose extra volunteer efforts make our community of Tuxedo a stronger place to live, work and raise our families. Thank you.

### **Rorketon Seniors' Drop-In Centre**

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** Many small rural communities are sometimes the most active and vibrant communities of our province. This is because so many groups within those small communities are very active and vibrant themselves.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to one such organization. I want to congratulate an organization that happens to be in my constituency that has been awarded the recognition award by the Manitoba Council on Aging 2001. I invite everyone here to join with me in recognizing the Rorketon Seniors' Drop-in Centre.

These awards were awarded October 22, 2001 and they honour individuals and organizations whose exceptional acts or efforts have benefited Manitoba seniors and their communities. I am proud to see that one of our four 2001 awards went to the Rorketon Seniors' Drop-in Centre in Rorketon, which is approximately 80 kilometres northeast of Dauphin, across Lake Dauphin.

This drop-in centre began in 1974, and it has flourished because of the exemplary involvement of citizens in this community. The seniors' drop-in centre offers a meal program, birthday parties once a month, an annual supper and various other functions. The members also have a hall that they provide to the community of Rorketon and area. The centre has donated a generous amount of money to the community. For example, the local fire department has benefited from the generosity and community spirit of this organization.

The seniors centre is membership-driven and has 80 members. Full membership is

available for local people over the age of 50. The president for the past 15 years has been Gordon Bonnett who was raised in Rorketon. He was there along with Mary Werbiski to accept this award.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to the seniors' drop-in centre for receiving this award and encourage them to continue doing a great job working to the benefit of both the lives of Rorketon seniors and others in the community. Thank you very much.

### **Pembina Valley Water Co-op**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today to congratulate the board of directors and the general manager, Mr. Sam Schellenberg, of the Pembina Valley Water Co-op on the culmination of a project that was started over a decade ago under the previous administration, and that the previous government of Manitoba contributed substantial sums of money to. That is the water project that was started in southern Manitoba that now links four major treatment plants and loops them and assures continued water supply to the towns of Morden, Winkler, Carman, Morris, Letellier, St. Jean, Emerson, Rosenort, Lowe Farm and many of the smaller communities in southern Manitoba.

This is probably one of the biggest and largest economic development initiatives that is seen as finalized yesterday. The final stages, which were done in the last two years under this administration, under this NDP administration, did not see any provincial funding to the finalization of that project. The last \$16 million was financed completely by the 17 municipal partners that saw the initiation of the Pembina Valley Water Co-op and the pipelining of water to the many communities.

\* (14:40)

I should also say, Mr. Speaker, that the municipalities need to be congratulated for having initiated their own projects within their municipalities, which in total was estimated to be in excess of \$60 million over the last 10 years, to provide water to water-short communities and individuals in southern Manitoba. I



congratulate all those 17 municipalities for initiating this project.

**Ms. Darlene Lindsay**

**Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere):** I rise to recognize and honour Ms. Darlene Lindsay for being the recipient of a national citation for citizenship award. It was one of 20 awards presented by Citizenship and Immigration.

Ms. Lindsay is a long-time history teacher at Miles Macdonell Collegiate in East Kildonan, who has been involved extensively with Vietnamese refugees whom she has helped to settle in Winnipeg for two decades. As a teacher, Ms. Lindsay appreciates the multicultural composition of Manitoba and Canada. She is committed to helping students understand and appreciate the Canadian immigration policy.

Ms. Lindsay has also organized citizenship courts at school, helped introduce the Asia-Pacific studies, and has worked with students to plan mini-folkloramas. She has also worked with family reunification, has raised money for orphanages in Vietnam and has founded a charity organization known as Canadians Helping Kids in Vietnam, which focusses on education and improving living conditions for families in Vietnam. This charity has built three schools and sent plane loads of hospital supplies to Vietnam.

Today in this Legislature we recognize and honour Ms. Darlene Lindsay for exceptional humanitarian efforts. Her great work will be remembered for many years to come. Ms. Lindsay is not only a great teacher but a respected and compassionate citizen of our province and country.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Second Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon, the honourable Member for Flin Flon has seven minutes remaining.

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I touched upon the many positives

in the Throne Speech. However, I do not wish to minimize the changing economic realities facing Manitoba, and, particularly in this case, northern Manitoba. The softwood lumber dispute with the Americans has hit us very hard in northern Manitoba, and certainly affected Tolko and other forestry operations. We are also concerned about the low base metal prices, particularly for zinc and copper.

Many Manitobans may be unaware that mining is a billion-dollar industry and an integral and vital part of our economy. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) has established a mining task force that will travel the province starting mid-February. The purpose of this task force is to find out what steps Manitoba needs to take in order to strengthen and sustain its minerals industry, in other words public input on ways to strengthen that industry.

I am most proud of something else, though, in northern Manitoba. That is the Manitoba Northern Development Strategy that this Government has devised. It is a long-term plan that identifies opportunities to develop the human and natural resources in the North and thus effect social and economic changes for the positive, changes that will benefit the people of the region. NDS, the Northern Development Strategy, is designed to give northerners a voice in the future of their communities and region.

It began in April of 2000 with a meeting of northern MLAs, and it is based on many consultations and on numerous reports and studies, particularly the report of the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission of 1991, which cost approximately \$1 million and which was shelved by the former government and which we are using extensively. As well, we are relying on the information from the Northern Mayors and Chiefs Forum in January of 2000. There was an important housing forum in northern Manitoba in Thompson, among other initiatives.

In April 2000, the northern MLAs identified five broad priority areas, and they are housing, health, transportation, employment and training, and economic development. The Northern

Development Strategy focusses on co-ordinating all government initiatives in northern Manitoba. An interdepartmental working group meets regularly and together with the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet ensures that the five northern priorities are consistently addressed.

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

Impressive progress has been made on a host of diverse issues affecting northern Manitoba from the dredging of Churchill Harbour to planning a new health centre at Island Lake, which would include a dialysis unit, to providing funding for a study that explores better winter road options for five northern Manitoba First Nations communities in partnership with those communities and INAC. This is a focussing and co-ordinating initiative. The first task of NDS was to compile an inventory of provincial programs and activities in northern Manitoba. Secondly, the NDS is developing strategies for better delivery of existing programs and thus better serve the needs of northern Manitobans. Government departments are viewing northern developments as a priority and working co-operatively to meet the objectives of the NDS, and we are very enthusiastic about this strategy.

In conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, there are many positives in this Throne Speech, and I hope members opposite support it. Yes, there are dark clouds on the horizon, but they too will pass. The pride, the determination and the hard work of Manitobans will surmount any obstacles put in our path by people or nature. We proved our unity and our tenacity during the great flood of '97. When the chips are down, as Manitobans, we put our differences aside and we work together. I hope this trend, this good tradition will continue.

Let all of us in this Chamber be ever mindful, Mr. Acting Speaker, of the people of Manitoba who will put their trust in us. The times may be uncertain, but there should be no uncertainty in our own minds. Let us not waver but continue resolutely on the journey we started over two years ago. Let us continue as we have to seek solutions to problems in an honest,

pragmatic and sensible manner, and to date we have done that. If we do that and continue to do that, then the future of Manitoba will be graced with unparalleled prosperity and security. Thank you.

**Ms. Linda Asper (Riel):** C'est avec humilité mais aussi avec fierté que j'appuie la proposition de mon collègue, le député de Flin Flon. J'ai beaucoup apprécié ses remarques.

Si je me trouve ici aujourd'hui, c'est grâce aux résidents de Riel qui m'ont élue le 21 septembre, 1999, et que je représente comme députée et membre du gouvernement. Je les remercie sincèrement encore pour leur confiance en moi et leur coopération depuis mon élection. Mon travail avec eux et pour eux est un défi que j'embrasse tous les jours à Riel et ici au Palais législatif.

Je remercie aussi ma famille, surtout mon mari Aubrey, pour l'appui et les conseils qui m'aident beaucoup à accomplir les tâches quotidiennes d'une députée. Je crois que nous sommes tous reconnaissants du rôle de nos familles et de nos amis pendant nos années en politique.

Je veux aussi souligner l'importance du travail des femmes et des hommes avec qui nous travaillons tous les jours au Palais et à nos bureaux. Mathieu Allard au bureau de Riel est un exemple d'une personne qui apporte son enthousiasme et son énergie afin de servir nos Manitobains et Manitobaines et surtout les gens de Riel.

#### *Translation*

It is with humility but also with pride that I am seconding the motion of my colleague the Member for Flin Flon. I very much appreciated his remarks.

I am here today thanks to the residents of Riel who elected me on September 21, 1999, and whom I represent as an MLA and as a government member. I sincerely thank them again for their confidence in me and their co-operation since my election. The work that I do with them and for them is a challenge that I embrace daily in Riel and here at the Legislative Building.

I also thank my family, especially my husband Aubrey, for the support and advice that assist me greatly in accomplishing the daily tasks of a member of the Legislature. I think that we are all grateful for the role of our families and friends during our years in politics.

I also want to emphasize the importance of the work of the women and men with whom we work daily at the Legislature and in our offices. Mathieu Allard at the Riel office is an example of a person who brings his enthusiasm and his energy to the service of Manitobans and particularly to the people of Riel.

### *English*

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new pages for this session. It is a pleasure to see young people working in the Chamber. They will certainly help us as members of the Legislature as they work to facilitate daily House business. I would also like to thank the interns who have been working already with both the Government and the Opposition and will continue to work with us.

\* (14:50)

As a member, I certainly appreciate the ongoing guidance and support of the Clerk and her staff as well as the Sergeant-at-Arms and the deputy.

In the Throne Speech two days ago, we were reminded that the year 2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer. Every day we witness the generosity and contributions of Manitobans in our communities, some of whom are recognized by membership in the Order of Manitoba and other provincial and local awards.

Riel is no exception to the work being done by many volunteers. One of these individuals is Joanne Muller, whom the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) and I presented with the Greendell community club volunteer of the year award on November 2. It was awarded for Joanne's various leadership roles, including coaching roles and club president. Joanne symbolizes countless community workers who coach teams, serve on committees and lead by example with our young people in Riel.

Another constituent, Lynda Shapiro, received the 2001 Premier's Volunteer Service Award in recognition of her 10 years of volunteer work in the development of a support group for parents of high-risk adolescents.

Another constituent in Riel is Mike Balshaw, president of the Bishop Grandin Greenway, a project designed to involve our community in the development of a nature corridor along the boulevard. The countless hours that Mike and his volunteers are donating toward the long-term effort will leave a legacy for our children. The immediate goals of a butterfly garden, shrubs, trees and wildflowers such as Queen Anne's Lace trails and even a skateboard park for the young will soon be met.

My colleague the Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) and I spent several hours a few Saturdays ago giving our time and effort to the planting of shrubs and trees, which was followed shortly I think by a turn in the hot tub. These individuals, several that I have described, represent the volunteer fabric in our communities of which Manitoba is so proud.

It is certainly appropriate that the first order of business in this session is to respond to the anxieties felt by our citizens in light of recent terrorist attacks. These anxieties are very real. After the Throne Speech two days ago, when I was speaking with Muriel Smith, a former member of this House, a former deputy premier, she described how her 11-year-old grandson had absorbed conversations the morning of September 11 and anxiously asked his grandfather at noon: Will there be a war?

Our son showed up at our home after work that day to touch base with us, either to make sure we were all right or to be close to his family or both. He visited again the next evening, a fact that impressed us since he spent most of his teenage years trying to leave home, a fact that impressed upon us the impact of this event on him and others. It did not help that there was a bomb scare in my mother-in-law's nursing home while my husband was visiting the next day. An empty package was found in the elevator.

Now there are security measures in the Sharon Home in north Winnipeg that remind us

that world events affect us directly in this city. I know many of you referred to that yesterday in your talks.

A few days after September 11, I visited the Islamic Centre in my constituency and was challenged by a security guard coming out of her van in front of the mosque. It saddened me that we now have to take measures to protect citizens in our community, measures that I have experienced in many other countries and never dreamed that I would confront at home on Hazelwood Avenue in Riel.

It is essential that we guard against the danger of new expressions of bigotry and prejudice. Fortunately here I think people are sensitive to this issue. For example, the director of a day care centre that I have visited in my constituency contacted me for assistance when some of her staff started reacting to mothers who wear the veil. I put her in touch with Shahina Siddiqui, a resource person in the Islamic community, who met with the staff and helped foster a greater understanding of what was happening both in that day care centre and in the world for all those involved.

When I received the day care centre director's e-mail, I could not help thinking of my own first experiences with women wearing the veil when I was teaching in northern Nigeria in 1971. Such exposures have led me to accept assignments in developing countries over the years such as the two weeks that I spent in June 1996 working with women in Amman, Jordan, on their education and their rights as persons. I and others look forward to the day when the women of Afghanistan will be free and able to interact with other women around the world and will enjoy the privileges and rights that we have.

As outlined in the Throne Speech, I applaud the Premier (Mr. Doer) for the measures taken to date, including the establishment of an all-party committee on security measures and the co-ordination of Manitoba's health, emergency and other personnel to respond to security challenges.

