



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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WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 21, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Domestic Violence

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

I rise today to speak about an issue that affects us all, domestic violence. As November is Domestic Violence Prevention Month, it is important to raise public awareness and essential to recognize that incidents of domestic violence against women happen every day. No one is immune from the potentially devastating effects of this abuse. It crosses all age groups and all social, cultural and geographic boundaries. Having said that, we know that women are most often the victims.

This Government has worked hard to reduce domestic violence by providing an increase in those supports and services which help abused women leave violent relationships and seek protection from abusers and by conducting public awareness campaigns. As well, on November 6, the Government announced an additional \$1.1 million in funding to support a multifaceted initiative to prevent domestic violence, including a men's resource centre.

As Minister responsible for the Status of Women, today I am pleased to table a public opinion survey on domestic violence issues in Manitoba. The survey highlights the fact that we have made progress. Four out of five Manitobans surveyed said they were concerned about this issue, with a full 50 percent expressing strong concern. A decade or so ago, many people viewed domestic violence as a private family matter. The survey shows that public awareness levels are high and that the

Government's public awareness campaigns are succeeding.

I note that when individuals were asked what they thought to be the causes of domestic violence, substance abuse and stress greatly outranked all other views. Stress includes financial and job-related stress, in addition to general stress. Almost one half or 46 percent volunteered alcohol abuse as a main cause, and drugs were considered a cause by more than 20 percent.

With respect to solutions, nearly one third indicated public education, while 22 percent mentioned stricter laws and penalties. This is useful information as it helps government to direct public information campaigns toward a more complete understanding of domestic violence dynamics. The survey provides baseline data against which we can compare our progress in follow-up surveys.

* (13:35)

In summary, Mr. Speaker, violence against women touches far too many lives, and we must remain strong and vigilant in our efforts to end these crimes.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I want to thank the minister for her statement today and indicate that all too often we see issues of domestic violence in our province. I think governments, over a long period of time, have worked very diligently to try to put in place the resources and the programs that would deal with the issues of domestic violence. I would like to note that the domestic violence campaign that is ongoing—I commend the Government for continuing the campaign that was launched when I was the Minister of Family Services under the previous administration. I believe that it does need to continue, and we need to be ever vigilant. It is good to have survey results so that we can move forward and try to ensure that we implement the proper programs for the proper reasons.

I do note with some interest that this is the Government that did introduce wide-open alcohol sales and consumption on Sundays. We know that, according to the survey, I believe over 40 percent, 46 percent of individuals that were surveyed do relate domestic violence to alcohol consumption.

I would also like to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Manitoba Medical Association just recently in their last publication talked about: Northern MDs decry Sunday alcohol sales. They indicate that there are very many social consequences as a result of alcohol consumption, and they are lobbying very strongly in the Flin Flon area, the doctors up there, to try to force the municipality not to allow Sunday alcohol sales and consumption in public places.

It is interesting to note that doctors obviously were not consulted before this Government moved ahead with their Sunday alcohol legislation. I would hope they would take to heart some of the concerns that our physicians, the specialists in this area, are putting forward and maybe reconsider the direction they have taken, because certainly domestic violence is highlighted as one of the issues that they are very concerned about, and they do not believe that the changes that this Government has made are going to have a positive impact. They believe it will have a negative impact.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask to speak on the minister's comment.

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

Mr. Gerrard: It is important that we are discussing domestic violence today. This is quite an important subject for Manitobans. It is an area that we should work to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Manitoba.

That being said, I think it is quite significant that we should go beyond public opinion surveys and need for good social policy, much more funding of social sciences research conducted through qualified people at universities, for example, in Manitoba, and that this research might probe questions like has the incidence of domestic violence gone up since the NDP have

changed the laws and made liquor more available on Sundays?

I think we need, as the minister has pointed out, a better understanding of the reasons for domestic violence and those things which we can do to reduce domestic violence. We have already heard discussion of the role of alcohol, but there are clearly other factors, and what can be done in terms of reduction of stress and reduction of alcohol abuse. These are very important subjects.

* (13:40)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I am pleased to rise today to table a statement as to fidelity bonds, pursuant to section 20 of The Public Officers Act, and Manitoba Hydro's Quarterly Report for the Six Months Ended September 30, 2001.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 7—The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), that leave be given to introduce Bill 7, The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, and that the same be now received and read the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is that on behalf of the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen)?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Ms. Wowchuk: On behalf of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, I am pleased to introduce Bill 7, The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act. This bill proposes changes to the non-resident electoral provision. Specifically, this bill sets the maximum number of

non-resident owners of a parcel of land who may vote at a municipal election to two persons.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Resignation Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on November 15, in this Legislative Assembly, the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) asked the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), and I quote: "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?" The Minister of Education rose in his seat and replied: "Yes, Mr. Speaker."

We have learned that the Minister of Education has forced the school division to falsify their enrolment numbers, that they have forced them to hide payment. Therefore, the Minister of Education has misled this Chamber and all Manitobans. Yesterday, as he had been for several days, the minister repeatedly referred to the judgment of the Provincial Auditor and indicated in this House that he accepted the Auditor's judgments. Today, we learn from the Provincial Auditor that he believes the conduct of the minister and the deputy minister in their transactions with the Agassiz School Division should be reviewed by the Justice Department for criminal fraud.

Will the Premier do the right thing and ask for the resignation of the Minister of Education?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The Minister of Education has indicated to the public some time ago that the audit referred to as the investigation of the adult learning centre, called the program in the Morris-Macdonald School Division No. 19, would be referred to the Justice Department, and that was conducted and conveyed on October 4.

* (13:45)

Agassiz School Division Adult Learning Centre—Funding

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Premier refuses to do the right thing by asking for the resignation of the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell). Why? Is it because the Premier and the Treasury Board were involved?

So my question is very simple. My question is to the Premier. I want to know when he first knew about the fraudulent transaction with the Agassiz School Division.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if there is no fraud involved in the Agassiz School Division, will the Leader of the Opposition resign?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members, when the Speaker rises, all members should be in their seats and the Speaker should be heard in silence. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier, and it is very simple: When did the Premier first learn about the fraudulent transaction with the Agassiz School Division, or is he part of some sort of cover-up?

Mr. Doer: There is only one cover-up in the Legislature that I am aware of. Let me table a memo in 1998, from the Director of Administrative Services in the Department of Education. You will recall that we asked for Lionel Orlikow's Upward Bound Program to be subject to a review and an audit. We are now at the end of the first term, and I was wondering if the review and audit will proceed. My reason for asking is that I am hearing from a source whom I have no reason to doubt that the desired administrative and programmatic connections between Upward Bound and school divisions are non-existent.

In 1998, who cancelled the audit for the people of Manitoba?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are very early into Question Period and we still have a long way to go. The decorum is already getting a little out of hand for the viewing public and the guests in the gallery. I would ask a little co-operation on the decorum in the House. Every member will have an opportunity to ask questions if they wish, so I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Adult Learning Centres—Funding Treasury Board Submissions

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Yesterday the Minister of Finance said that the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) was responsible for an \$868-million budget. On May 10, the Minister of Education put out a press release announcing \$14 million of funding for 43 adult learning centres. Did the Minister of Education follow the long-established practice of coming to Treasury Board with a detailed Treasury Board submission signed by the minister or his deputy, or were these details conveyed to Treasury Board in another manner?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I would like to table a memorandum in the Legislature that I received from the Secretary to Treasury Board yesterday and have it distributed, please.

The memorandum indicates the practice used in delegating authority with respect to these grants is a practice which has been in effect for several budget years, and that was the practice followed in the year in question. Mr. Speaker, that indicates the delegation is noted with the Estimates decisions for the year 2000-2001 Treasury Board authorized grant payments totalling \$615,142,200 for school operating grants to be distributed to school divisions on the basis of the funding formula.

Clearly the practice that was followed was the practice which has been in place for several years in Treasury Board.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Is the minister telling this House that the Finance Department flowed this money to the adult learning centres with no documentation, with no scrutiny by Treasury

Board staff and by the Deputy Minister responsible for Finance?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the practice that was followed was the long-established process that was in place, as indicated by this memorandum from the secretary to Treasury Board, and the process reviewed the grants to school divisions with respect to adult learning programs and then delegated that authority to the department, as has been the long-standing practice.