As we discuss in this House the multipronged legislative package on security in the days ahead, I cannot help wondering what

our war veterans would say to us in light of their experiences in fighting for democracy.

Last Saturday, my colleague from St. Vital, my husband and I attended the annual general meeting of the St. Vital Historical Society. In his address, Charlie Smeaton, president, commented that this year marked the 83rd anniversary of the end of the First World War on November 11, 1918. He noted that there are many to remember, as we all know, for what they did for us by sacrifice and dedication to our country in both World Wars and other conflicts up to the present date.

For example, the president reminded us about the heroic gesture of Sergeant Major John Osborne, from St. Vital, who in World War II was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously, and also about a little-known story with a Riel constituency connection. Of the 35 young men who were part of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, 7 lived on Arden Avenue in Riel. They served in Hong Kong and when it fell to the Japanese on December 25, 1941, these 7 men became POWs: Fred Abraham, Bill Lancaster, Eddy, Alf, and Harry Shaler, all 3 of the same family, George and Morris Peterson. Luckily 6 of them from Arden Avenue did survive the war. George was at this AGM, 1 of 2 still alive.

As well as we all did at that AGM, many of us took a moment on Remembrance Day to remember our family members and others who fought for our freedom. I have mentioned it here in the House before that my father, Harold Barker, was wounded at Vimy Ridge in World War I. One of his brothers is buried in the Canadian military cemetery at Sancourt, France, among the poppies. Another brother is commemorated on the Menin Gate at Ypres, Belgium, having been blown up in a crater. My late brother was in the Airforce in World War II, and my older sister served in the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

A real learning experience for our son about war was to visit the tunnels at Vimy Ridge with his grandfather, my husband and myself. My father started explaining how a bullet shot out his teeth, and he asked Lee to look for his teeth—this is 50 years later in the tunnels—to get him into the spirit, I guess, because his real purpose

was to give a lesson to Lee about the horrors of war.

\* (15:00)

As we give thanks then for the sacrifices of those who fought for our freedom, I am reassured by the Throne Speech and its measured approach to address the issues raised by the events of September 11 and later. Actions, including Legislative measures, are being taken to increase the security for us. However, at the same time, these initiatives are being taken in a manner which comply with and respect the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the Speech from the Throne, I welcome once again the emphasis on laying foundations for future growth in Manitoba with investments in education and youth. I specifically applaud the fact that ministers will be working directly with service providers to streamline administrative costs and ensure that frontline services are the priority.

For example, the decision to reduce educational administration through amalgamation in order to direct more of our education investment into the classroom is long overdue. In my 35 years as a public school educator, the majority of which were spent in school board offices, school and provincial administration, as well as my experience as a school trustee, I learned first-hand the need to reduce administrative costs to direct more assistance to students in these economic times.

I know that change can be difficult. This initiative of amalgamation will take determination and leadership. I believe, however, that the majority of Manitobans view it as necessary in these economic times and will work toward a goal of an improved education system.

I was extremely proud of the St. Vital School Board's press release last week following the announcement on amalgamation. I quote: "The board of trustees of the St. Vital School Division is very proud of the long history and unique culture of its school organization. In the true spirit of collaboration and co-operation, the board looks forward to this new opportunity for

the St. Vital family of schools. In the days ahead, the board will endeavour to ensure that all stakeholders are kept apprised of the transitional process and that the needs and interests of the children in schools will be kept at the forefront. The board welcomes the opportunity to work with the St. Boniface school division community in this new partnership."

I congratulate Marilyn Seguire, Chairperson, and the other St. Vital school trustees, as well as Terry Borys, Superintendent, for their focus on collaboration, co-operation and partnership in beginning a journey that will mean some tough decisions and choices.

These words of collaboration, co-operation and partnership are much more acceptable to me than words that I have heard like "shotgun weddings," which I consider to be a very outdated expression. I do not think that my son would even know what that means in this day and age. I certainly cannot imagine the Minister of Education being involved in such a transaction. I would rather hear the words "arranged marriage," if you are going to use those images. I think the image of an arranged marriage is much more appropriate because it involves consultation, wisdom and vision.

Another specific education initiative that I applaud in the Throne Speech is the move to give a prominent place to Canadian history, geography and citizenship in our schools so that young people develop a greater sense of their heritage. We as Canadians have a remarkable history and learning more about it will foster greater pride in being Canadians.

The Throne Speech focussed on many initiatives to help Manitobans in all parts of the province. I think that that is one of the strengths that we have as a government. Certainly the task of improving health care for all citizens continues to be a high priority.

As I reflect on the progress made to date, I know the constituents in Riel are very pleased with this Government's work, more specifically pleased with the tireless efforts by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and his staff to address the challenges in health care. My constituents tell me this on a regular basis at the doors and on

the telephone. I note that more nurses are being trained now than at any time in the last decade and twice as many as just five years ago. There are over 1400 nursing students in 2001 and triple the number of nurses to graduate in 2002 as in 1999.

There are 15 additional spaces in medical school, 9 for rural and northern family medicine. Over 150 medical students received grants on condition they set up practice in Manitoba; two-thirds are specialists. Wait lists for breast cancer and prostate cancer treatment have been cut in half from 10 to 5 weeks. Bone density testing down from 22 weeks to 5 weeks. Funding has increased for emergency medical services for the first time since 1991-92, almost doubling funding and purchasing 80 new ambulances for communities across Manitoba. The list of accomplishments in health care during our first two years in office continues. As stated in the Throne Speech, a challenge now is to work with other provinces to secure an adequate level of federal support.

Manitobans were very pleased to hear in the Throne Speech that despite the economic uncertainty tax reductions scheduled for January 1, 2002, will proceed on schedule. The speech noted that this will bring the total Manitoba personal income tax cut under the current government to more than 9 percent, focusing on middle-income earners. The small-business tax cut will also proceed.

Many of us are encouraged that time has come to decide on the appropriate project for enhancing flood protection for Winnipeg and to move that project forward with the federal government. As a person who has lived on the Red River since 1943, I was very happy today to see the report tabled in the House, and I look forward to having the appropriate action taken to protect those of us who are directly affected by the moods of the Red River.

There were many other initiatives outlined in the Throne Speech that aim to improve our lives now and in the future: the commitment, for example, to early years programs that support new parents and prepare children for success in school, their strategic investment in post-secondary education with a 12% increase in

enrolment at our public colleges and universities, and this is to name but a few.

I congratulate the Premier (Mr. Doer) again this year for his leadership, his vision in presenting the issues facing us as a government and as a province. As we continue to fulfil the five commitments we made to the people of Manitoba in the 1999 election I am sure that we will concentrate on Manitoba's immediate priorities and do so within our limited budgetary resources.

Je suis très fière d'être membre de ce gouvernement et de travailler en équipe dans le but de respecter les engagements qui constituent notre mandat: restaurer le système public de soins de santé dans toutes les régions de la province; donner un nouvel espoir aux jeunes grâce aux possibilités créées dans le domaine de l'éducation; améliorer la sécurité de nos communautés, réduire l'impôt foncier en augmentant les crédits d'impôts, et assurer la conservation et l'amélioration de la loi sur l'équilibre budgétaire.

Voici mes commentaires par rapport au discours, les priorités des résidents de Riel, les priorités de notre gouvernement et quelques réactions.

#### *Translation*

I am very proud to be a member of this Government and to work as part of a team to respect the commitments that constitute our mandate: to restore public health care in all regions of the province; to provide new hope for young people through opportunities in education; to make our communities safer; to reduce property taxes through increased tax credits; and to maintain and improve the balanced budget law.

These are my comments on the Throne Speech, the priorities of Riel residents and of our Government, and a few reactions.

#### *English*

I again would like to emphasize how proud I am to be a member of this Government with the actions that we are taking to fulfil the

commitments we made to the people of Manitoba, and I look forward to the session with the decision to move ahead. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I would first like to welcome to the Chamber our new pages. I congratulate them on their selection and I hope that they find their experience here very interesting and a very rewarding one. I would certainly like to welcome them to the Chamber. Clearly they are just a few of Manitoba's young leaders of tomorrow. As we all work together to build a safer and a more secure province let us all ensure that we are doing everything possible to make their future here in Manitoba a brighter one, Mr. Acting Speaker.

\* (15:10)

Before I specifically address the Throne Speech, I would like to make some comments about September 11th, a day that will not be forgotten. As much as we must continue on with our daily lives and continue moving forward we must not forget the thousands of innocent women and men including Canadian citizens who perished in the terrorist attack of New York City's World Trade Center on September 11. The sense of loss that their families and friends must endure is incomprehensible.

It is often difficult to find the right words, but this past Sunday at a Remembrance Day ceremony in the army, navy and air force veterans' club in my Kirkfield Park constituency, I met a man who did just that.

Lieutenant General Ray Crabbe is a man who has devoted his life to his country. He spoke of our good fortune to live in a nation that has not seen war on its soil since 1814 and how distant wars are to Canada and to Canadians.

He said, and I quote: War is a nasty, deadly business. It is often difficult for Canadians to accept war, and perhaps that is why there is a degree of complacency within Canada about war and why we as a peace-loving nation and a country that has had the good fortune of not having wars fought on our soil should ever have cause to participate in it. That complacency was shattered on September 11. The most

fundamental freedoms that many nations around the world do not share nor enjoy that we take for granted, that we assume as a right, our very way of life is now being challenged for the very first time close to home. Distant and past wars were fought elsewhere because that was where the threat had to be dealt with. Now the threat is here at home in Canada. That is why Canada as a nation and Canadian men and women went to war and why so many gave their lives and why today we live in the best country in the world, thanks in large part to their sacrifices. The freedoms that they died for bore a very heavy price. Now we as a nation must take up the torch and pay our price to maintain our way of life. While some would not agree, there is a price to pay for such freedom and rights. The price we must pay is to defend these freedoms wherever and whenever they are threatened, and as a nation and as individuals the first responsibility of a sovereign nation is the defence and protection of its people.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those words from Lieutenant General Ray Crabbe speak volumes about why we as a province must be strong and vocal in our support of our American neighbours. His words remind us how important it is that we do everything possible to improve the safety and security of Manitobans. His words remind us how very important it is for us to remember and to be thankful. I know we all share in the offering of our prayers and support for their families and friends who lost loved ones in the September 11th attack and in our call for justice to be served for this most evil act. At the same time, when people the world over have been shaken to the core by the events of September 11, it is important for the restoration of individual confidence for our leaders to be strong and decisive. Justice demands it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, just as it is important for leaders to be strong and decisive on issues of safety and security it is important that we be strong and decisive on other priority issues. Unfortunately, for Manitobans, that kind of leadership has not been forthcoming from the Government, nor was it present in yesterday's Throne Speech.

Mr. Acting Speaker, yesterday's Throne Speech was weak. It was yet another opportunity

for the Doer government to finally put forward a vision and a plan for Manitoba, but they did not take that opportunity. There was no plan to deal with the runaway spending, no plan to make Manitoba competitive, no plan to improve our health care, no plan to tackle the growing crime problem, and no plan to ensure Manitoba is a place where there are jobs for young people so they can stay home to make their lives and raise their families right here in Manitoba. Right now Manitobans are looking to other provinces and states for better opportunities. The question they keep asking themselves is: How can I afford to stay here? That is unfortunate because, had the Premier (Mr. Doer) made some different choices over the last few years to make Manitoba competitive, these same people would be asking: How can I afford to leave?

The Premier's (Mr. Doer) Throne Speech provided no answers. As is typical of this Premier, it was full of excuses. Rather than admit his free-spending ways have caught up to him, the Premier is trying to use September 11 and the economic slowdown as an excuse. There is no excuse. In the last two years, provincial revenues have increased by almost a billion dollars. Did the Premier save some money? Did the Premier plan for a potential downturn in the economy? No, he spent every last nickel of it. The question Manitobans are asking is: What do we have to show for it? Do we have better health care? Well, patients are waiting more than a year for cataract surgery. *[interjection]* They say yes. The fact that patients are waiting more than a year for cataract surgery, they think is okay. The fact that they are waiting more than a year for hip and knee surgery, apparently they think that is okay. Remember the campaign promise. We all know it. We can all recite it. Give us six months and \$15 million, and it will go away. We all know hallway medicine is alive and well in the province of Manitoba two years and half a billion dollars later. We have a shortage of health care workers in the province. Sure the Government talks about training nurses, but they are doing nothing to keep them in this province. No, Mr. Acting Speaker, we do not have better health care.

What about safer streets? Do we have safer streets? According to Statistics Canada, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics for the

year 2000, Winnipeg had the highest homicide rate, the highest violent crime rate, the highest robbery rate, the highest sexual assault rate, the highest assault rate, the highest auto theft rate and the highest rate of mischief. Those same statistics show that Winnipeg also had the second-highest rate of break and enters, the second-highest rate of thefts other than auto, the second-highest rate of offensive weapons, the second-highest rate of property crimes, the second-highest rate of total crime code offences excluding traffic. Mr. Acting Speaker, there is nothing safe about that report.

In terms of rural Manitoba, it took two years, but finally the words "rural development" appeared in the Throne Speech.

**An Honourable Member:** Darn glad to see it, though.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, it was great, except there is no meat in the sandwich as usual. There is no hope. There is no vision. There is nothing to keep our rural communities vibrant and alive. There is no mention of real economic development for rural Manitoba and the communities. There is nothing for the small businesses which provide almost 80 percent of the jobs in rural Manitoba. What was in the Throne Speech for rural Manitoba was more bureaucracy, more regulation, more red tape and more costs.

What about education? Have we had better education for our kids? Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, how could we possibly know? The Throne Speech talks about an annual report on student outcomes. Well, how can you report on a province-wide basis student outcomes without province-wide standards testing? Will the NDP now make six and nine standards testing compulsory? The Government talks about issuing a report without actually holding standards tests, more opportunities for young Manitobans or maybe even a little more money back in our pockets. If the Throne Speech said anything at all, it said Manitobans will not be seeing any action anytime soon.

\* (15:20)

When the Doer government came to office on a platform of slick slogans, unrealistic promises, they were left with a strong economy,



the best economy in 25 years. An editorial written by the *Winnipeg Free Press* exactly two years ago stated, and I quote: The new NDP administration arrived in office in time to harvest the fruits of 12 years of Conservative administration.

Mr. Acting Speaker, for the next two years, the Doer government went on a spending spree. The Premier (Mr. Doer) and his Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) are not unlike Thelma and Louise racing full speed towards a cliff, and now as they near the edge they look at each other and they decide maybe they should ease off the gas just a little bit. It is just too bad that it took us all that long. They took us along for the ride. I think Manitobans riding in the back seat frankly are getting a little car-sick.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Government's Throne Speech would lead Manitobans to believe that the economic slowdown, somehow it snuck up on them, that they were not aware of it. The fact is they have known for months. I remember the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) telling this House on April 11 of this year, and I quote. She said: I know during the recession right now there is a small slowdown.

Even the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) on May 8 told Manitobans, and I quote: A slowdown is certainly in the air and there are indications that this is happening. We are seeing that with announcements of corporate reductions of jobs.

Did they do anything at this time? Did they have a plan? Did they show the leadership to make the tough decisions? No, they just went right on spending. So now at long last the chickens are coming home to roost. A recent Fraser Institute report has dropped Manitoba's rating for fiscal management down from 3 to No. 8.

Mr. Acting Speaker, to quote a recent article from the *Winnipeg Sun*: It looks like the Doer government's spending habits and reluctance to keep pace with tax cuts in neighbouring provinces is finally catching up to it. The Premier would have us believe that he has seen the light. In the Throne Speech he announced

that one of the pillars of his new growth strategy is, and I quote: sound management of public resources. Hallelujah. Of course, there were no plans for such radical change outlined in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on this side of the House, we have always recognized that sound management of public resources is the responsibility of government. It is not a new-fangled idea. It is a cornerstone of the trust that citizens put in their government. It was a PC government that enshrined the concept of a government living within its own means in law, the balanced budget legislation, legislation I would like to note that every member of the Doer government voted against, legislation that the Member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) said is, and I quote: one of the more unthinking pieces of legislation, that its real purpose, of course, is an abdication of responsibility and it is a sheer sham, legislation the current Member for Inkster (Ms. Barrett) said is, and I quote: It is an unrealistic piece of legislation this Government is going to have an enormously difficult time living with. The member went on to tell Manitobans the very concept of balancing budgets, and I quote: does not correspond to any economic theory known to personkind, either historical theory or current economic theory.

So are we concerned that the Government will run a deficit and break yet another promise to the taxpayers of Manitoba? You bet we are, and we have very good reason to believe so. Do Manitobans need to fear that this Government will undo all the hard work they put in to balance the budget? Yes, they do. Do Manitobans deserve better? Of course they do.

A Throne Speech is supposed to be about vision. Where is the Government's vision in our children's future, for their education, for their safety, for their opportunities? Where is the Government's vision for reliable, sustainable health care for Manitobans? Where is the Government's vision for safe communities throughout Manitoba? Where is the Government's vision for rural Manitoba? Where is this Government's vision of a strong and vibrant business community? Where is this Government's commitment or vision to Manitoba that competes with the likes of Alberta and Ontario?

The vision is nowhere to be found because on that side it does not exist. No vision, no plan, no leadership.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has a vision of growth and hope and opportunity for Manitoba, and unlike this Premier who governs for a select few we will provide new leadership for all Manitobans, all Manitobans, not a select few. It is for all these reasons that I say today that we on this side of the House are truly disappointed that yet another Throne Speech has come from members opposite that provides no vision and no plan to build a better, more prosperous and more competitive Manitoba. Again, no hope for Manitobans.

So it is on their behalf that I propose the following motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** Order, please. Could we be a bit quieter so we can hear the speaker?

**Mr. Murray:** I could start over again if it was the will of the House.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is on their behalf, on behalf of all Manitobans that I propose the following motion. I believe it is important that the motion that we put forward to all Manitobans and put forward to this Government represents those things that are important to all Manitobans, not a select few, not a select few as we have seen over two years. I am going to put forward a motion that is on behalf of all Manitobans, and so therefore I introduce this motion:

THAT the motion be amended by adding to it after the word "Manitoba" the following words: "but this House regrets

(a) that the Government's inability to fulfil the promises outlined in its Throne Speech of November 13, 2001, include the following failures: not ending hallway medicine; not addressing the province-wide shortage of health care professionals; not reducing waiting lists of health care services; not providing adequate resources to Manitoba's justice system, including a commitment to maintain a minimum of 1180 police officers in the city of Winnipeg; rejecting compulsory standards testing in Grade 6, Senior

1 and Senior 4, while at the same time announcing annual reports on student achievement outcomes across subject and grade levels; not ensuring a viable future for the family farm in Manitoba; failing to adequately promote rural economic diversification; failing to secure adequate levels of income loss compensation for Manitoba farmers; and not forging a new strategy for economic development; and

(b) the Government's failure to address the challenges facing the province's health care system; and

(c) the Government's failure to bring Manitoba Hydro before the Public Utilities Board despite the Government's commitment to projects that may potentially cost the Province of Manitoba \$10 billion; and

(d) the Government's failure to release long-term strategies for economic growth which include meaningful tax reductions, thereby making Manitoba less able to compete in the national and global economy; and

(e) the Government's failure in this time of a slowing economy to provide any meaningful measures to maintain economic growth and stimulate job creation, thereby making Manitoba a less attractive place in which to live, work, invest and raise families;

(f) the Government's failure to back up the Member for Concordia, who earlier this spring made a commitment to the citizens of Manitoba that there will be "no forced amalgamation (of school divisions. It is not the Manitoba way."; and

(g) the Government's failure to arrive at a national farm safety net program that adequately addresses the needs of the province's agricultural producers; and

(h) the Government's failure, as promised by the Member for Concordia, as promised in the Legislative Assembly on May 9, 2001, to arrange a meeting—"any day, any place, any time"—between the Prime Minister and a delegation of farm, business and municipal leaders in order to address the challenges facing the agriculture sector; and

(i) the Government's failure to address the issues raised by its complete mismanagement of the expansion of gaming through the creation of five First Nation casinos; and

(j) the Government's failure to address issues pertinent to seniors; and

(k) the Government's failure to address issues pertinent to women.

AND has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

\* (15:30)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Harry Schellenberg):** Order, please. The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington):** Mr. Acting Speaker, in this Third Session of the Thirty-seventh Legislature of Manitoba, November 2001, this Member for Wellington wishes to speak on one general issue, security, in the broadest meaning of the term. In addressing this issue of security, unless this MLA runs out of time, he will touch briefly on at least four subtopics: the psychology of fear versus courage; the philosophy of life versus death; the theology of competing religious claim to the truth and an eschatology of Judeo-Christian prophecies of the end time; and then conclude by asking what we need to do and why.

Let me start with this anecdote about an elderly Amish couple. On September 12 they stop their horse and buggy, approach the window of the ticket agent in a rural Pennsylvania train station and say, "Mister, has the three o'clock train gone yet?" "Yes, a quarter of an hour ago." "How soon will the next train come?" "Quite a while yet, before the four o'clock train." "Are there any passenger trains before then?" "No." "Any freight trains?" "No." "Any train at all?" "No." "Are you sure?" "Yes, I am sure," bawled the now exasperated ticket agent. Turning to his wife, the Amish farmer said to her, "Honey, I reckon we are safe to cross them tracks now."

This couple, being Amish, subscribed to no newspaper, they had no radio, they had no television. Did not know anything about what happened on the horrendous day of September 11, 2001, in New York City that was just the day before.

Millions of people around the world watched TV, which depicted how the two hijacked aircraft one after another flew into the twin towers of the World Trade Center and another at the Pentagon with ensuing explosion, innocent people jumping from the windows, resulting in almost 6000 deaths of innocent civilians who went to work and some who just visited there, like our own Christine Egan, and never returned home.

Instead of researching the writings out of a book now, the now famous French physician and astrologer Nostradamus, this member consulted the Old Testament and was led to the following passages from Isaiah:

Sur toute haute montagne /Sur toute colline élevée /Il y aura des cours d'eau abondants /Au jours du grand massacre /Quand les tours s'écrouleront.

**Translation**

*Upon every high mountain /Upon every high hill /There shall be streams of abundant waters /In the day of the great massacre /When the towers fall.*

**English**

Then this member linked that vision of the prophet with the utterances on the Mount of Olives found in the New Testament:

Il y aura en divers endroits /Des famines et des tremblements de terre /Et tout cela sera le commencement /Des douleurs de l'enfantement.

**Translation**

*And there shall be famines, and pestilence, And earthquakes in diverse places. /These are the beginning of sorrow.*

### *English*

The current NDP government in Manitoba, speaking through the Lieutenant-Governor, asserted that the first order of business is to respond to the anxieties felt by our citizens with actions that are measured and practical.

What is anxiety? Everybody seems to be anxious now. What is anxiety? Anxiety is one result of incomplete feeling of personal security characterized by uneasy apprehension similar to fear but based upon some unclear or unknown threat. Fear. What is fear? It is one of the basic emotions of human beings. The others are anger, anxiety, disgust, happiness, surprise, sadness, all being studied by psychology.

But what is psychology? The word is a combination of two Greek words: "psyche," which is translated in scientific terms "the mind," but in the original Greek it is the soul; and the word "logos," words of wisdom, understanding or knowledge. Thus, psychology is a branch of social science, and we acquire knowledge through the systematic study of behaviour.

In various psychological studies of fear there are various intensities of fear ranging from trepidation, dread, fright, alarm, panic and terror. Let us define each of these so we have a clear idea.

Trepidation is painful anticipation of some apprehended danger—apprehension. Dread is the reluctance to fear, to face a fearful situation. Alarm is a sudden apprehension of danger. Panic is irrational over-mastering fear causing hysterical behaviour, but the highest degree of fear is terror. Fear is a basic human emotion arising of a inborn instinct of self-preservation. We fear those things that we do not understand, including darkness always sometimes associated with evil. When we were very young, we feared the dark, but singing and whistling in the dark is not enough to dispel our fear. We fear what is unknown and also the unknowable.

\* (15:40)

Some say that the opposite of fear is courage. What is courage? A French proverb

says: Le courage est souvent un effet de la peur; courage is often an effect of fear. [*interjection*]

For example, General Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President of the United States, to whom the southern Confederate Army under General Robert E. Lee surrendered, and well known for his bravery, wrote in his memoir: I was often afraid before going to battle, but I figured that the opponent was also afraid. I figured on his fear of me and his ignorance of my fear of him and went and crushed him before he found out that I also fear him.

The Greek philosopher Plato considered courage as a special kind of knowledge. The knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and also the knowledge of not to fear what ought not to be feared.

Courage then is not the absence of fear. It is being afraid, then overcoming that fear and then doing exactly what you have to do.

Paraphrasing Ralph Waldo Emerson whose works John F. Kennedy probably, most likely had read: whatever we do, in whatever arena of life, we need courage because there are usually people who tell us we are wrong, that we may lose our friends, our fortune, even the esteem of others, obstacles and difficulties which tempt us to believe that our critics are probably right. But according to our conscience, we must do what we must in spite of personal consequences, in spite of pressures. If we stand up to enemies, even to stand up to our own association of friends, then we have courage, including the courage to admit that we were wrong. Absent knowledge, therefore, we have to rely on something else because not all things can be known. On the unknowable, you need faith. Faith can surmount fear because it converts our faith in a more enduring force of faith.

Love is also able to conquer power if we know how to transform our love for power into the power of love.

Now, let us go to the philosophy of life. What does life mean to us? What does life mean to you? Have we asked that question? What are we to make the most of life while we have it, while we have life? According to Isaac Kiser, to the preacher, life is a ceremony. To the joker, life is a jest. To the miser, life is money. To the loafer, life is rest. To the lawyer, life is a trial.