Agassiz School Division Funding—Minister's Awareness

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): I would ask the Minister of Finance: When did he first become aware of the scheme to underhandedly flow half a million dollars to Agassiz School Division in this deceptive way? When did the Finance Minister first know about this?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would remind members opposite that on a radio transcript yesterday the former Minister of Finance confirmed to the public of Manitoba that red flags had gone up in 1998 and that he was aware of overspending in the writ period in 1999. When he had a choice to inform people in his—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would indicate to the Premier that he is wrong. I did not say that there were any red flags in 1998. I indicated that these issues were coming forward in the fall of 1999.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. A point of order is a very serious matter and I would ask the co-operation of all members of the House.

The honourable First Minister (Mr. Doer), were you rising on the same point of order?

On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Minnedosa, he does not

have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, have you concluded your comments?

Mr. Doer: Thank you very much. I will provide the transcript for the member opposite.

The issue was raised, and the matter was known to members opposite. We have memos talking and asking, begging the former government to have an audit. At least this minister and this administration had the ability and the fortitude to have the Provincial Auditor look at the actual lack of any management in the adult education branch.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where, in 1999, without any reference to the first quarter statement put out by the former Minister of Finance, the expenditures in the adult education line were \$17 million for a \$6-million appropriation. That is 300 percent over budget. They should start looking at the mirror.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will ask once again for the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very difficult to hear the questioning, and it is very difficult to hear the answers. I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. It is not who shouts the loudest that is going to be heard. It is the person who has the mike. So I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

*(13:55)

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Delegation of Authority

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House the Minister of Finance stated that the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) had the delegated authority to request that the Department of Finance cut a cheque to the Agassiz School Division based on a request that contained falsified information that it provided to the Department of Finance from the

Minister of Education and from the Deputy Minister of Education and that this resulted in an overpayment of half a million dollars to the Agassiz School Board.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance: When does any minister of the Crown have the authority to spend taxpayers' dollars based on fraudulent information?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): As the memo indicates, once a total funding level is established for the program through the Estimates process, Treasury Board delegates the authority to the department to make specific grants payments to individual school divisions. The Minister of Education has acknowledged his error; he has taken steps to correct that with a new change in the program funding. He has volunteered and received an audit, the recommendations of which he is willing to follow, and, of course, now he is going to follow through with legislation which will tighten up even further the accountability requirements for these types of programs.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Finance did not come clean with the House yesterday; he is not coming clean today.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, aside from the Opposition member's skating very close to the line of unparliamentary language, if not slightly over, I do draw the attention of the Chair to the fact that a supplementary question should need no preamble. Would you please remind the member of that rule of this House?

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble, and at this point I would like to caution all honourable members about their choice of words. I would choose them very carefully.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if in this whole sordid affair he is trying to protect the Minister of

Education (Mr. Caldwell), or is he attempting to protect his whole Cabinet who, the Minister of Education indicated on Friday, knew all about this fraudulent misrepresentation?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of protecting anybody. It is a question of indicating the truth of what really happened. The truth of what really happened is that there was a delegated authority as is past practice, as is indicated in this memo. The minister has indicated where he thought an error was made. He has taken proactive action to clean up the mess that was left by the previous government in changing the funding from a formula-based approach to a program-based approach which has more accountability built into it. He has gone further and asked for an audited report, and he has willingly—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor. I ask for co-operation, please.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not only has he changed the basis upon which these programs are funded, he has sought out and received an Auditor's report, the recommendations of which he has agreed to follow. Now he is bringing in legislation to bring even greater accountability to this area of expenditure.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to once again ask the co-operation of the House. As the Speaker, I have to be able to hear the person that has the mike for the breaching of rules or for using unparliamentary language. When people are shouting back and forth, I cannot hear the comments. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Agassiz School Division Adult Learning Centres—Funding

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he can tell this House if the Minister of Education and the Deputy Minister of Education misrepresented the facts in the document that they sent forward to the minister's department requesting that the

Agassiz School Division be over-funded by \$500,000. Did they misrepresent the facts?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): The Department of Education put forward a total package for Estimates for which they received delegated authority to distribute. The minister has been very forthright in saying that he admitted an error in the way that that was handled, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Agassiz School Division, as a transition payment. He has indicated very clearly that he did it in the interest of stabilizing education programming for children in that school division.

Further, he has indicated and he has acted with dispatch to change the funding formula from the transition funding to a more accountable form of program-based funding and sought out an Auditor's report, and now is bringing forward legislation. He has acted in a proactive manner from the day he has taken this issue in hand. If only the previous government would have acted with the same degree of alacrity and dispatch, we would not have had this financial mess in this program area.

Agassiz School Division Adult Learning Centres—Funding

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): The Minister of Education has misled this House. His conduct of dishonesty, deceit, and the cover-up and forcing school divisions to produce fraudulent numbers has placed him in an untenable situation.

I want to ask this Minister of Education: He said yesterday that he knew about the numbers before the transaction was made. I want to ask him why he did not stop the transaction, knowing that it was fraudulent, before the transaction occurred.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): The character assassination, libellous comments, slanderous comments that, if made outside of this House would lead to legal action, is despicable. I have been sitting here for the last number of days reflecting upon these comments which, if made outside of the House would have consequences for those making them.

This Government, when confronted with an overexpenditure in adult learning centres in this province to the tune of almost \$11 million, took action immediately to freeze those funds, to put caps on levels of funding support for individual students, changed the policy to move to a program-based funding process for adult learning centres, and have tabled in the Throne Speech its intent to have legislation this session.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, this minister has admitted to Manitobans that he knew about this transaction before it occurred.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order similar to one I raised earlier, a supplementary question should need no preamble. That is *Beauchesne's* Citation 409. Would you please remind this honourable member of that rule?

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble. I ask the honourable member to please put his question.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Why did this minister not stop this fraudulent transaction to Agassiz School Division before it occurred, since he knew about it before it occurred?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, I accept the Auditor's judgment and take full responsibility for the error that was made in this process. The decision on Agassiz was made through the department's delegated authority, and I suppose if there is an error here—and in hindsight I think I have acknowledged that there was—we erred on the side of children, students, learners, and educational excellence.

I quote from the *Winnipeg Free Press* today: That the decision saved Agassiz School Division from making deep cuts in services, especially in

classroom aides for special needs students, Mr. Speaker.

Where the department erred, and where I erred, as I have acknowledged, we erred on the side of children and learning.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, so what does this minister have to say to Manitobans when just today the servant of this Legislature, the Provincial Auditor, has said that this transaction with Agassiz School Division should be investigated for fraud?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are taking great liberty with language and privileges of members on this side.

I reported to this House three questions ago, to the member from Kirkfield Park, that the matter was immediately referred to the Department of Justice, and that reference was made on October 4.

Agassiz School Division Funding—Criminal Investigation

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter, as the minister would like everyone to believe, of a simple mistake. Today, the servant of this Legislature, the Auditor, when asked on a public radio program made it very clear that this transaction must go to the Department of Justice for an investigation as to fraud. When asked, do you want the Department of Justice involved because it might be fraud, that Auditor said, right.

I want to ask this Minister of Education: Is the reason why this Government is bringing in legislation, that they need a bill to ensure he will be honest?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, again, the matter was referred to the Department of Justice. The Auditor correctly stated also, something I would suggest that members opposite would pay attention to, that he would have to await the findings, the independent findings of the Justice Department. Those are the people who are experts in these matters not, I would suggest, members opposite, starting with the member from Kirkfield Park.

The issue of awaiting the findings of the Justice Department dealing with matters arising from the audit that was initiated by this Government and was refused to be initiated by the previous government when the same bells were ringing prior to the last election campaign, they had a choice. They could go to the Auditor, investigate these complaints and find out what was inappropriate in terms of financing to protect the taxpayer, to protect the students, or they could neglect it, neglect the advice. We chose to go to the Auditor to get to the bottom of it, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:10)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, will you tell this House whether or not the investigation requested by the Auditor, including the transaction done with Agassiz by the minister and deputy minister—is that transaction and their role part of the criminal investigation by his department?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The member opposite is playing very loose with descriptors. I also note that the Education critic opposite was apparently saying on the radio the last couple of days that red flags were going up in 1998, and today he said: Now it was not until 1999. I think the Opposition should decide what version of the truth it wishes to put on the record.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday and this morning, I was briefed by the deputy. I was briefed yesterday and further this morning or today by the Deputy Attorney General, who advises that on October 4 the audit report was referred to the Department of Justice. The department's review concluded that there was a proper basis to refer Morris-Macdonald to the police. At the same time, the department concluded that on the basis of the Auditor's Report there was not a sufficient basis to refer the issue of Agassiz to the police.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Justice, since the Auditor has asked specifically for the transaction and the role of the minister and deputy, if he did what every other Attorney General does when a minister or deputy are being investigated. Did he refer this

to an outside Crown attorney to ensure that the decision made would be done without any, any question as to whether or not it was done properly? Has this been referred to a Crown attorney outside of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Day after day, question after question, members opposite play loose with the truth to try to build a straw case on this issue. I said very clearly that the former Minister of Finance was aware during the election campaign that he confirmed it on a radio broadcast.