To the medical doctor, life is a patient that needs treatment. To the poet, life is a poem. To the singer, life is a song. To the soldier, life is a battle. To the teacher, life is a school. To the grafter, life is getting, but life is a failure to the fool, for idleness is the holiday of fools; l'oisiveté est le repos des sots. To the driver, life is a journey. To the merchant, life is trade. And to anyone, life is what we make it.

In other words, life is whatever we are alive to. Some people are alive to the basic appetites: to eat, to drink, to sleep, to copulate.

**An Honourable Member:** What?

**Mr. Santos:** Copulate.

**An Honourable Member:** Can you spell that?

**Mr. Santos:** C-o-p-u-l-a-t-e. Others, in addition, are also alive to beauty, charity, discovery, excellence, faith, goodness, honesty, justice, knowledge, love, and they seem to live successfully, doing the best they can with what they have and where they are. Still others live to anger, hate, envy, to destroy and to kill.

So we ask: Is there security in this life? No, there is no security in this life on earth. Why not? Life is nasty, brutish and short, says Thomas Hobbes. The length of life is uncertain. As Job puts it, man born of a woman is of few days and full of sorrow. He springs like a flower and withers like a fleeting shadow.

The Psalmist said: As for man, his days are like the grass. He flourishes like the flowers of the field. The wind blows over it, and it is gone.

When the word "man" is used in the old writings before the new correct thing, it includes both. The length of our years are three score and ten, and, if by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet, in their strength, labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off.

Now, we have to balance the materialistic with the aesthetic, the physical with the spiritual. Maybe that is the one best way of living a life, but we should do it right now.

The Roman emperor and philosopher king, Marcus Aurelius, reminds us that a man's life lies all within the present, as it were but a hair's breadth of time. As for the rest, the past is gone. The future may or may not come.

Therefore, let us live our life today now as nobly as we can. It is sensible for us to live a little as we go along. We ought not to spend all our time toiling, accumulating, saving, trying to get ready to live only to find out that we run out of time.

Life is action. The time for action is now. If life does not go into action, it is wasted life. A wasted life lies in the love that we have not given, in the kindness that we have not shown, in the good turn that we have not done, in the capacity that we have not used, and in the helping hand that we have not extended to others.

As one unknown poet has written: The clock of life is wound but once, and no human has the power to tell just when the hand will stop at late or early hour.

When we are sad, we cry. When we are afraid, tears sometimes flow from our eyes.

Tears are shed also for one's religious belief. Theology is the study of religion as a particular system of faith. The Speech from the Throne stated that we seek security for Manitobans to protect and enhance the things we hold dear. Among the things we hold dear are the values of truth, justice, freedom, equality, democracy. But of all these values that we hold dear, the most comprehensive, I believe, is the truth.

\* (15:50)

What is the truth? That question was asked by Pontius Pilate, but he did not wait for the answer. He immediately left, so therefore he did not get the answer. What was the Lord Jesus Christ's answer to this question? He said to his disciples: And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. I am the way, the truth and the life. No one cometh to the Father but by me. If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed.

Praying on behalf of his disciples, Jesus said to his Father: Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe in me through their words, that they may all be one. As thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they may also be one in us.

If the word of God is the truth and if the Lord Jesus Christ is the word of God in the beginning, how was the word of God communicated before Christ came to our own world here, when in the beginning the Lord Jesus Christ was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. God who at sundry times and in a diverse manner spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in this last day spoken to us by his Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he also made the worlds.

The earliest oldest religion of Hinduism with no founder originated in India with its Sanskrit writings, including the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* which together sum the truth in two names: Brahman means the outer truth of the universe and Atman is the inner truth of the self, and these two are one and the same.

The second oldest organized religion founded by Moses is the monotheistic religion of Judaism with its scriptures in the Old Testament, which gives us the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, through Moses: No other gods before the Lord God; no graven image; no taking of the Lord God's name in vain; keeping the Sabbath holy; honouring father and mother; do not kill; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness, meaning do not lie; do not covet; do not greed.

Another universal way of having a glimpse of the truth is Buddhism, founded by Gautama Buddha when he sought and found Nirvana, the great enlightenment about the four Buddhist statements of the truth: namely, first, all existence involves suffering; second, all suffering is caused by insatiable human desires; third, therefore by suppressing all human desires, all sufferings will cease. Yet, while we are still living life on this earth, every person must live moderately, moderately, guided by the eight righteous paths: of belief, of aspiration, of

speech, of action, of livelihood, of endeavour, of concentration and of thought. If we are able to do this, we attain Nirvana, the spiritual enlightenment and it will give us the status of a Buddha.

The only other monotheistic universal religion. The only one that originated after Christianity, after the Lord Jesus Christ had gone to Heaven. In opposition to it and next only to Confucianism, the largest non-Christian religion is Islam, which means complete submission to the Almighty God Allah: La ilaha illa, 'lahu, Muhammad rasulu 'illah. There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is Allah's prophet.

Let us go to eschatology. A prophet can have visions of future things. Eschatology is the study of future things like the end of the world, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment.

Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives. Then the disciples came unto Him, and the Evangelist Mark named Him. Peter and James, John and Andrew, they came to Him privately saying: tell us, when shall all these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the world? Jesus answered and said to them: Take heed that no one deceives you, for many shall come in my name saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many.

Who are some of these many deceivers claiming to be Christ the Messiah? In almost every other century after the death of Christ and his ascension to Heaven, many false Christs have arisen such as Simeon Bar Kocha, Moses of Crete, Abraham Abulafia and Shabbethai Zebi. In our immediate past century alone, persons impersonating Christ include Charles Manson, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, Jim Jones, David Koresh.

The Lord Jesus Christ also said: and there shall be famines, pestilence, earthquakes in diverse places. Yesterday I was reading the newspaper and I read—that was the other day—there were 36 hours of torrential rain in Sudan that rendered 4000 families homeless and 579 persons dead. That is just rain. We have read of the severe droughts and resulting famines in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa, India and

Southeast Asia. Pestilence is re-emerging as new strains of bacteria and viruses, resistant to antibiotics and other standard treatments, the two E's, Ebola and E-coli, AIDS, the most deadly among sexually transmitted diseases. Earthquakes are increasing both in frequency and intensity. A killer earthquake is one which registers 6.5 or higher in the Richter scale.

Between 1900 and 1970, there were only 37 recorded killer earthquakes. Then in the decade of 1970s, this increased to 56. In the decade of 1980s, this increased to 74, and by mid-1990, half of that decade, there were already 124 killer earthquakes and more to the end of 1999.

The Lord Jesus said to his followers: they shall deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you. Ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake . . . and then many shall be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another.

When the Talibans left Kabul the other day, they took with them eight foreign aid workers as hostages. Two of those eight were accused of the offence of spreading Christianity. I read the other day now, before I left, they were already rescued by the Delta Force, all of the eight.

But what do we know by recent history? The Holocaust in Nazi Germany, the anti-Semitic persecution in Russia, the Jewish and Christian persecution within modern Arab nations. This racial hatred is spilled over, even among various nationalities within the same nation-state. Think about Bosnia, Kenya. Hatred pervades even traditional families of husband, wife and children proven by bitter legal battles for divorces and custody of children.

\* (16:00)

The Lord Jesus Christ continued: And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.

In our generation alone we have seen, read and heart telepathic persons, seers and diviners. For example, very recently one British newspaper reported that the U.S. intelligence agencies are now actively recruiting seers and psychics, remote viewers, to help them predict where, how and when the terrorists would likely strike.

The Lord Jesus also said: And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations, and then the end shall come.

What do we need to do now, having seen, heard all these things happening around us? If we are awakened to the reality and the frailty of human life, short, but we cherish it, what are we to do and why?

In *Ecclesiastes*, King Solomon said: To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die.

In between those two events, birth and death, still we do not know when or how death will come. So we dream, we study, we toil, we save, we seek self-fulfilment.

The wise King Solomon now asks: What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth?

What do we get in all of this? Studying, toiling, saving, seeking, doing, working, all of this, what do we get?

I have seen the travails that are given to the sons of man. I know there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour. That must be the product of his labour, not the labour of others. The thing that you can enjoy, you have a right, are the products of your own labour. It is a gift of God. I know that whatsoever God doeth that man should fear before him. That which is to be hath already been. God requireth that which is past. I said in mine heart: God shall judge the righteous and the wicked for there is time there for every purpose and for every work. That is King Solomon.

If God is to judge in the day of judgment, how is such judgment to be done? How will it happen? For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether good, whether it be evil. If we have done evil, if we kill, if we commit adultery, if we steal, if we bear false witness by lying, can we say: But,

Lord, the devil made me do it. Can we say that in that last day of judgment? We cannot say such a thing. Why not? Why can you not say: The devil made me do it?

Speaking through Moses, God said: I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life that both you and your seed may live. We are given the right to choose. Free will.

But when will this last day of judgment happen? As it is appointed unto men once to die and then after this the judgment, who shall be the judge in that ultimate and last judgment? For God the Father judgeth no man, but He hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Verily, verily, I say unto you the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. Marvel at none of this for the hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice and shall come forth. They that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.

For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even to the west so shall also the coming the Son of Man be. But of that day and hour no man knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

If we have heard, and if we believed the prophecies of the end time, what are we enjoined to do? Therefore, be ye also ready for in such hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. When the Son of Man cometh in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all the nations and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goat.

In *Revelation*, St. John, the divine servant wrote: I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened. Another book is opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the book according to their works.

Then shall the King say unto them on His right, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall He say to those on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

But who are these cursed? Who are they? That the cowards, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, the whoremongers, the sorcerers, the idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. That is the end time, and we have been seeing all its signs.

Now, knowing the frailty of us, of human beings and our inability to even see in the future, even to know what will happen tomorrow now our own weaknesses, where do we go? No matter how many air marshals you put in a plane, you cannot prevent things from happening. What we have is a semblance of security, a feeling of security but no real security. So when we are out and lost here, what do we say?

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He leadeth me into the green pasture; He restoreth my soul. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Le Seigneur est mon berger, je ne manque de rien.

#### **Translation**

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

#### **English**

That is the beginning. I forgot the rest. But I can find the French. I would like to say it in French also. Not good? Le Seigneur—I will sing it, so it will be good to hear.



\* (16:10)

Le Seigneur est mon berger, je ne manquerai de rien/ Il me fait coucher sur les frais herbages/ Il m'amène près des eaux du repos/ Il ranime mon âme/ Il me conduit par les bons sentiers de droiture, pour l'honneur de son nom/ Même si je marche dans un ravin d'ombre de la mort, je ne crains aucun mal, car tu es avec moi/ Ton baton, ton appui, voilà qui me console/ Tu dresses une table devant moi, face à mes adversaires/ Tu parfumes d'huile ma tête, et ma coupe est débordante/ Oui, bonheur—

**Translation**

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want/ He makes me to lie down in green pastures/ He leads me beside the still waters/ He restores my soul/ He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake/ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me/ Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me/ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies/ You anoint my head with oil/ My cup runs over/ Surely goodness—*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise before the House today and put a few words on the record regarding this Speech from the Throne.

Before doing that, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back the Clerks and welcome the pages to their new positions. I hope it is going to be an enjoyable session for you, and pass that on to your colleagues as well, and the Sergeant-at-Arms and all the other staff who are back with us. I would also like to welcome the interns who have been with us since September and making our lives easier, certainly a big help to the members of this Assembly.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think the most that I can say about yesterday's Throne Speech is it was a modest view from a government and a Premier that has much to be modest about. This Throne Speech is bereft of vision, no vision for the future whatsoever, no indication of where

this present government plans to take this province. It lays no groundwork to help this province come out of the economic downturn that is enveloping North America and has been with us for the better part of the last year.

This Speech from the Throne is simply a list of disjointed announcements, most of which are re-announcements of events that have been announced over the last two years, most of which have not come to fruition, a good number of which I must say probably will not ever come to fruition, and that is unfortunate.

This Throne Speech is mundane, uninspiring, and it offers very little hope to the people of this great province and even less direction. That is very unfortunate. I think we have witnessed yesterday afternoon and this afternoon in the moving of the speech and the seconding of the speech and of the response to the Speech from the Throne from the Member for Wellington (Mr. Santos). But collectively this is a tired government. This is a government that is out of ideas two years after being elected. The member from Flin Flon spent most of his time in moving this speech talking about the past, talking about things that were announced years ago, not talking about the future. That is the seconder of the Throne Speech—nothing to say about the future.

\* (16:20)

The member from Riel spent most of her time talking about volunteers, certainly laudable, certainly something we should be very proud of, but it tells Manitobans nothing about the direction this Government wants to take. It just fills space. The member from Wellington, well, he just dusted off a philosophy lecture from his days at university. Nothing at all to say about the Throne Speech. Nothing at all to say about the vision any member on the benches opposite have for their vision of where this great province can go, and that is a disservice. That is a tremendous disservice to the people of Manitoba.

Quite frankly, I am not surprised. This is a government that had very little energy when it got elected. I mean, 40 percent of its major campaign was to do nothing, and they have done a wonderful job of doing that. I have got to tell

you, Mr. Acting Speaker, if this Government is good at one thing it is doing nothing. Unfortunately, that is not something I want to congratulate them for today.