I have the direct quote that the member opposite denied just a moment ago in the House. It came to our attention. I quote the former Minister of Finance: It came to our attention during the writ period and afterward that we had a volume problem and we had an overexpenditure problem.

Mr. Speaker, then he puts out a financial statement a couple of weeks later after the writ period that completely covers up the fact that they are \$11 million over budget.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Accountability

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Education: The minister has publicly called the system of funding adult learning present, when he became the minister, an absurd system. I table today a report which the minister received shortly after he became the minister on November 10, 1999, which made a very strong recommendation to the minister.

I quote from page 29: It is our strong recommendation that Manitoba Education and Training consider altering the existing funding structure for adult learners. The system is currently based on September 30 enrolment, which is designed for the traditional school year but is not in alignment with the demographics of adult learners who tend to enter the senior year's mature program at various times throughout the year.

I ask the minister: Why did the minister not listen to this advice and make the changes

quickly so that the problems with the African Immigrant Program in Classroom 56 would not have occurred?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): It is a pleasure to get a question that does not begin with character assassination.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Caldwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for River Heights is quite right. This Government did inherit a system for funding adult learning centres, in fact, a system for monitoring the quality of education in adult learning centres, from members opposite that was non-existent in terms of accountability for programs and financial responsibility.

We immediately, as noted in the Auditor's report, began to make changes which represented important improvements to the processes involved for accountability in adult learning centres. We made those changes in a systematic fashion through time so as not to destabilize adult learning centres in the province and thereby take opportunities away from Manitobans. We froze the amount of money that was available for adult learning centres in light of the \$11-million overexpenditure that we received upon coming into office and made further steps.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Minister of Education. I ask the minister to acknowledge that if he had moved quickly to put in place the changes as recommended in the report, then he himself would not have been in a position to ask Agassiz School Division to fudge its books by using an incorrect number of adult learners because the system would not have been based on adult learners, and then he would not be in the pickle that he is in today.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the veracity of the statements made in the question placed by the member opposite. But I do acknowledge, and I think that we have been dealing with this matter in the House obviously for the last week, that there was a system that

was put in place and designed by members opposite that had no provision for accountability either in fiscal terms or in programmatic terms.

I do acknowledge, as does the Provincial Auditor, that important improvements have been made to this including, as promised in the Throne Speech a week ago, legislation this session.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Minister of Education. I ask the minister to acknowledge that if he had acted quickly to make these changes as recommended in the fall of 1999, then he would have in fact prevented both the Morris-Macdonald mess and the misappropriation error that he finds himself in.

Mr. Caldwell: We have comments from the members opposite that they were aware of problems in this system in 1998. Certainly we, upon coming into office, immediately froze the amount of money available for adult learning centres, immediately reduced the amount available on the per capita funding formula that is the root of this mess and proceeded to move from there to a program-based model. Subsequently this session, we will be introducing legislation to finally put into some legislative framework accountability that should have been part of this when the project was designed.

Clean Environment Commission Rothsay Rendering

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I have been pleased since the last election to represent residents in east St. Boniface and Windsor Park to help them address long-standing issues as being neighbours of the meat packing industry.

I want to ask the Minister of Conservation if he can give details to the House of a successful mediation at the Clean Environment Commission between Rothsay Rendering and residents of this neighbourhood in order to eliminate odours that they have been faced to live with.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): I am pleased to answer the member's question. Indeed, there was a severe odour problem experienced by citizens in that area that

she is referring to. So, earlier this year, we asked the Clean Environment Commission to undertake an alternative dispute resolution process involving local citizens, the plant management and also our Department of Conservation to attempt to find a solution that was both effective and practical. As a result of that process, Rothsay is voluntarily installing additional odour control equipment that everyone will be satisfied with.

I want to congratulate the company for taking that action, Mr. Speaker, and I also congratulate the citizens in that area for participating responsibly in that process.

* (14:20)

Agassiz School Division Funding—Justice Department Review

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): The Minister of Justice just indicated that the review by his department on Agassiz School Division was complete.

I would like to ask him when he received that information, and if the issue that the Provincial Auditor discussed this morning on CJOB was included in that review.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Further to the information I discussed earlier, as part of that briefing I was also advised today that on November 14, senior departmental lawyers had met with the RCMP and provided them with a full copy of the Provincial Auditor's report, asking them to initiate an investigation into the allegations in the report concerning Morris-Macdonald.

Now, the issue of Agassiz was neither raised nor discussed during the meeting because of the department's conclusion that there was no basis to believe any offence had occurred.

But the RCMP have today confirmed that they are conducting an investigation into the Morris-Macdonald matter and that in the process of their review, they will be examining all aspects of the report.

So that is normal and sound police practice, but that does not mean that everyone named in the report will, of course, be under police

investigation. Mr. Speaker, the investigation concerns Morris-Macdonald, examined against the backdrop of the full report and any information that comes to the attention of police during their investigation.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, since he has responded and indicated that there has not been a review of this transaction by the Department of Justice, Mr. Speaker, will he now undertake to ensure that an investigation of the transaction by the Department of Education, as related to the Agassiz School Division, will be undertaken, as the Auditor said today publicly he expects to happen?

Mr. Mackintosh: The Auditor may not know of the transactions that have occurred in the Department of Justice and between the Department of Justice and the RCMP. As I stated earlier to the House, the department and senior officials have looked at the matters, looked at the report of the Auditor, and the full report is before the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Minister of Education, Training and Youth

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, over the past few days, members of this House, the media and all Manitobans have had a tough time sorting out the contradictions of this Education Minister.

Every day is a surprise. Who will he blame next for his gross mismanagement of nearly half a million dollars? Did the Treasury Board approve the funds or not? Did the matter go before Cabinet or not? Were the funds funnelled to Agassiz School Division under appropriate authority or in error?

Mr. Speaker, this minister does not know whether he is coming or going. The Education Minister has shown a clear inability to decide which set of facts he wishes to share with Manitobans. What is printed in the newspaper one day is recanted in this House the next. How

are Manitobans supposed to believe anything this minister has to say? How can this minister represent the interests of young people and educational organizations when he cannot even clearly represent the actions of his own department?

Mr. Speaker, the inconsistencies this minister has provided, his refusal to provide Manitobans with honest and transparent accountability for his actions, demand that this minister do the right thing: Admit that he has mismanaged his department, that he has acted with gross irresponsibility in the use of public funds, and that he cannot adequately represent those in Manitoba's education system. This minister must do the right thing. He must resign.

Maison Gabrielle Roy

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Je vous annonce avec grand plaisir que la maison natale de l'auteure manitobaine, Gabrielle Roy, a été désignée comme site provincial du patrimoine. Gabrielle Roy, l'un des grands noms de la littérature canadienne, est née à Saint-Boniface, où elle a grandi. Avant de quitter le Manitoba en 1937 pour aller étudier à l'étranger, elle enseigne en région rurale et à Saint-Boniface, tout en participant à de nombreuses activités théâtrales. En 1939, elle s'installe au Québec et collabore à diverses publications. Son roman *Bonheur d'occasion* est publié en 1945 et lui apporte la gloire. Ce roman pour lequel elle obtient le prestigieux Prix Fémina se situe à l'avant-garde de la littérature consacrée au milieu ouvrier canadien-français.

L'oeuvre de Gabrielle Roy, dont une grande partie se situe au Manitoba, est profondément marquée par les paysages des prairies et la pauvreté digne de son enfance. Son style simple, sur lequel repose une évocation émouvante de la vie quotidienne, lui a valu une renommée internationale. Grâce à ses 18 ouvrages, Gabrielle Roy a reçu un grand nombre de prix, dont le Prix du Gouverneur général à trois reprises.