The other 60 percent of their election platform are broken promises. We have unfilled promises, we have broken promises and we have empty words with little meaning and with no action. This Throne Speech set the stage for this Government for the last half of its mandate. And what did it do? What is the main purpose of this Throne Speech? I believe the main purpose of this Throne Speech is to lower the expectations of Manitobans. Because this Government knows that not only is it out of ideas, not only is it out of energy, it is out of money. Surprise, surprise.

With the Minister of Finance standing up in this House today, November 15, more than halfway through the fiscal year, and when asked a simple question, how much more than the budgeted \$60 million he was going to take out of the rainy day fund, what was his answer? We are going to wait and see how hard it rains. I mean, can you believe that? This Finance Minister's departments are out of control. The Budget they presented in 2001 is out of control. Just to clarify for the members opposite, we do not want you to spend more money. We want you to spend money more wisely, and I know that it is very, very difficult for most of the members opposite to figure out the difference. But, hopefully, there are a few that can educate the rest of you.

This is a government that has inherited the best economic times our province has seen since the early 1900s, probably since the opening of the Suez Canal. And what have they done? *[interjection]* Sorry, the Panama Canal, Mr. Acting Speaker. A little slip of the tongue there. They have enjoyed the best economic times this province has seen since the opening of the Panama Canal. They inherited that from the previous government. They inherited from the Filmon government a sound economic plan for the redevelopment of this province, a plan that was in place and a plan that was working. In less than two short years they have managed to bring this province, its economic partners and its finances to its knees. They have done that by a simple lack of control on their unsustainable spending habits. This is a problem that has been

created by this Government in the last two years that Manitobans are going to have to live with through the next decade.

The problems that they are creating today are problems that are not easily fixed. That is evident in this Throne Speech. They have taken money, and as fast as it has come in the door they have shovelled it out, mostly to special interest groups, mostly on the basis of polling, mostly on the basis of doling out grants to friends. That, Mr. Acting Speaker, is a disservice to the people of Manitoba. If you ask the people of Manitoba if they are better off today than they were two and a half years ago, the answer would be a resounding no.

To get there it has cost the people of Manitoba a billion dollars, a billion dollars a year. That is how much this Government has increased program spending in the last two and a half years, most of it done through sleight of hand. They talk about an open and honest government, and yet everything they do is behind closed doors. It is not based on any sound business logic or any plan, any long-term plan to move the province forward. It is based on an agenda primarily driven by polls and an agenda of fear. This Government should be embarrassed for that.

We have departments that have overspent their budgets by tens of millions of dollars, and yet there have been no reprisals. There has been no effort to cut those departments back. The Government has simply drawn on the resources made available to it through the growth in the economy in the late 1990s and has been content to sit back and say, well, hopefully the money will keep rolling in, hopefully the economy will keep growing and we will keep having money to spend and no one will ever catch up to what we have done to the people of Manitoba.

It is catching up to the New Democratic government, and it is catching up quick. The Finance Minister knows that. He may be the only one who knows it, because he sees the numbers. I hope he sees the numbers. If he is doing his job he will see the numbers and he will understand quite clearly that from a financial perspective this province is heading into a very dark period. Unfortunately, we are now feeling

the effects of the slowdown in the North American and in fact the world economy that has been brewing over the course of the last year, one that had we paid attention to it last March when we urged the Government to cut its spending, to put some controls on its program spending, we could have been better prepared for.

We could have had a situation where we had more in the rainy day fund for bad times. We could have had a situation where we had provided tax cuts to make our economy competitive so that, when the economy does turn around again and it does start to heat up, people would have looked at Manitoba and actually believed that there was an advantage to live there, to set up business there, to grow their business there, to expand their business there. But this Government has ensured that through its taxation policies and through its spending policies we are uncompetitive with every jurisdiction that we border on.

What is the grand goal of this Government? The grand goal of this Government is to hopefully be competitive with Saskatchewan. That is their vision for the future. If we can only be competitive with Saskatchewan. You do not make progress by lowering the bar. You make progress by setting the bar higher and running hard to get over it. That is a lesson that this Government needs to learn, and it needs to learn quickly.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Instead of delivering to the people of Manitoba a Throne Speech that shows no ingenuity, no entrepreneurship, no desire to do the work that is necessary to move this province ahead, this Government has delivered a Throne Speech that lacked creativity, contained nothing substantial, and clearly told Manitobans that the only place they have to go is where they have already been.

We are going to reach back into the '80s, and we are going to rely on hydro projects to be the key to our future. But do we have a business plan that says we have a customer that is going to take the power from the hydro generation that we are embarking upon constructing? The

answer is no. We have a government that says, oh, when it is ready eight or ten years from now, we are sure there will be somebody to buy it.

Well, what they need to wake up and realize is that there is somebody on the other side of the equation. There are buyers of hydro. Quite clearly we are saying to all suppliers of hydro we are going to buy on the spot market because we are betting we do not need fixed contracts, because we are betting there is going to be alternative sources of power, there is going to be cheaper power eight or ten years from now, and we are not going to have to enter into a fixed contract with Manitoba Hydro because we will have solved our issues by then and technology is moving in that direction.

Not only are we moving back into those days of the '80s when the government once again was bereft of ideas and out of money and their only solution was to dip into public sector corporations that they controlled, MPI, Hydro, MTS at the time, and raid the piggybank for more money. We see this Government going back to that very plan. We see a Minister of Hydro who increased water rental rates, who increased other fees to Manitoba Hydro and told the citizens of Manitoba, oh, well, there is lots of money there. We will only take \$50 million or \$60 million out. Well, it is going to be closer to \$100 million.

So at the same time that he suggesting we should use Manitoba Hydro to make investments and build our economy, he is stripping away their ability to make investments. He is stripping away their ability to put the hard-earned equity that arises out of the sale of electrical power back into use and he is saying to them expand your capacity but do it on debt. Go borrow a whole bunch more money and do not worry about it because after all the Government of Manitoba will guarantee that bet, and the best news is we will not have to stand up and talk about our public debt cost increasing because it is over there. It is over at Hydro.

The minister knows, his backbenchers should know, his ministers should know that it is irrelevant where the debt sits. Whether it sits at Hydro, whether it sits in a pension fund, whether it sits as general debt for the Province of

Manitoba, a debt is a debt is a debt. There is a cost to that debt and a very high cost to that debt. I am afraid that the people of Manitoba are going to have to pay for years and years.

\* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker, this Government needs to rethink its approach to Crown corporations. It needs to rethink its commitment to Manitobans because quite frankly they are going down the road of privatizing Manitoba Hydro to the benefit of a select few. Nobody argues the fact that they have entered into an arrangement with some northern bands, an arrangement that at the end of the day really does not amount to much other than the Government flowing some cash through to the band through a spread in the difference between interest rates and a rate of return that Manitoba Hydro, through the Province of Manitoba, is going to guarantee. It is just a sham. Again, they are hiding information. They are not making information public. Worst of all, they are not making the same type of investment choice available to all Manitobans.

I am sure there are many citizens in our community, many senior citizens, who rely on interest from their accumulated savings over the years to provide for their retirement income. Right now they are faced with Canada Savings Bonds coming due, probably bonds that carried rates of anywhere from 5 to 10 or maybe even 12 percent if they have held them long enough, and they are looking at reinvesting those monies into bonds that are going to pay them 2 percent, 1.8 percent. Why would this Government not give those people an opportunity to share in the investment, in the growth of this province through an investment in our Hydro corporation? Why are they excluding the citizens of Manitoba from that opportunity? That is a question I doubt will be answered. It is certainly not answered in this Throne Speech.

Unfortunately, the other questions that remain unanswered from this Throne Speech are what plans this Government might have to help the private sector in Manitoba lead us out of this economic downturn. I mean, it is obvious from the Throne Speech that this is an old-style NDP government that believes surely the only way to bring out a recession is through spending more

public dollars. Let us spend billions of dollars on hydro projects. Let us cast around for construction projects that we can fund. But that is not the solution. The solution will lie in making our province competitive with the jurisdictions that surround it, not just competitive with Saskatchewan but competitive with Alberta, competitive with Ontario, competitive with North Dakota, competitive with Minnesota, competitive with South Dakota because in this day and age those are alternatives that businesses look at when they are looking at investing and expanding at growing their businesses.

We all know that in this day of high-speed electronics and a global economy, businesses can locate anywhere. If we do not provide in this province the right economic climate for entrepreneurs and for businesspeople to invest in businesses and grow their businesses in this economy, we fail to provide any hope for future generations because we can talk all we want about education, about university systems, about Red River College. Those are all very necessary, but if at the end of the day the students graduate and there is no opportunity for careers in this province, they will simply move elsewhere. Young people today are very mobile. They go to where the opportunities exist. They do not sit around and wait for an opportunity to come to them.

\* (16:40)

So, if we want to talk about hope for our young people, if we want to talk about opportunities, we better talk about more than education. We better talk about keeping this province competitive, about making this province competitive, and we better talk about how we are going to encourage Manitobans to grow their businesses in this province. We are going to have to look at how we can grow more head offices in this province. There is nothing in this Throne Speech that any businessperson would look at and say: There is something for me. There is a reason for me to invest in Manitoba. There is a reason for me to build a business in Manitoba. There is a reason for me to employ more people in Manitoba. This Throne Speech does not speak to that issue at all. That also is a tremendous disservice to the people of Manitoba.

Mind you, that is not the only thing that has been left out of this Throne Speech. I would also say that this Throne Speech is more remarkable by what is left out of it than by what actually is on this paper. That is even true when it comes to this Government's policies. This is a government that has made a great to-do about tearing down a heritage building in the heart of our downtown and building a new entertainment complex on a site that everybody knows is way too small. Not one mention of that. They talk about development, about all the public capital spending that they are doing but not one mention of that arena in this Throne Speech. I have to ask the question why. Why is this Government so ashamed of a project that they were so proud of in the spring?

Quite frankly, there is only one reason for that. There is only one reason that this Government would be ashamed, because it is how they operate. They must have taken a poll that showed them that the public is not in support of their site location or their method of financing. So now they have a new poll, and the new poll contradicts the poll they had in the spring, so, conveniently, they have decided to leave that out. There is no room for talk of a new arena.

Quite frankly, there should not be because of the way they have dealt with this project, again in the typical style of this Government, behind closed doors, unwilling to share a business plan either with the members of this Legislature, with the people at City Hall, with any level of government other than themselves, keeping all the information to themselves, because they know this project will not stand on its own merits. So the only thing they can do is concoct some wild agreement that has a confidentiality clause in it that stipulates that no information will be made available to the public.

So they have good reason not to mention the arena in this Throne Speech. They have good reason to be ashamed of what they are doing and the way they are doing it. Like many Manitobans, I would like to see a new arena constructed in downtown Winnipeg, but I would like to see it constructed in such a fashion and in such a way that there is open public consultation, that the finance show package is clear and that everybody has a clear understanding of where it

comes from, that we are not trying to fill in holes with VLT revenue, with tax concessions that do not make sense.

We are going to have a building in the heart of downtown Winnipeg that once paid the highest property taxes of any building in downtown Winnipeg and is now going to have the same tax base as a golf course. Now, give me a break. What does that say about this Government's vision for downtown Winnipeg? The only project that they can move ahead they have to give a tax break the equivalent of a golf course in the centre of their downtown.

Find me one other city in North America that has done that. There is not any, and this Government knows it. This Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) knows it. This Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) knows it. The Minister responsible for Sport, some people have decided to call Wrecking Ball Ronnie, you know, the Minister responsible for Heritage. I hear that all the time in the community, and quite rightly so.

He is the one that is supposed to stand up for heritage. At one point the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs told this House that sometimes heritage buildings have to stay empty for 10 or 20 years before a suitable use is found. How she and the Minister responsible for Sport (Mr. Lemieux) are helping to ram this project through simply because their First Minister wants to be able to say at the end of the day that he was able to get something built that nobody else could. That is his vision for the future. That is his vision for where his Government is going. Boy, if I can just stand up and tell the people of Manitoba that I got something done that nobody else could. Would that not be wonderful? Would that not just make his career?

That minister should understand that in solving his little ego problem he is going to destroy downtown Winnipeg for decades to come, and all he has to do is look at his involvement with the North Portage shopping development and replay that story to understand how devastating one large building that takes people off the street and is empty too many hours of too many days will do to destroy the core of our city.

So while there is lots of rhetoric in this Throne Speech about downtown development, there is no action. There is no action that is going to restore the core from this Government. There is no leadership in terms of redeveloping especially retail space. There is no leadership in terms of using the assets that are quite rightly part of the public sector to redevelop downtown.

What we have is a government that is telling Manitoba Hydro not to make any noise about the fact they need a new office building. Just be quiet, be quiet, Manitoba Hydro, until we get our arena built, until the Eaton's building is down. Do not say anything about the fact you are going to build a new office space out at Kenaston and Wilkes until we solve that little problem we have with the Eaton's building, because we do not want any noise. We do not want the people of Winnipeg standing up and saying, well, hold it, why would Hydro build a brand new office tower at Kenaston and Wilkes when it could come downtown and revitalize downtown with a mixed-use building by revitalizing the Eaton's building.

The Government does not want to hear about that. The Government does not want to be involved in that. The Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Selinger) has quietly swept that under the carpet. We can expect sometime in the next year or two there will be an announcement from Manitoba Hydro, and what will the Government do then? Oh, well, we really did not know it at the time. It was only written in the *Free Press* 18 months ago. Where were they then? The minister is aware of this. What is he hiding? This is the type of vision or lack of vision that we are getting, that the people of Manitoba are getting from this Government, and that is all over this Throne Speech.

We have a government that while in opposition talked about how much they cared about the people of Manitoba, how much they cared about those less fortunate in our society. They talked about how damaging gambling was to many members of our community, and yet when they come into office, do they do anything about it? Well, yes, they expand it and they concoct deals, crazy deals. Let us say, okay, we will take these VLTs and we will put them over and it will help fill in the debt that is going to

have to be put on the arena, because we do not want to come right out in front and say we are paying for it. So we will move VLTs around here. Maybe they took the advice of Mr. Loxley, who recommended to the Minister of Finance last year that they raise the percentage of the VLT revenue that the government was going to take by 2 percent so they would have more revenue. There is a government that cares. What does the Minister of Finance do? Well, he did not take Mr. Loxley up on that idea. He said hold on, John, hold on. We have got bigger and better things for you. We can figure out how to jerry-rig the VLT revenues so that we get more of it already. We can do that on our own. We need your brilliance over here in the health field. So what does he do? He gives his old crony from Choices a contract with the Health Department.

\* (16:50)

Do we see anything in this Throne Speech relating to the desperate situation that our health care is in and our front-line medical staff are having to put up with? No. The only thing we see, the only thing we hear is the whine from the Minister of Finance as he goes to the federal government whining for more money. Please, you have to increase the transfer payments, Mr. Federal Government. We need more. We need more. It is not unusual that he would come with that approach, because that is quite frankly what this Government hears from its constituents all the time. Mr. Minister, Mrs. Minister, Ms. Minister, we need more, please give us more. So that is echoed by the Finance Minister every time he goes to Ottawa.

What he has conveniently forgotten was that in their first year of office, '99-2000, federal transfer payments increased by \$548 million. How much is enough? Mr. Speaker, \$548 million in one year obviously was not enough because, in spite of that, this Government had to draw \$185 million out of the rainy day fund.

I should correct the record, Mr. Speaker. It was not \$548 million, it was \$507 million. They overspent their budget by \$548 million. That is why they had to draw \$185 million out of the rainy day fund for the 1999-2000 fiscal year. That is not enough. Just like a billion dollars in revenue growth is not enough for this Government.

As I said, we are not saying that the Government should not take advantage of the groundwork that was laid in the 1990s in terms of growing our economy. What we are saying is that the Government needs to be prepared to make the hard decision. The Government needs to treat the money that flows in from the people of Manitoba, from the businesses of Manitoba, as a sacred trust. It is not just their money to wistfully write cheques on. They need to take that money in trust, spend it wisely, and what they do not need they need to give back to the people of Manitoba. I hope that is a lesson that this Government will learn before its mandate is up.

An honourable member indicates that he does not believe that they will ever learn that. Unfortunately, I am of the same mind. I do not think this Government has the capacity to learn that, because if they did we would have an economy that is in much better shape today than the economy we have right now. Make no mistake, we have an economy that is in a tailspin.

The minister downgraded his GDP growth rate from 2.4 percent in March; he says now it is at 1.7 percent. He will be lucky if at the end of the year it ends up at 1 percent. I think he knows that. I think he sees those numbers from his department. He is just afraid to stand up and tell people because then he will be proved to be too far off his mark, and that is too much for him to accept. How could I say in March that it was going to be 2.4% growth, and now I have to go back to the people of Manitoba and tell them it is going to be less than 1 percent. But we will see. Maybe we will have a friendly little wager resting on what the growth rate will actually prove out to be if the minister is up for it.

**An Honourable Member:** The growth rate of their spending or the growth rate of their—

**Mr. Loewen:** Well, the growth rate of their spending is another issue. That is up in the high 30 percentage, but I also want to talk about the growth rate of their appetite for taxes, and again, Mr. Speaker, this Government, through the back door, through its delinking of the tax system from the federal government, basically short-changed Manitobans on the tax breaks that were

to be passed on by the federal government in 1999. That probably cost the people of Manitoba \$200 million or \$300 million, and that is \$200 million or \$300 million that the people of Manitoba could spend much more wisely than the Government of Manitoba can spend.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to close my comments by, once again, reiterating that this is a document that tells Manitobans the only place we have to go is where we have been. This is a document that shows a lack of ingenuity, that shows no creativity, that shows no vision to the people of Manitoba for where this Government wants to go.

This is a government that through this Throne Speech has shown it is lethargic. It has shown that it is pedestrian, thoughts are in fact more pathetic than its election promises. This is a government that is afraid to speak to economic expansion. It has no idea that it has completely lost touch with the hopes and the aspirations of the people of Manitoba, particularly the young people. Those are just a few of the reasons why I will be voting for the amendment and against this Throne Speech.

I must also say that I am deeply disappointed that we are going to be quite likely the only Assembly in Canada that does not pass a unanimous motion in support of our friends to the south, and I am deeply disturbed by that. We should all be embarrassed by that. Those are friends and family members living south of the border. We should have the courage to stand up for them. Thank you.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** I want to begin my comments today on the Speech from the Throne and the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) by saying how interesting it was, how much of an honour it was to follow the speech of the preceding member and say how much I value his input into this democratic process, unlike the beginning of his speech when he referred to several of my colleagues on this side as wasting our time here in the Legislature by taking up so much time. He referred to the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), the Member for Riel (Ms. Asper) and the Member for Wellington (Mr.

Santos) as dusting off a part of our day here in the Legislature.

What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that no matter what our positions are in this House, no matter what our opinions are, no matter what we believe in, everybody in this House has a right to stand and put forward their ideas, even if they do happen to disagree, for the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen).

I want to say also I absolutely disagree with what the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) said this morning in committee. I understand and I appreciate his right to say that business community in the centre of Winnipeg is declining because of the undesirables that go to the social assistance offices set up in that area—the undesirables. I would like the Member for Fort Whyte to explain to me who these undesirables are. If there was ever a time, if there is ever a time when the attitudes of intolerance should be allowed to speak, I guess it was this morning when the Member for Fort Whyte came up with that beauty.

I want to make sure that I welcome everyone back to the Legislature. After a period of time outside of the Chamber, I think I am like most MLAs, I really do look forward to coming back here and exchanging views and putting forth plans and debating and talking about issues and then watching to make sure that actions are taken on behalf of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome you back to the Chamber and offer our support for the work that you do here in the Legislature. I want to say welcome and a thank you to the pages and the people who have signed on in the Internship Program. It is my hope that the pages who are here enjoy their time that they will spend with us.

\* (17:00)

I think you understand that this is a very historic building, and it is a very important process that we undertake here in the Manitoba Legislature. This is the building where Autopac was debated and passed in the 1970s. This is the building in the—and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) may be able to help me out—I think it

was in the 1950s where this Legislature debated the colour of butter. This is the Legislature where we talked about depressions.

**An Honourable Member:** The colour of margarine.

**Mr. Struthers:** The colour of margarine, there. Now, there is a good example of how this House can really work well. I had just misspoke myself, and I want to apologize to the pages in my little history lesson there. It was the colour of margarine that was up for debate, not the colour of butter. I appreciate the help that the Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) and the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) gave me on that. That is how things are supposed to work around here. That is the kind of co-operation that this Legislature can strive for, and indeed sometimes I think you will find that we do hit on that kind of co-operation.

So I hope that the pages and the interns have a fruitful and very instructive year. Their time here will be a good one, I hope.

I also want to welcome back the staff, all the staff in the Clerk's office, the Sergeant-at-Arms and all the people who work to—*[interjection]* Just as I talk about all the people, the bells start ringing. I am not sure what that is all about, Mr. Speaker, but in true political fashion I will keep on speaking despite that fact that there are bells ringing.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome everyone back to what I hope will be a very good session. In my opinion, we have a very good start to this session with a very good Speech from the Throne.

I want to think back a little bit to the Budget speech of last year. When we introduced our Budget back in the spring, I remember speaking and talking a little bit about the effectiveness of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) at the time. I can remember wondering about some of the statements that the Leader of the Opposition was making in his first few months as Leader of the Official Opposition. He was prone to saying things like I am not the Government, I am not the Premier. Why are you asking me these questions? Why are you asking me for positions



on issues? Why are you asking me this? I am not the guy in charge. Mr. Speaker, he was stewing. Every issue that came up, he would wring his hands. Members of his caucus would do the same. They would all wring their hands and they would wonder. They would stew about things.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that has changed a little bit. I still pick up this stewing that has been going on with the Leader of the Opposition. I still see some of that because it is still tough to get positions put forward by the Opposition on issues of the day, important issues to Manitobans, but it has changed a little bit. Now the Leader of the Opposition, over and over and over again he wants it both ways. On the one hand, he keeps telling us, oh, they are spending too much, that NDP government. They are overspending. They are out of control. The departments are all overspending. They are spending too much on health and on education and they go on and on, and justice is too much, too much money, too much money. But at the same time, that same Opposition Leader wants us to spend some more, spend some more, spend some more. They are trying to have it both ways.

It is part, I think, of this change they are trying to make in the good old Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba. They are trying to forget those bad old days of vote rigging, those bad old days of selling off Crown corporations. They are trying to get us to believe that they are a little bit different now, that they are different than what they used to be.

One of the things that they really are concerned about, Mr. Speaker, one thing they are really concerned about is their image. Image is very important to this Progressive Conservative Party and this Opposition, so they want to give the image now that they are supportive. I think they have heard from Manitobans. Manitobans have said, look, we have got some priorities, we want you to fight for them, but at the same time this same Opposition Leader over and over again wants to appeal to that Stockwell Day wing of his party, that Canadian Alliance/Reform side of his party that says do not spend, do not spend, we have to be fiscally conservative.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you know what that is called? That is sucking and blowing at the same time, and they should not ought to be doing that. How can they suck and blow at the same time on one issue after another, after another? They do it over and over and over again.

Take a good look at this so-called amendment that they brought forward, an amendment that did not even deserve 15 minutes worth of a speech from the Official Opposition Leader. He blew in here, introduced sort of an amendment, talked a little bit and left. I think the people of Manitoba deserve at least a half hour speech about this. You know, I heard the Official Opposition Leader, I read the Official Opposition Leader in the *Free Press* earlier this week. He said we were getting a free ride over here. No wonder, 10 to 15 minutes on his speech and then to put forward an amendment that says that they are mad at us because we are not ending hallway medicine. They created the mess. They created hallway medicine, and we have solved the problem to the tune of over 80 percent. We have brought that problem under control, and he has the nerve to walk in here, the absolute, unmitigated gall to walk in here and say that the people of Manitoba have lost the trust and confidence of this House.

A shortage of health care professionals—that is the bunch that chased a thousand nurses out of this province when they were in power, and now they have the nerve to come in here and say that we are not addressing the province-wide shortage of health care professionals. That is the party over there, Mr. Speaker, who reduced by 15 the seats at the University of Manitoba to train doctors to come out to the rural parts and northern parts of Manitoba. I do not know who the brilliant person across the way was in the early '90s who decided to reduce that number at the U of M, but now we are reaping the benefits of their short-sightedness. We as a government are addressing that. We came forward with a five-point plan to help in recruiting and retaining doctors in rural and northern parts of this province. We are working on that and we are fixing up the mess that they left. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) is sucking and blowing on this one too.

Then they have the nerve to wade into the whole field of education and say that the people of Manitoba have lost the trust and confidence of this House. Get serious. We two years in a row have put record levels of funding into education, record levels, not the minus two, minus two, minus two, oh, election year, we will freeze, minus two, minus two that Manitobans and students and parents and educators and trustees got used to when the Opposition was in power. We are doing things in education that are making a difference for kids in the classroom, and that is all we can get from the Official Opposition Leader.

Oh, here is a real winner, the Government's failure to bring Manitoba Hydro before the Public Utilities Board. *[interjection]* Exactly. The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) reminds me at least we have got Hydro still. Given this previous government's record, given their attitude towards Crown corporations as seen in the selling of Manitoba Telephone System, we are lucky we have still got a Manitoba Hydro to talk about. If it was up to them, Hydro would be sold off to their friends and we would not have to go to the Public Utilities Board at all for any kind of equalization rates because there would not be a Manitoba Hydro.

They are a little bit nervous about this, Mr. Speaker. They are very nervous about this because they know that we on this side of the House have done something really good, really tangible and really helpful for rural Manitobans in Morris, in Killarney, in Neepawa, all across this province, throughout the north, in Gimli. They know that we have done something really good for their constituents, even in Rorketon, and they on the other side of this House have the nerve to come in here and say we should go to a public utilities board. Have a little guts. Take some action. We did. Just a little advice for the guys across the way, a little bit of advice, jump onto a good thing when you see it. When you see something really good like us equalizing hydro rates and treating rural Manitobans and northern Manitobans on the same par as the folks in Winnipeg, jump on board that wagon with us. There is enough room. Come on.