Gabrielle Roy naît au 375, rue Deschambault à Saint-Boniface. Cette maison où elle connaît une enfance heureuse alimentera sa création littéraire dans son recueil de nouvelles, *Rue Deschambault*. Comme le disait si bien

l'auteure: Certaines circonstances de ce récit ont été puisées dans la réalité.

La Province du Manitoba félicite la Maison Gabrielle Roy, fondée pour offrir aux gens d'ici un musée qui rend un digne hommage à Gabrielle Roy.

Translation

*It gives me great pleasure to announce to you that the birthplace of Manitoba author Gabrielle Roy has been designated a provincial heritage site. Gabrielle Roy, one of Canadian literature's most prominent names, was born in St. Boniface and grew up there. Before leaving Manitoba in 1937 to study abroad she taught in the rural regions and in St. Boniface, while participating in many theatrical activities. In 1939, she made her home in Québec, where she worked for various publications. Her novel *Bonheur d'occasion* or *The Tin Flute* was published in 1945 and brought her fame. This novel, for which she won France's prestigious Prix Fémina, stands in the vanguard of literature exploring the French-Canadian working class experience.*

Roy's writing, much of which was set in Manitoba, was deeply influenced by the prairie landscape and the genteel poverty of her early years. Her simple style, with its moving evocation of everyday life, earned her an international reputation. As a result of her 18 works she was awarded many prizes, including three Governor General's Awards.

*Gabrielle Roy was born at 375 Deschambault Street in St. Boniface. This house, where she spent a happy childhood, was to provide inspiration for her collection of short stories *Rue Deschambault* or *Street of Riches*. As the author herself said, some of the circumstances in this book are taken from real life.*

The province of Manitoba congratulates Maison Gabrielle Roy, founded to offer the local community a museum that is a fitting tribute to Gabrielle Roy.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Education Incentive Programs

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): It was with some interest that I noticed the press release and the reports of information about incentive programs to keep at-risk students in school recently released by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) discuss the case of a student who could receive a \$25 gift certificate for not wearing his headphones in class for two weeks. First of all, when do we allow students to wear headphones in class, No. 1, and a reward for tuning into class was handed out as part of A Real Future, an incentive under the Healthy Child Manitoba Initiative, a funded program of \$65,000 from this Government. I know there are some ex-teachers over there who must be a little bit embarrassed by this.

I am all for the development of programs that will encourage students, be they at risk or academically gifted, and encourage them to participate in the learning process. But, as a parent and a former trustee, have we so lowered our expectations that it has become acceptable to provide what some would call an incentive and others would simply call a bribe to encourage children to show up and be interested in their education, or do we want to teach them to "play the game"?

Mr. Speaker, instead of providing gift certificates, would it not have a greater impact on a larger number of students if we put this money into things such as textbooks, computers and other teaching aids? A gift certificate is fleeting. Provide some initiative.

Margaret Rose Thompson

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Ms. Margaret Rose Thompson of Cranberry Portage, who just turned 104 on November 9.

In 1925, Ms. Thompson and her sister, Edith, came to Elbow Lake in northern Manitoba from California to visit her parents and her brothers, George, Hall, and Vaughn, who were surveying mining claims. Later the family settled in Cranberry Portage. Rose Thompson still lives independently in her log cabin fronting on Lake Athapuskow at Cranberry Portage.

* (14:30)

For over 60 years the Thompson family was involved in prospecting, developing mining properties and selling and optioning claims. Three of the seven major Thompson properties became mines. Ms. Thompson is the president of Thompson Mines Limited. This spirited first lady of Cranberry Portage is still active, does not consider herself retired, and works diligently on her memoirs.

Ms. Thompson's family history is as interesting as her own. Her father, W. T. Thompson, began his surveying career in 1872 at the age of 19. He died on a surveying trip at age 84. He held two degrees from McGill University. As a Dominion Land surveyor, he surveyed immense portions of this country. He became a friend of Sitting Bull after that famous chief had moved his Sioux warriors and followers into the northern Prairies following the battle with Custer at the Little Big Horn.

When W. T. Thompson came down with a life-threatening illness, his friend, Sitting Bull, sent his personal medicine man to cure him. Her grandfather, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hall Thompson, was a Father of Confederation. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1867 and he received the Canadian Confederation Medal. Her great-grandfather, Major Joseph Thompson, fought with the Duke of Wellington and helped defeat Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. He moved from Europe to Brock township in Ontario in 1836.

Ms. Thompson's great-great-grandfather was in the British navy and organized the British withdrawal from New York. Her great-great-great-grandfather fought with the British at Germantown in the American Revolution.

I am sure all members in this House will join me in saluting this remarkable family and Ms. Rose Thompson herself, who is an astounding living testimony to northern vitality, tenacity and determination.

Adult Learning Centres—Funding

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we have in the last few days in this House been unearthing a very tangled web of

problems in adult education. What is clear is that when the NDP came to power there was a markedly deficient system in place. What is also clear is that the evidence was there to know that it was deficient and that the minister should have acted, that the minister had at least as early as November 10, 1999, very strong recommendations to change this as soon as possible. Not only that, but the minister had in this report of Bill Bumstead's on the Morris-Macdonald School Division the following recommendation: It is absolutely critical that adult education policies and programs be developed and in place as the province of Manitoba enters the 21st century.

Well, Manitoba entered the 21st century as the year 2000 came along, and in January 2000 the minister still had not got the policies in place. February 2000, they were still not in place. March, April, May, June, July, August, they were still not in place. September, we have the formation of the African Immigrant Program and later became Classroom 56 many years into the tenure of the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell).

This whole problem with the African Immigrant Program could have been prevented. Interestingly enough, the minister could have prevented his own misuse of numbers if he had changed the system. It is too bad that the Minister of Education did not, because the fact that you could use these numbers in this way led to this problem and this pickle that he is in.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the amendment proposed by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food, who has 31 minutes remaining.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I want to continue my comments, and I want to address a few issues that have been raised by other members. I listened carefully to the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) yesterday when he

talked about the securities bill that we were bringing forward and the concerns that he had with respect to aerial and ground spraying equipment. I want to ensure the member that there has been consultation with the industry, and we will continue to consult with the industry. This is not intended to cause hardship for farmers but rather to ensure, when there is an issue of security, particularly with aerial sprayers, that it can be addressed.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The Member for Arthur-Virden also talked about our lack of commitment to rural Manitoba and our lack of support and our lack of understanding in rural Manitoba. He was also critical of us for expanding the Grow Bonds program. I find that really strange when a program that has been in place, has worked for some people although there have been failures with the program as well, but to have it expanded into another area to be perceived as diluting the program. I thought that the Opposition supported the Grow Bonds program. It was a program that they introduced and now, when it has expanded into another area, they see this as a weakening of the program.

I would say to the member that I think there is need to look at business in rural, northern and urban Manitoba as to how we can support them. One of the other areas I want to very much talk about are comments that were made by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) about this Province's position on drainage. I guess listening to the Member for River East speak, what he said about drainage just gives me a clear understanding that the member does not understand rural Manitoba very well. He does not understand drainage issues, and he does not understand what the previous government did with drainage.

If you will remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the drainage budget and the staff in the then Natural Resources Department was reduced dramatically under the previous government. Now the member says, if we would have fixed up drainage, we would not have had to pay out money to farmers under the Excess Moisture Insurance program. Well, I want to tell the

member you cannot fix up the neglect of 11 years in 2 years. We have taken steps. We have put additional money in, but I would think that the member opposite would support a program that would put money into farmers' hands when they are challenged with excess moisture.

So I would ask the member to think about what he is saying. I would encourage him to listen more carefully and listen to producers because the producers have been very, very supportive of the Excess Moisture Insurance program that our Government has put in place. They have also been supportive of the other changes, and certainly there are requests they have made through the safety net programs that we have to address.

One of the biggest issues under the safety net program is the fact that we have a program; that is CFIP right now. Farmers who are in most need are not able to get the money, and that was why it was at Manitoba's insistence before we signed the last safety net agreement that we would have a full review of the safety net programs. That is something that I am very committed to. I would hope that I would have the support of members on the opposite side of the House as we move forward to try to negotiate a better safety net package, that they will recognize that farmers do need these kind of protections to protect them from downturns in the economy. Drainages have to be addressed, but there is much more that has to be addressed as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, I want to commend and recognize the work our Government has done to increase investments in rural Manitoba. We will and are continuing to work with rural communities. The announcement at the university of a nutraceutical research centre in Manitoba, although located in Manitoba, is a very important asset for farmers and for rural communities because this will be an opportunity to diversify into new commodities and hopefully add value to the products that we produce on our farms.