\* (17:10)

Then clauses (b) and (e) of this so-called amendment talk about the slowing economy and how we have to add some money in so that we can stimulate the economy and stimulate the growth, stimulate more jobs, asking for money, money, money. Well, it does not add up with what either the Official Opposition Leader said here earlier today or what the Member for Fort Whyte said. They think they can suck and blow on this one too. Let us not spend, but let us stimulate the economy with money. How do you do that? They cannot have it both ways. They should stop sucking and blowing at the same time, Mr. Speaker.

Here is an interesting one. The Government's failure to arrive at a national farm safety net. This is a group of people, and the Opposition Leader maybe should go back into the classroom, I would suggest Grade 9 civics, where they teach the difference between a national and a provincial and a municipal government. They are asking us as the Manitoba Legislature to enact a national farm safety net program. They did not think this out very well at all. We cannot come up with a safety net program for Prince Edward Island or for B.C. We can do one for Manitoba, and we have sure been attempting to get that accomplished. We have got zero help from the member from Emerson and his colleagues across the way, and we are going to continue. We are going to work hard until we do convince that federal government to sit down and work out a national safety program that is going to be meaningful for our farmers in this province.

So I would submit that this amendment moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition is not worth the paper that it is printed on. I will vote against that amendment. What I will vote for is our Speech from the Throne because it is progressive. *[interjection]* It is visionary. Good word. It is proactive.

I cannot help but think, though, of the response still of the members opposite. I do not know how many people watch those nature programs that come on on a Sunday afternoon sometimes, the discovery channels. Quite often you see those pictures of little birds. They are up in the nest, up in the top of a tree, way up above the crocodiles that the Deputy Premier is

interested in, up in the nest, and they have little birds. These little birds are looking and waiting for the parent to come flying in. Those little birds have all got their beaks pointing straight up to the sky. They are wide open, and they are screeching. They are squabbling with each other, and they are yapping for food. When the parent bird comes along, they get all the more excited and more yapping, and they are all stretching out to get as much as they can.

That is what I think of when I look over at the Opposition benches these days. On the one hand, they are saying do not spend, got to be fiscally conservative, got to balance budgets, got to do this. At the same time, there they all are lining up for all the money that they can get their hands on, all the spending they can get their hands on.

Let us just take one example. When it comes to farming, the Leader of the Official Opposition has said to us, do not spend money, but at the same time he says: Well, how about \$92 million? How about \$92 million for farmers? That is what we did for farmers. Is the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) saying we should not have gotten \$92 million for Manitoba farmers? Is he saying we should give the money back? Tough fiscal times. Let us be conservative about this. He is sucking and blowing at the same time again.

Maybe we should not have gotten together and put \$121 million on the table for the farm safety net that we doubled in 2000 and 2001. Maybe the Official Opposition Leader thinks we should say no to \$16 million in the Prairie Grain Roads Program. Maybe the Leader of the Official Opposition says no to \$6 million for a nutraceutical centre for agricultural products. He cannot have it both ways. You cannot jump up and down and try to get the right-wing, Conservative fiscal vote on the one hand and at the same time say spend, spend, spend. That is what they are trying to do, sucking and blowing at the same time.

One of the more interesting areas which the Leader of the Official Opposition has talked about is education. This Government is taking very seriously its commitment to take money from administration and put it into classrooms. I

guess what the Official Opposition is doing is they are choosing that we should put money into a brick-and-mortar building called a division office up in our area instead of putting it into the classrooms of schools like Ethelbert and Winnipegosis. That is an interesting—*[interjection]* The member opposite says they are going to close. Why does he not go and tell the people in Ethelbert that he is in favour of closing their schools? No, he will not. He will get the former Tory candidate maybe to go around town saying that but he will not do that. It is not going to happen. There is no guarantee out there that any school, whether you amalgamate or not, whether it is rural or north or city, there are no guarantees of anything except that when we do this in our area, when we amalgamate the schools, I will guarantee you that there will not be money going into administration like there used to be. That money can be channelled into classrooms now. Is that what people opposite are in favour of? We had the backbone to do this, and they did not.

We provided an education property tax credit. We increased the tax credit. It cost \$53 million to do that. Are the members opposite saying we should not have done that? Are they worried about the fiscal side of this to the extent that we should not be spending that money for Manitobans on a tax credit? The University of Manitoba infrastructure fund, we put \$50 million in. Are they saying no to that too? Are they saying no to the \$5 million we put into Brandon University and the \$15 million that we put into the University of Winnipeg? Are you saying no to that? You cannot have it both ways. Thirty million dollars for the Red River College downtown campus.

Instead of talking about the undesirables that are going to social allowance offices like the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) did this morning, we should be talking about real action that is going to help the downtown area. That is what we have done, \$18 million over two years for a 10% tuition reduction at universities. Would the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) prefer we did not do that? Bursaries, \$6 million; lighthouses, up to 21 sites that we are funding this year to provide some hope for kids in this province. Are they saying we should not do that either?

I have not even gotten to the health section of this because, you know, the Official Opposition really has no room to manoeuvre on anything having to do with health care after they messed up the health care system when they were in power. But you know, the members across the way, they were so fiscally irresponsible that they were taking money and giving it to an American consultant that they brought up.

**An Honourable Member:** What was her name?

\* (17:20)

**Mr. Struthers:** I think her name was Connie Curran, and they gave that money to her. Were they worried then? Were they saying the same things as I hear the Official Opposition Leader saying now? They were not sucking and blowing at the same time then. They were just spending.

We are taking some very positive steps in the area of training: 400 spots for doctors, nurses, ultrasound technicians, x-ray techs, occupational and physiotherapists. We have moved on that. We have moved in the area of new equipment; CT scanners replacing equipment that is old. These are at Victoria Hospital and Seven Oaks Hospital; an MRI at the Health Sciences Centre. The price tag is \$73 million.

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

The people across the floor, are they telling us we should not spend money on these things? That is what they are saying today in Question Period. That is exactly what they said. We are spending too much. It is out of control. We have heard it all before. It is that mantra that the fiscally conservative across the way think that they need to jump on. But they cannot have it both ways. They cannot get after us for spending too much and then tell us to spend more.

We have purchased a new linear accelerator to fight cancer at CancerCare Manitoba, \$4 million, a new cervical cancer-screening program. Are you saying no to that too?

Here is a good one. We have turned over the keys in many of the ridings of Opposition

members to brand new, state-of-the-art ambulances, 80 that we have purchased, Mr. Acting Speaker, 70 of them to rural parts of this province, to rural and northern areas. Are they saying that that was a mistake? Are they saying that we should not have done that? Is the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) not at least a little appreciative of the help that we have given his health services in his part of the world? Does he say we should not have gone ahead and provided that kind of a service to rural Manitoba? That is what they are telling us.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** I would like to thank the Government for the ambulances that they sent to rural Manitoba and just point out to the member opposite that with their new policy of highway medicine, I am sure they will get plenty of use.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** That was a dispute over the facts, not a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Struthers:** The point of order itself was very instructive, and I hope the tone of voice and I hope the silliness of the statement, I hope that was not lost on people. I hope that was not lost on people, and I really hope that really shines through in Hansard when people do take a look at it, because, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is an initiative that we undertook that really is popular, really is needed and really was not done by him when he was the legislative assistant to the Minister of Health back in the bad old days of the Filmon reign in this province.

For members opposite to belittle that kind of an initiative that is so important for rural and northern Manitobans especially, this is not becoming of a member of this Legislature.

Again, all through the area of health care the members opposite led by the Official Opposition Leader suck and blow at the same time on these issues over and over and over again. Give us more money; do not spend money. Let us go after the government because they spend too much, but do not forget my backyard. Do not forget about my area. Let us keep the money

coming for our area. Let us keep the money coming for our projects that we want. You cannot have it both ways.

How about drainage? The Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) made some very good points at one point back in the '90s when he criticized his own government for letting drains overgrow in this province. I am told they are finding poplar trees growing in some of these drains that date back to the early '90s. They are thick trees in the middle. We wonder why drains were not working very well. We wonder why the farmers could not drain their lands very well. Well, because the previous government, in this case I cannot say they were sucking and blowing because they just went ahead and cut, and they cut people within the departments, within the Government whose job it was to maintain those drains and to clean those drains.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** The Member for Emerson, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I would suggest to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that you caution the honourable Member for Dauphin that he put correct information on the record. I refer to the comment he made about poplar trees dating back to the early '90s. I would suggest to him, if he checked with the department of natural resources, that he would actually find that these poplar trees dated back to the Schreyer era.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** That is no point of order. It is a dispute of the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Struthers:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. You would almost think that the member from Emerson was out there cutting down these poplar trees and counting the rings to see exactly what year it came from. I can assure you that did not happen because I know that there was no cutting of trees in these drains for the whole period of time that this previous government was in. That is the problem. That is exactly the problem.

Is the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) telling us in this House—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** The Member for Emerson, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that if he wants to come with me to the Gardenton Floodway, I will indicate and show him the clean-out that was done on the Schreyer poplars that grew in the Gardenton Floodway. They were up to a thickness of two feet of which the NDP had never dared cut or wanted to cut. I would suggest to him that the deer population has in fact increased because they can find their way out of the floodway now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Schellenberg):** It is a dispute of the facts, not a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Struthers:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. I can safely say that anyone from this Government will go to that drain with the member from Emerson. The difference between our visit and theirs is that we will go there with some money in order to do the job, unlike his government that ignored the problem all through the 1990s. We have put on the table \$1 million in our last Budget, \$1 million to do the job that his government would not do. Now, if he was to follow the wisdom of the Leader of the Official Opposition, we would not put that \$1 million forward. We would not spend any money because, as the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) said, there is no money. That was his quote. There is no money, he says. He still wants to build an underpass somewhere, but he says there is no money. They cannot suck and blow at the same time.

I want to spend a few minutes to just outline some of the better qualities that I thought were in this Throne Speech that was read here on Tuesday. This Throne Speech that we heard earlier this week, I think, builds on the first two throne speeches, builds on two years of success. It builds on two years of hard work, and whether the folks across the way want to admit it or not, it does build on two years of accomplishment, two years of getting things done.

My constituents in Dauphin-Roblin are much like constituents across this province, and

since September 11, they have been concerned with the security of themselves and their families and also the security of our communities. It is my opinion that the Speech from the Throne dealt in a very effective way with the concerns that my constituents have about security. It is a document that provided an assurance that this Government, No. 1, was not going to use it as a way to play politics in this House, but that we were going to take an all-party approach. Indeed, we have invited members from across the way and in the other two parties present in this Legislature to take part in meetings, to take part in providing input towards a strategy in this province.

\* (17:30)

We had a book of condolences that sat here in the rotunda of the Legislature available for people to sign so that we can send to the victims, to the United States of America, so that we could get across to them in no uncertain terms that we are not a country that favours terrorism, that we are a country which opposes all terrorism.

Terrorism is not something new. It was not invented on September 11. It is something that other parts of the world have had to deal with for a lot of years. It is right in our backyard. I understand that since September 11, and we as a provincial government are continuing and will continue to address that.

My hope is that the members opposite will walk with us. My hope is that we can present a united and strong message to the rest of the world, not something that just appears magically here in the Legislature for political purposes but something that we work on together and put forth as our position.

Part of the tragedy, and unfortunately part of the outcome of the bombings on September 11, was the era of terrorism that it has left and the effect that has had on people's psyche, on peoples' outlook, on our economy. Much of the economy of Canada and the world is based on how we view the goings on around the world. If you tune into the news and you spend a big portion of that newscast looking over the bombings that are happening in Afghanistan and then looking over the threats of anthrax, and then

another part of the program being talked to about the negative effects that that has had on the North American and in particular the Canadian economy, it cannot help but have a depressing outcome, cannot help but depress a person when you see that.

That affects our economy. That is something we have to be aware of. I am very proud to be part of a government who, since 1999, since the election, the first two years of our mandate, have put ourselves in a strong position to withstand the economy, the downturn in the economy, but it is going to be tough. It is going to offer special challenges that we all need to deal with in this House as legislators.

The Throne Speech, again, Mr. Acting Speaker, dealt with an area that I think provides a lot of hope mostly to young people but also to those of us who have been out of school for awhile and that is education. We have a record that I am very proud of from this side of the House over the last couple of years. I am proud of the support that we have been able to show to our public schools and to our post-secondary institutions. I am very proud of the support that we have been able to garner for universities and for community colleges.

It is a focus that should have happened many years ago, but we are making it happen now. I am very proud to see that that was part of this Throne Speech and I think is reassuring to Manitobans who know that we have been doing a good job in the field of education since we have come into government.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

This is a Throne Speech that in a general way dealt with the issues concerning our health care in this province. It is a Throne Speech I think that reaffirmed that confidence that Manitobans have that we can indeed handle the health care situation in Manitoba. They know that every day of the week, every day of the month, every day that we have been here, we have taken on the attitude that we are going to roll up our sleeves and come in and work hard on those health care issues that are so important to Manitobans. The Speech from the Throne, I think, backed that up.