* (14:40)

Ethanol initiatives—*[interjection]* The member talks about the reduction of the number of

family farms. I will bring him back the statistics of the number of farms that were lost under administration, and I would ask him to remember which federal administration it was that changed the policies that resulted in many farmers leaving rural Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the steps we are taking to diversify the agriculture economy of this province are very important steps. I would hope that we would get a little bit of support from the Opposition in recognizing that there is an opportunity to diversify. There is an opportunity to add value to the products that we produce in rural Manitoba. Members opposite, those who come from rural Manitoba, should recognize that.

If you look at the statistics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on how Manitoba farmers have fared in comparison to some of the other provinces, I am very proud of our farmers because they have taken steps to diversify, to add value to their product. They have moved out of grain production into other products that has put them on a little more stable ground than with some other producers. There is much more that we can do, and our department and our Government will continue to work to improve the quality of life in rural Manitoba.

One of the things we have done that the Opposition does not seem to want to recognize was the step that we equalized hydro rates across Manitoba. Now, some will say that this is not very important, but if you look at reducing hydro rates and bringing the opportunity for investment in rural Manitoba, it is one of the important steps. Rural Manitobans certainly do appreciate that, along with the other steps that we have taken, the step that we have taken to give property tax credits back to the people of Manitoba, the step that we have taken to reduce the portioning on farm property.

All of those steps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are steps that I would hope that the Opposition would support on behalf of the people of rural Manitoba. The previous administration in fact raised the portioning, raised the level of portioning that farmers paid on their property. We took the step of reducing it and put \$7 million into farmers' property. Now, the member

says the taxes went up. If assessments went up, the value went up. That is why we are addressing the portioning.

But I want to address one issue that affects my constituency, and that is the Swan River Hospital. I am really proud of our Government that we have made a commitment that that hospital will be constructed. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the previous government was involved when the hospital had to be demolished. They said that there was going to be a new hospital built, but when we came into office, we found out that that hospital was not on the capital program. They had not put it on. That was their commitment. There was no commitment by the previous government to put the construction of the Swan River Hospital on the capital program.

Our Government saw that as a flaw in the plan of the previous government. Our Government recognized that Swan River serves a very large area and that they could not continue to operate with a temporary facility. So we did put it on the capital program. The regional health authority is out consulting with people over the next couple of weeks about the plan. The architect has been working on the plan, and construction will begin within the next year.

So had it been the previous government, I am not sure how long the people of Swan River would have had to stay with the temporary facility because they had not kept the commitment to put this facility on the capital project.

I am also very pleased that our Government has worked to develop the Northern Development Strategy. This was launched this fall with new initiatives focussing on housing, health, transportation and the training needs of the North. I say this is very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because if you look at the track record of the previous government, the people who are on the opposite side of the House right now, the previous government had no understanding or commitment to the North. There was serious neglect in infrastructure, serious neglect in housing and serious neglect in transportation.

It is time that we took the steps, and I am very pleased to have been part of developing the

Northern Development Strategy and look forward to delivery of programs in that area. I look forward to further development of our rural development strategy and working with the people of rural Manitoba to ensure and to increase the opportunities for development and growth in rural Manitoba. Certainly, the steps that we have taken with respect to water and improving the quality of water and infrastructure in rural Manitoba are important steps and ones that rural Manitobans certainly—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I cannot hear the speaker.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you. I am pleased with the steps that we have taken on our Northern Development Strategy. I am pleased with the steps that we have taken in rural development and the steps that we are taking to improve the quality of life, steps such as, as I said, the nutraceutical centre, ethanol initiatives, the steps we have taken in health, investments in Brandon and Beausejour. The Brandon hospital was promised by the previous government for years and years and never did anything. The work is happening under this administration.

We have provided 80 new ambulances for across the province, over a million dollars in drainage, the \$6.8 million in the prairie grains program. Certainly I am proud of what we have done for our producers in this province. Our producers are facing very difficult challenges with low commodity prices and to be able in this year to bring in \$92 million in emergency assistance for our producers has a significant impact on some families.

With respect to health care, members opposite somehow have forgotten about their record on health care and how the public lost trust in them on health care. They are now trying to make this their issue. I can tell you that when we came into office Manitoba was the second highest per capita spender in health care despite aging diagnostic equipment and the dramatic reduced investment in training for health care professionals. Today we rank fourth in per capita spending behind Alberta, B.C. and Newfoundland. We are prudently managing the system

through strategic capital investments and increasing training. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are increasing the number of nurses that are going to be available to work in our health care system. We are increasing the number of doctors, and we are ensuring that doctors from rural Manitoba are trained and northern Manitoba are trained as well.

So for the members opposite to try to make an issue of health care, I am very proud to stand on the record that we have put forward and what we have done in two years of government. There have been tremendous strides made. There is no doubt that there are challenges in health care, but we have made great strides. I commend our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) for the work that he has done in this area.

* (14:50)

Before closing, I also want to mention the issue that the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) just talked about. He talked about that we should be spending money for textbooks. Well, if I remember correctly, under the previous government the school classrooms were spending more money on photocopying, trying to create material for students because the previous government did not have money for textbooks. So I think that he should look at what his government did with regard to education funding. Under his administration the education funding was at zero and minus two and minus two. They were cutting money from education. We have made a commitment that we will fund education at the rate of the growth of the economy and have brought stability to education funding that people can predict and school boards can predict what their funding is going to be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also just briefly want to touch on amalgamation. It is one that there has been a lot of discussion on in my constituency and one that I continue to work with. My constituency, the Duck Mountain School Division, is one that the previous government had indicated they should look at amalgamation because their assessment rate was so low. The previous government had put funding into that division to try to come to a solution for this division. That is one of the divisions that is

being amalgamated and one that I am working very closely with. I look forward to further discussion with the people of my constituency to discuss this matter.

So in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that it is unfortunate that the Opposition did not recognize the merits of this Throne Speech and recognize the work that we are doing to improve the quality of life for Manitobans. They have chosen instead to bring forward an amendment that is really not worthy of comment in some cases, because some of the comments in that amendment are in fact not very accurate.

So I would, with those few comments, like to say that I am pleased with the work we have done and I am proud of our Government for the work they have done to support Manitobans, whether they live in rural Manitoba, whether they live in northern Manitoba or whether they live in urban centres. It is time that we had a government that recognizes the equality of people and that there have to be opportunities for all people in this province. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield.

An Honourable Member: She is not finished.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thought you were. I am sorry.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sorry if you misunderstood me, and I am sorry if the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) misunderstood me. I was concluding my comments, but I had not sat down.

I would just take a few minutes to say that we are working to improve the quality of life for people wherever they live. The area I represent is rural Manitoba, so I just want to outline some of the initiatives that we have taken in rural Manitoba, for example, water management and drainage.

My colleague here the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) has taken great steps in the area of water management and drainage, an area that has been neglected under the Tory

administration. When you think that the Tories cut water resources initiatives by 43 percent, resulting in a dysfunctional system of drainage in this province. By committing over \$80 million this year, we have doubled—the neglect that the previous government has taken, has caused in this system.

Drinking water, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very important issue for all Manitobans, safe drinking water. What did the previous administration do? They cut the testing. We instituted a 70% subsidy for private drinking water testing to ensure that there is safe drinking water.

I mentioned the area of crop insurance. I am proud of the work that we have done, but I want to continue to work with producers to look at how we can enhance that program, change the program to meet the needs of producers.

One of the major issues is the livestock growth in this province. The Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) made some comment about our holding up the licensing when in fact the provincial government really cannot control the federal government. The member from Arthur-Virden raises a very important issue. That is the role that Fisheries and Oceans are playing with regard to streams and waterways and the delays that they are putting not only on livestock operations, but on drainage issues and on any kind of development. There are all of those issues. Certainly, he raises the point, but I would not want somebody to feel that this is because of a provincial issue that these are being slowed down. It is in fact a federal one. I believe the member did talk about the Province being able to change the federal government's view on this, but in reality this is a federal issue, and our departments work closely with people. The federal government has their own role, and certainly we work closely with them.

There has been a lot of discussion on livestock and the growth of the livestock industry. I had the opportunity to participate in a very interesting panel just recently called CBC's "counterSpin," where people talked about concerns about the industry, and particularly with the hog industry. I want to let this House know that the livestock industry is very important in this province. I think that there is the opportunity for the intensive livestock operations or the large hog barns to expand.

There is the opportunity for smaller operations. There is opportunity for the hoop barn industry, and natural or organic production. There is room for all of that. We always have to base the decision of expansion of industry based on science.

I want to give a lot of credit to the people who work, whether it is in the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Department of Conservation, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, as we work through the expansion of this industry, as we work with municipalities and encourage them to put their planning by-laws and their zoning in place so that the people who are involved in the expansion can do so with a firm set of rules knowing what municipalities want.

I want to commend those people in the department. I want to commend the people who work within the Department of Agriculture in a variety of areas, as some producers go through some difficult times, as some producers try to diversify into new commodities. They do a very good job at what they are doing. I am proud of the work that we are doing to ensure that this industry expands in a healthy and sustainable way.

I heard the member from Emerson say: Why do you not say that you support the livestock industry? I have said many times, and I will continue to say, that I do support the expansion of the livestock industry in this province. I have said it clearly at every meeting that I have gone to, so if the member wants to play with some words to imply that I do not support the industry, he is wrong. He is wrong when he says that about our Government, because we are working together with them.

I wanted to get those few comments in on the agriculture industry and the people that are working with us. I hope that the Opposition will recognize the value of this Throne Speech and vote down their amendment, vote with us on the Throne Speech that has been written and support us on the work we are doing in the best interest of Manitobans, no matter where they live in this province.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I would like to thank the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) and

her colleagues for giving me that warm round of applause. I, too, would like to make some comments on the record in regard to the motion by the Leader of the Opposition, and to some respects on the Speech from the Throne. This is now the third address I have been able to make. If the first two were a disappointment, this one has got to be an even bigger disappointment.

If one were to summarize what was heard on the 13th, I guess one would have to say that it was a regurgitation, it was a rehashing, no new ideas. There is really no plan in the Government. There seems to be an awful lot of spin and these days, one would have to say, an awful lot of damage control. Alas, we will get to that a little later on.

* (15:00)

I do, however, want to take a bit of time, seeing as the Government forced closure on the motion that was brought forward initially on terrorism, and where this particular Legislature, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, stands. I felt that the motion was most appropriate. It was very discouraging that the Government came in and, in such a callous and cold way, shut it down. I suppose that had to do with ideological reasons within their own caucus. They could not get enough support to back this kind of a motion. Clearly their federal counterparts do not support these kinds of things, and they as a provincial party certainly got in line with their federal counterparts, and I think that was most unfortunate.

September 11, for myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, symbolized an attack on my generation. Probably never before had we seen as many of my age group, give or take, being attacked. The attack came in a different fashion. We have probably never before seen a terrorist war. I believe it was an act of war; it was an act of aggression.

We have never seen something like that before, and certainly I, who happened to be home that day, somebody called up and said, it looks like an airplane hit one of the World Trade Center towers; you have to see this. I turned it on and we watched for a while and with absolute horror watched the second airplane deliberately crashing into the second tower and then the

aftermath with the attack on the Pentagon, the fourth airplane into the field and then, of course, the carnage that then took place in New York. For me it was a defining moment. It was very much a shaking situation to look at. I think when the story started to come out about the individuals who were affected, the magnitude was not known at that point in time, and the absolute carnage and the death is just sometimes beyond comprehension, what we can actually fathom as human beings, that we would go out and purposely do something like that to each other.

Commentaries were made that Pearl Harbour was an attack on a military installation, that there were other attacks. It was done as a part of an act of war, but this was such a cowardly act. It was such an unprovoked act. There was really no indication. People had no way of trying to protect themselves or to be aware that something might be coming. I think that is just the whole travesty of it.

When we did have that very, very short debate on November 14, before the Government shut down the debate on this issue, because, frankly, they do not support the federal government. They do not support the United States and what they are doing. The United States, which has gone into Afghanistan and has freed women from bondage and slavery, has freed women from being beaten and shot and being terrorized by a minority called the Taliban, for those issues this Government had no time, had no desire to stand up for them and that is very shameful. It is shameful that they are following their federal counterparts instead of being what they tried to bill themselves as, a middle-of-the-road government. It has been a sham right from day one. It is most unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would have liked to have seen a real serious debate on this issue, because the kinds of people who were attacked that day were individuals who would have graduated about the same time as I, a lot of them with young families. I would refer back to the Wednesday, November 14 Hansard, where I listed the 24 names of those Canadians who were killed in that unprovoked horrendous attack for which the Government does not want to stand up, which is so shameful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you go through the list, you have individuals in their 20s, in their 30s, 40s, predominantly in that age group. There were some a little bit older with young families, with spouses expecting and children now sitting at home saying where is dad, where is my father, where is my mother, where is our son, where is our daughter?

Probably one of the most moving incidents was when Mr. Gerhardt from Toronto, hearing that the attack had taken place, rushed to New York and knew in his head that it was over, that his son was not coming out. But he stood there beside the carnage, and he said: I have come here for my son, and I am not leaving. I want my son. That is the kind of effect that has had. I find that it is most unfortunate that we did not proceed with the debate. It was something we should have done. We should have passed this motion. It should have gone on to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is not part of my political party. I would state that very clearly. But in this instance he is the leader of our country. He is the leader of Armed Forces that are going over there and putting their lives on the line to free the men and women and the children who have been under this horrendous Taliban regime, and we can see that the Taliban regime is falling apart. To our soldiers and to those who are fighting on our behalf, I say, congratulations, we are standing 100 percent behind you, certainly on this side of the House. We did not play politics with it; the members opposite did. We will stand with the federal Liberals. We will stand with the other parties in Parliament, and we will stand behind the men and women who are standing up and taking those individuals who perpetrated an unprovoked attack on us in North America and taking them to task. That is what it is about.

I say to those individuals, and I said it during my speech on the 14th, for those who lost family, the 24 who passed away and their loved ones, on behalf of this MLA, on behalf of the residents of Springfield: No, we probably do not know what you feel right now at this moment, but our hearts certainly do go out to you. Like I say, a lot of these my age have children my age. I know, when I am gone for a couple of days, my

18-month-old walks around, points at pictures and says papa, papa, meaning dad. What are these children doing now? Their dad is not coming home, or mom is not coming home, or that sister or brother or spouse, they are no longer coming home. I think that is the travesty of it. Again, the motion that was put forward, it would have been nice if this House would have taken that motion, passed it unanimously, passed it on to the Prime Minister and the House of Commons and perhaps passed it on to the President of the United States who has done lots to take on these individuals, this minority that perpetrated that unprovoked attack on North America.

I would like to move on and deal with some of the issues in regard to the Throne Speech. I would like to just briefly mention that I congratulate those individuals who are now part of the Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council. As a former chairperson of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, I am sure this is a very exciting time for them. They will be getting together and starting to find out who they all are and what the different ideas are and where they want to go with it and all those kinds of things. I know that will be very exciting for them. I, however, have to say to the minister responsible, she knows, and her government knows, that this whole situation was very poorly handled. It was on the borderline. Well, it was undemocratic. There is no borderline involved there. It was undemocratic the way it was held. The election process was most unfortunate. They should have allowed individuals to be able to correspond with each other, to be able to deal with each other. Still, I do not think any of that should take away from these individuals who are now on the council, and perhaps in years to come the minister and her Government can learn from what took place and make the process a lot better and make it so that it is not done with such acrimony and such divisiveness.

* (15:10)

These organizations, I know, from a multicultural perspective—I was very involved at one time—are a lot of fun. They are very challenging. Some of my first MIC meetings were just a real raucous, exciting affair, and there was a lot of excitement and a lot of

interest. You know, you left after a weekend and you went: Wow! Now that is vibrant. You do not have to always agree on every constitutional amendment. You do not have to agree on every little detail of it, but the fact that you are getting together and you are having a good time, and I certainly wish this of this council. I do wish them all the best in the years to come.

I listened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with great interest to the Throne Speech, and I tried to pick out of it that there was a government that knew where it was going, that it had an idea where their direction was, where they were going to go with this, what was going to take place. As I mentioned already, it seemed to be a retreat. It seems to be that it was just another spinning and spinning.