I also want to say that I was very pleased that this Government, through its Speech from the Throne, recognized rural Manitoba. I know the member representing the urban seat of River East thinks it is finally, but I think what she ought to do is maybe join the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) and I when he and I go out checking drains, as he has promised, and come with us and see what is actually happening out in rural Manitoba. You see, the Official Opposition Leader and his party think that the answer to rural development is to create another department with the minister and a deputy minister and, oh, a few executive directors, and let us put some more bureaucrats here and there.

That is not what rural Manitobans want. I think even the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) understands that. What rural Manitobans want is to be not second-class citizens. They do not want to be treated differently from our friends in the urban parts of Manitoba. They do not want to be left out. We do not want to be left out. We want to have good health care. We want to have good schools. We want to have clean and safe drinking water. Just like everybody else, we want a good road system so that we can get around. We want our hydro rates to be same as the city of Winnipeg, and we have done that. We want to live in secure communities, and for the first time we have funded the RCMP to a level in which they can offer a full complement to rural Manitoba. We do not want to be treated differently and hived off. We do not want more bureaucrats from the previous Conservative government. We want a real strategy, a real economic strategy that fits into the whole system in Manitoba.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to put a few words into the text of Hansard. I hope that I have covered off the feelings of my constituents. I recommend that everyone, come voting day, stands in favour of this Throne Speech because it is a good one. Thank you.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and speak to the amendment that was put forward on the Throne Speech by my leader and first of all say to staff of this Assembly welcome back and let us hope we have a productive and meaningful

session and that you have the opportunity to do your jobs because we co-operate and work with you.

I do want to welcome the pages that have been appointed this session to the Legislature and make note that three of those pages are from River East School Division, a division that I represent in the Manitoba Legislature. But I do want to say to all of the pages I hope your time here is enjoyable and that you learn some valuable things as a result of your experience here. To the six interns that have been chosen to work with the Government and Opposition caucuses this session, I say welcome. We have had the opportunity to see the good work already that the three interns that have been assigned to our caucus have achieved. I know that they will grow and learn from the experience that they have in the next year.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to indicate that at the outset I was quite disappointed yesterday that we did not have the opportunity through a resolution that my leader presented in the House to send a strong message, a united message, a resolution that would have boded well for the province of Manitoba, for Manitobans that do depend on us as leaders to speak on their behalf as a result of the terrible activities that took place on September 11. I believe that the House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) may have manipulated things to his advantage when the resolution was introduced and had it referred to a period after Question Period and a MUPI, which did not allow the resolution to be voted on or passed. That is unfortunate, because I believe that manipulation of the process showed the clear lack of desire on behalf of this Government to ensure that all legislators' voices were heard with the unanimous resolution that would put us on record as supporting our country and the United States and our allies.

You know, I listened very intently after the debate on the resolution was finished yesterday to the mover of the Throne Speech. The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) had the opportunity to put some of his thoughts on the record. I do not believe that he did speak on the resolution, but I think he spoke somewhat to the resolution when he moved the Throne Speech. I listened intently to the comments that he made. I would

just like to quote from what he said, because I believe it is very important to indicate to this House that we all feel for the Member for Flin Flon, who did live for three years under Nazi occupation in occupied Europe during the Second World War and what a devastating experience it was for him as a child and that he would not want to see any other child have to witness or experience that. I do not think any of us would want to see that.

But he did go on to say that so for me to ever in any way say war is a correct course of action would be extremely difficult. I can understand that, but I do also want to say that because of that war and because of the men and women that fought on his behalf as a person that lived under an oppressive regime, he now has the opportunity to sit in a democratically elected Legislature in a free country and express his point of view and his feelings.

Mr. Speaker, had not Canada and their allies at the time of the Second World War taken the strong action that they did, we might, right throughout this world, be living under the kinds of oppressive regimes that the Nazi occupation presented during the Second World War.

So, Mr. Speaker, no, I do not think any of us want war, but there comes the point in time that we have to look at defending our democracy and our freedom. I think September 11 spoke loudly and clearly to those of us that maybe thought we could take for granted the peace that we experienced in the North American continent for many years since the last world war.

\* (17:40)

I had hoped too that I would never have to experience a war in my lifetime or that my children or grandchildren would never have to experience war, but there does come a point in time where we have to stand up for what we believe in and when we look to the kind of regime that the Taliban has imposed upon Afghanistan it is not something that I can condone or I do not think any member of this Legislature can condone.

By talking about the Taliban, I am not talking about any ethnic, anyone of any specific

ethnic origin, I am talking about a madman just like under the Nazi regime of Adolph Hitler that has oppressed people in a country because of his beliefs. We can not condone that kind of activity, and we cannot let him impose that kind of oppression upon us in a free and a democratic society. I am pleased that I can stand in this Legislature as a woman in my country and be equal to men across this country and speak my mind. I feel very much for the women under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that would not be allowed to participate in many, many activities that are kept oppressed. I do not believe that any of us would want to see that happen in our country.

When we see in a time of peace the kind of activity and the kind of murder of innocent women and men and children as a result of the bombing in the United States on September 11, Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone can sit back and say that we should allow that to continue and that we should not take action to stop that form of terrorism. So I guess I can understand why there was some sensitivity on the part of the Government to pass a resolution like the resolution that was presented in the Legislature yesterday. I am saddened by that, because I believe very strongly that we need to go to every end possible to ensure we have the liberty and the peace and the opportunity to live in a democratic society.

So that is one of the first points I wanted to make. I believe it was important that we all had the opportunity to show that kind of unanimity and support for our country and for the United States. It is a disappointment to me that that did not occur.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to the Throne Speech and indicating at the outset, of course, that I will not be supporting the Throne Speech. I will be supporting my leader's motion that was put forward with just cause. We have seen over the last two years a government that I know some of my colleagues have said, and I will echo their words, is tired, lacks initiative, lacks vision, lacks foresight and a plan for what needs to happen to keep Manitoba competitive.

I listened intently to the member from Dauphin that spoke, I think it is Dauphin-Roblin



that now is the name of the constituency that he represents—and was somewhat dismayed with the tone and the language that he used. I think that it brings, sort of, the debate in the Legislature to a new low when I hear the kind of language, like "suck" and "blow," that was used several times. I think it is demeaning. I think it is language that does not show respect, and I hate to see the debate in the Legislature stoop to that kind of language and name-calling.

It reminds me of last session, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) talked about our policies—that they were policies that were akin to beating women with sticks. It is that kind of language that does not do a service to the offices that we hold and to our responsibility to represent our constituents and speak on behalf of those constituents in the Legislature. So I just wanted to put those few comments on the record. I do not believe that there is any government that comes into government with the intentions of harming or doing damage to the province that they were elected to represent. We know that every government strives to do to the best to their ability the things that they believe are right.

Governments do make choices and do make decisions. The role of Opposition is to be critical of the decisions, but the role of Opposition is not just to be critical. There are times when constituents and others in the community have talked to me and have said: It seems like you are always opposed to everything that government does. Mr. Speaker, I talk to those constituents and say: It may appear that we are always opposed because very much of what is covered in the media from this Legislature is Question Period, and it is set up to be an adversarial type of process.

Mr. Speaker, what many people do not see is the kind of activity that goes on on a day-to-day basis in this Legislature where bills are introduced, bills are debated, bills are passed; and more bills are passed with unanimity than are opposed by the Opposition. Obviously, there are controversial pieces of legislation where, philosophically, we have some difficulty, as opposing parties, on what that legislation includes, and those seem to be the things that, obviously, are reported in the news media. There

is a lot of co-operative activity that takes place in this Legislature, and again I will say that so very much of the direction that a government takes is all about choices.

We see some of the choices that this Government has taken. We see choices that have been made on spending that we would not agree with. I know the Government likes to stand up and say, well, you do not agree. Yes, the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) was saying we did not agree with expenditures on ambulances and we did not agree with other expenditures. There would be expenditures, obviously, that government undertook that we would agree with as an opposition, but there are also choices that this Government has made that we do not agree with.

Mr. Speaker, one of the choices that we do not agree with was the buying of the frozen food services by this Government. Now, they complained when they were in opposition about frozen food in our hospitals. But, what did they do when they became Government? They spent close to \$50 million to buy the frozen food services with taxpayers' money. They liked it so much they bought it. That is something that we would have opposed. That \$50 million could have gone a long way to put money into the classrooms for the students in the province of Manitoba.

What else did they do on health care? The Member for Dauphin-Roblin brags about all the wonderful things they have done in health care. They have not lived up—

**An Honourable Member:** Where?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Where? They have not lived up to any of the promises that they made during the election campaign. They failed to end hallway medicine. They failed to reduce waiting lists. He brags about the comment in the Throne Speech that says, by amalgamating the regional health authorities in Winnipeg, they save money. Well, Mr. Speaker, all you have to do is look at the books and look at the way the Minister of Health has been fidgeting in his seat to know that his answers are smoke and mirrors, that it has cost more to amalgamate in administrative

costs the two health authorities in Winnipeg, not less like he said and like he promised.

\* (17:50)

We know that he is very sensitive to the questioning by the member from Charleswood because, if he was not, he would not have had to get one of his backbenchers to stand up today and give him a forum to try to fudge the numbers one more time. So we can tell that he is very sensitive and that he has got something to hide. We just want to serve notice today that we are not going to let him hide behind the rhetoric that he is hiding behind right now. We are going to be asking him the tough questions, and we are going to be asking him to tell the truth and to put the right information on the record. We know that he has not done that, and we will be pressuring him to make sure that he tells the truth.

I listened with interest again to the member from Dauphin-Roblin talk about all the wonderful things that they have done in education. Yes, there have been some positive steps forward on education, but there have been a lot of negative too. I think, when you look at the announcement that was just made last week by the Minister of Education about forced amalgamations of school divisions, and the rhetoric again that talks about saving \$10 million in administrative costs that will be able to go into the classrooms, when we ask the questions of the Minister of Education, he cannot tell us where the \$10 million is going to come from. It seems that all they do is pull numbers out of a hat. His bureaucracy cannot indicate where the money will be saved. By all indications, from what we have seen from the amalgamation of the health authorities and the increase in cost, I believe that what we are going to see in the Department of Education is a nightmare because of the way this issue has been handled, and we are going to see increased education taxes, not decreases.

One of my questions for the Minister of Education would be this: As a result of the announcement that he made the other day, will in fact the taxpayers in the province of Manitoba see their education taxes reduced next year? Because that is what he is promising them. Will

they see their education taxes reduced two years from now as a result of his amalgamation announcement? He cannot give us the details. He has no financial analysis done. He has picked a number out of the air that sounds good and says he is going to save money.

We know that his own deputy minister just a few years ago was very critical of amalgamation of school divisions. We know that the Deputy Premier was very outspoken about forced amalgamations of school divisions. She is quoted. She had several reports that she tabled to back up her statement that said that there was no merit to amalgamation of school boards.

It is interesting, when they are now in government and not in Opposition, that all of a sudden the tables turn and they do not have to be accountable for the statements that they made in Opposition. I believe the record will show and the budget will show in years to come that it was a decision. Nobody has said that amalgamation might not be a good idea if handled in the proper way. But my sense would be that the whole issue of funding of education and the funding formula is something that needed to be looked at and announced in conjunction with amalgamation. I just believe that the way this issue has been handled will come back to haunt this Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) and this Premier (Mr. Doer).

Mr. Speaker, there was not much mention in the Throne Speech about a generation of economic activity. We know that we are into an economic downturn. We have heard members opposite even call it a recession back long before September 11. It is clear that this Government, with the billion dollars that it has found since it came to government, has spent every penny without any consideration for saving any of those dollars for difficult economic times.

I know that there is going to be very difficult choices and decisions that are going to have to be made. It will be interesting to watch this Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) when he brings down his Budget in the spring, because we know from being in government that many of the new programming that they announced last year was programming that started part way through the year. So the dollars that were

included in last year's Budget might have only been for half-year funding. Mr. Speaker, we know that they are already going to have to find the money to fund those programs for a full year in next year's Budget.

On top of that, all of the special interest groups that are knocking on members opposite's doors wanting to ensure that they are paid back for supporting this Government will be wanting more. We have not even talked yet about the health care system and the demands that are going to be placed on the Treasury of this Government as a result of all the contract negotiations that are coming up and all of the requests, and very legitimate requests, that are going to be there for increases in funding to keep our health care workers competitive to those across the country, so we will not see an even greater exodus.

We hear on a day-to-day basis the hardships that our health care workers are experiencing in

our health care system when the nursing shortage has doubled in the two years that this Government has been in power. We know for a fact that nurses are going to be requesting, and legitimately so, significant increases in order to keep them in the profession and to ensure that our health care system continues to provide the service to meet the needs of those who need health care in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Government is going to have some very difficult times and some very difficult choices, and they have not had to make difficult decisions—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) will have 17 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Friday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 15, 2001

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