You go into the hallways after Question Period and the spinners, or those that deal with communications on the part of the Government, it used to be there were three in the hallway, then four, then five, and now the hallway is packed. There is almost no media, but the spinners from this particular Government line the hallway from one end to the other. I have not seen so many spinners, and that is exactly what this Throne Speech is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is spin. It is spin, spin, spin. There is no direction. There is nothing concrete. It seems to be a government that is floundering. It seems to be a government that does not know a purpose.

I take the Legislative Chamber back to the summer when certainly in my constituency we had an issue with hydro development in our community. You know, residents were not saying that acronym NIMB, not in my backyard. What they were saying is they wanted to be able to deal with the minister, deal with Manitoba Hydro, and this is a government that if you do not meet you do not have to deal with them. The issue boiled and boiled. The Minister of Hydro certainly did not have the courage to come out and discuss the issue with the residents.

Surprisingly, I have heard from many former ministers who have said you go and you meet the public, and the fact that the minister comes out bears a lot of weight in that situation. Often people will be able to dialogue with the minister and some progress will be made, but

instead this Government, in particular the Minister of Hydro, stuck his head in the sand and did nothing. It resorts right back to this speech that we had the other day. It is stick your head in the sand and basically go nowhere with the Government.

I know for the citizens of Springfield, this was a very trying time. This was a very difficult time for the R.M. of East St. Paul. There was a lot of work put in by the likes of Frank Miller, Mike Wasylin, Sandee Comrie, Gord Glesmann and Gerry. He was very involved. There was a large group of them, and they certainly worked hard trying to get the Government to at least look at some of the suggestions they had. They were very in tune to the community. They made sure that they had a mandate from the community. In fact, they raised some \$10,000 to take on the Government.

The Minister of Hydro, who took on the same kind of a challenge in his own constituency when he still had his ideology close to his heart, when he still had some principles and some beliefs, which obviously he threw out, on this issue would not even meet with the residents. It was really quite shameful, but the residents of East St. Paul put on an admirable challenge. They took it on, and they did it with respect. They did it with dignity. They did a great job, and I was pleased to be working with them on this committee.

I would suggest to the Government they should get that committee together and write the Throne Speech for the Government. It would be a far better document than what we see here. At least there would be some plan of action. There would be at least some cohesion to it. This is a government that is scared of its own shadow, like the Minister of Hydro will not get out and meet the public, will not come and speak to individuals. He had meetings in his office, and they made sure they did not invite certain people who might actually have taken them more to task than they already were.

So I would say that, again, we are going to see this kind of drifting through the next year. We will probably see this kind of drifting. If the Minister of Hydro is any indication of what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) will be in the

next coming Budget, I think we are going to be standing up here and we are going to be horrified at what this Government has wrought upon the province because their idea of consultation is listening with earplugs in. Their idea of consultation is flying above the province and waving from above, and down below it is spin. That is all they have in the hallway here, and that is what comes out of the offices. It is spin, spin, spin. That is very unfortunate. That is very unfortunate for the citizens of this province, who, when they initially looked for a change of government were looking for a—I had heard it often, oh, we are looking for a Gary Filmon government with a tweed jacket, you know, just a slight change. This is going to be middle of the road. Well, were people not shocked? Are they not just horrified at what this particular government has wrought on the province? I daresay that that probably will not happen a second time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but in the meantime we have to deal with what is here.

I notice in the Throne Speech on page 7 there is this oxymoron that they have come up with on education. Here is one thing in the speech. The other one is what they have done to school divisions, how they have crippled complete divisions, complete areas, with callous disregard for what they are doing to the students. It is just galling when you hear the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) get up and talk about this is for the students, when that is exactly who he is attacking. It is the staff that he is attacking. You listen to the spin. Strong community schools are at the centre of your Government's strategy for K to S4. The recently announced amalgamation initiative will reduce administration costs while maintaining the level of provincial support for schools. It goes on and on and on. I will not even offend the poor people who have to transcribe this by reading it again.

I would like to point out certain instances. One of the arguments for what they were doing was that it would save money. All of a sudden the NDP have gotten into this save money thing. They have blown a billion dollars in two years, and all of a sudden that \$10 million they feel they are going to save, now that is the thing they are going to raise up. Maybe they should have started saving on the \$10 billion. That is where they should have started saving. Never mind.

I would like to refer to an article in *The Winnipeg Sun* of November 15, 2001, page 5: "Combining divisions won't save money. NDPers used to think so, too. If Manitobans think school property taxes are going to fall because the Province has forced school boards to amalgamate, they better think again.

"The Education Minister . . . announced last week that he's forcing school divisions to merge, reducing the number of boards to 37 from 54."

His spin was they were going to take small ones, and they mention, oh, all of those with 400 students and all of those with 600 students, we are going to force them to amalgamate so that we cut down on administration.

Let us go on that logic for a moment. We are going to force the small ones to amalgamate. So they took the small school division of River East School Division—oh, sorry, that would be the second-largest school division in the province—oh, and we are going to amalgamate that with Transcona. We are going to take other school divisions that are fairly large, and we are going to amalgamate those. But what about St. James and Assiniboine? Were those amalgamated? No. What about Seven Oaks? What happened to Seven Oaks? Not amalgamated. The amalgamation issue was pure and simply politics.

* (15:20)

When the previous government was looking at reviewing the school board boundaries, they took an impartial person, set up a committee, went around the province, got the results. If they were going to implement it, it was going to be a non-partisan implementation or they were not going to go through with it. Why did they not go through with it? Because it did not save money in the first place. That is why they did not do it, but to do it under the guise of saving \$10 million after you have blown a billion and then playing nothing but politics with it in the end anyway, what they have basically done is hamstring divisions. They do not care about the students. If they cared about the students, they would at least listen to some of the comments that are being made to them by teachers and by parents on behalf of the students. My phone is ringing off the hook.

I asked the minister the other day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the R.M. of Springfield never before has an R.M. been split up and forced into two different divisions. Worse yet, this Government on behalf of the people of Manitoba, so-called, took the industrial base off of the R.M. of Springfield and added it to the city and added the rest of it on to Agassiz. Agassiz has a very low tax base. They could have used that industrial base, but this is a typical anti-rural program that this particular Government is on. They want to cripple Springfield. They want to cripple Agassiz. That was the point. That was the politics behind it.

I am going to stand up and I am going to continue to fight, that if they are going to go along with this terrible idea, then the least they should do is put the whole R.M. of Springfield into another school division and not cut it off at its knees by taking away the industrial base and adding it on to someone else and putting the rest of the R.M. of Springfield somewhere else.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke to Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), and I said: Minister, the message that you are sending out is that within the Perimeter of the city of Winnipeg, it looks like eventually you are going to add all of that area on to the city of Winnipeg, the areas within Springfield, East St. Paul and the list goes on and on. What you are trying to do is within the Perimeter add that on to the city of Winnipeg.

He corrected me. He said, well, actually, the way it is going to work is it is the floodway, that is the section of Springfield; it is not even the Perimeter; it is the floodway. That section is being added on to River East. He said, no, no, that is not the message we are trying to get out there. This is just an anomaly. He actually did not even know what he was talking about in the House, and he had to go and get briefed on it. No, no, no, that was not the point; no, no, no, that is not what we are getting at.

But that is actually the message that is being sent out. This is an attack on the Capital Region, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there are some MLAs who represent parts and pieces of that, and do they care? Do any of the Government MLAs

care? No, they do not care. They will face the electorate next time and pay the ultimate price for it. They will lose their seats because of it, because this is an attack on the Capital Region. It is bad for the R.M. of Springfield. It is bad for the Agassiz School Division that they have played their politics with, that they have hampered and that they are now messing around with even more. This Government is playing pure politics. That is all they have done.

Do the children matter? No. Do the teachers matter? Not at all. I had a call from one of the Teachers' Association leadership, and he indicated to me today they are very concerned about what this Government is doing. The feeling is that the message is not getting up to the Education "Kremlin" and the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell). The message is not getting through that teachers are very concerned.

No consultation took place. No discussion took place. This has been forced. What is just so galling about all of this is the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) went around the province and said it is un-Manitoban to force amalgamation. No, no, no, we are going to hug and kiss everybody and we are going to get them all to amalgamate that way. We are just going to love them altogether. Furthest from the truth. That was absolutely the furthest from the truth. Forced amalgamation is where they have gone, and they have hurt a lot of school divisions, and unfortunately—I do not know how to say that. I will retract "unfortunately." The worst part of all this, the full effects of this will not be felt for a while because the real amalgamation will not actually take place until the next election. That is when the jobs will start being lost. That is when the tax increases will start taking place.

In the end, I believe what this Government is going to do is they are going to make sure that the true effects, that the truth of the politics they have played will not come into play until after the next election because they do not have the decency and they do not have the honesty to put all the facts up front and take that into an election. They will try to meander their way around it to make sure that they are not going to have to face the consequences of the politics they have played with this issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I can tell you as one MLA and as this caucus we will make them account for what they have done. We will make them have to stand up and account for it. I will make it my continued duty, as I have done already, to point out to citizens around this province the politics that was played by this Government, that they did not put the children first; they did not put the teachers first. They put their own little political interests in front of everybody else.

That is what they did with amalgamation, just like the Minister of Hydro (Mr. Selinger) who did the same thing with the hydro lines going through East St. Paul. They will have to pay the ultimate price, and it will be their political careers for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that it is most beguiling when we see that basically everybody has pointed out to them in very careful wording, very clearly laid out to them, that this is not going to save money. Explain to me how the Agassiz School Division that this Government has to basically, in the most underhanded way and the most fraudulent way, flit money over so that they can actually still survive and then crippling Springfield and putting them into Agassiz is somehow going to make the situation better. Explain that one. There is no explanation. Why would you do that? Why would you harm—I had a phone call today from someone—and there is a former teacher who sits there and bows his head every time hard issues come around and votes like a trained seal with this Government instead of standing up and having his voice heard, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member from Rossmere should stand up for the students. He used to be in the classroom. He knows what is going on.

The child guidance clinic for Transcona-Springfield, where is it situated? In Transcona. So that means that that is going to be cut off. A lot of the services that were provided to Springfield are now gone and those services are not provided in Agassiz.

What happens to those students? What happens to those children who need psychological care, who are going into different programs? They need those programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are not in those programs because it is a way for the division to expend

money. Those children need those programs, and it is going to be cut off.

And I ask, what about those 34 families that are affected in the part of Springfield that is now going to be cut off and left adrift? What happens to those, those that are getting bused to Dugald and have been going there? Are they going to be grandfathered? Not a word out of them. Who is going to fund that?

Have they actually even thought this through? I mean, certainly when the last government was trying this, and they went the right approach. They went to an impartial individual, impartial committee. They travelled the province. They listened to the concerns. After the Norrie report came out, I was on the school board of River East School Division, and the then-member from Springfield, the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the then-member from Rossmere, they sat down with the board because they were all government members, and they said: What does River East School Division think and what do you feel the effects would be? I will tell you, that was a pretty hot session and the Member for River East can vouch for what I am saying. There was no sugar-coating at that meeting. We told them what the costs would be and what the effects would be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they sat and they took notes and they listened and they did the right thing, as this Government should have done. They should have at least have had the courage to say: This is what we would like to do. Now we want to hear back from the public.

At least have that courage. But they have got about as much courage as the Minister of Hydro (Mr. Selinger) with his hydro lines through East St. Paul. He did not even have the courtesy, he does not have the guts or the wherewithal, to go up and show up and speak to the people and at least listen to their concerns. What is wrong with that? What is wrong with going and hearing what people have to say? They would have laid it out. I mean, yes, they would have explained what the problems are. But at least listen to the people. At least give them an opportunity to have their voice heard, and those three members that I mentioned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the previous government, they went back and they stood up for River East School Division, which

is saying a lot more than the current Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer). They just let this happen and play their politics with it, not to say with some of the other ones.

* (15:30)

The Member for Rossmere should know that the citizens of his community are going to remember this, because it was a bad idea. You are combining different cultures and the way things are done, and what they have done to Springfield is shameful. It is wrong, and I will continue to encourage the minister, at least reverse, that all of Springfield should be moved and not be splitting up communities the way that they are doing.

This is such a divisive kind of a government, and they spin and spin with their Throne Speech, and it is all flowers and honey, and they spin and mix and spin. When they come out it is nothing but vinegar, and that is the aftertaste.

Second to the Hydro issue, I have yet to have an issue that ever got as many phone calls, and the people are irate. They are concerned. They are worried. It comes from different levels of government, from the R.M. to the trustees, to the parents, to the parent councils, to teachers. As I stand here, I cannot keep up with the phone calls that are coming into my office. I seem to be doing nothing else, and the story is the same.

The NDP on the back bench sit and heckle and laugh about it. They think this is all funny when parents are concerned about their children, are worried about where they are going to go for help when they need it with their special-needs children, where they are going to get some kind of assistance, and the back bench of the NDP thinks this is funny and laughs about it. Shame on them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is not funny. Those concerns are real and they are true and they are heartfelt. I listen to them everyday. You know what? I encourage them to call up the minister's office, and what does the minister's office do? Shunts them off to somebody else. Talk to the school board, talk to this person, talk to that person, because they do not want to hear it. That is so unfortunate for these parents.

I had somebody call me today. They said: We are absolutely at wits' end of what we are supposed to do. What can we do about this? The Government will not listen. The Government is not even listening to their own members. They do not listen to the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), not that he ever says anything, but they do not listen to him. They have not listened to him on this issue, and they are all of a sudden going to start listening to the citizens that they have so maligned? The Minister of Hydro (Mr. Selinger) did not listen when he had an issue.

The citizens are—it is almost a resignation. I have encouraged them. I said, no, no, this is not over yet. We will work this through. We will make sure what works, and we will try to make it work the best we can. But I will tell you, it is not a funny issue. I look at the so-called Throne Speech and you listen to this: The recently announced amalgamation initiative will reduce administration costs while maintaining the level of provincial support, allowing more resources to be directed to the classroom. Really? Since when?

What this is going to cause is nothing but heartache. This is going to cause confusion. This is causing consternation. There are people out there who are very concerned about what kinds of services their children are going to get, and the back bench of the Government thinks this is all a joke. That is the shame behind all of this.

For them it is not a serious issue because, frankly, they play politics with it. They have made sure that marginal NDP seats, no changes were made there. They have ensured that various things were gerrymandered in a such a fashion that Seven Oaks was not affected, other areas not affected. I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many areas around this province that when push comes to shove this is going to be a costly exercise, and there is a human face to this. I would like to hope that the back bench of the NDP, which is popping champagne bottles and celebrating and dancing on the graves of the school divisions, I hope that at least down deep somewhere they will have a little bit of heart for some of the concerns that parents have for their children, that teachers have for their jobs.

We have had several teachers calling and saying, what is going to happen to me? What happens if now this program is gone? It means I have to drive 80, 90 kilometres to get to a school because now the division boundaries have changed. School divisions are concerned that if teachers feel that there is not a chance for moving up in the division, they are going to move elsewhere. This is going to cripple a school division. It was not thought out, and, most importantly of all, this Government did not take its plan and then go through a process of consultation.

You know what? Nothing wrong with saying, okay, we made an error here. Fine. We listened to the public and we will go in this direction. There are many, many positive things that the present government could learn off of the previous government, and that is when they realized that something was not working, was not in the best interests—from Premier Filmon on down, when he realized that it was not in the best interests of all Manitobans, he would pull it back and he would make sure that it was representative, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I, unfortunately, have to say that I thought maybe this time one would have a Throne Speech that one could actually vote for, and this is not one of them. This is an unfortunate, very unfortunate time to have had such a weak document. Now was the time for the Government to stand up, to show direction, to show where it was going, and it did none of that.

I refer to the motion that was moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) and, certainly, we have put a lot of different issues in there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, many of them in agriculture. I know the farmers in my community are having just a brutal time. Never before have they had this kind of moisture. I know that is no fault of anybody. That is what happens. What they would like to do is at least have a chance to address the Government in a meaningful way, and all that they get is spin.

I will conclude by saying that I will not be able to support the Throne Speech. I will be supporting the motion by the Leader of the Official Opposition, because this speech is just not good for Manitoba. Thank you very much.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel honoured to address the Throne Speech. Before I comment on the Throne Speech, I would like to welcome back all the members of the Legislature.

I would also like to recognize the pages, and I hope that they have a learning experience as they serve in this Chamber. As a former Canadian history teacher, I know that this will be something you will remember all your life. The experience of having the opportunity to serve as a page in the Legislature is an experience that many of our youth would relish.

At River East Collegiate, where I taught for many years, we had a history club, and we would take tours to different places, historical places. One place we went to was the Legislature. I can remember we took students to see the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson). We visited her in her office, and they appreciated it very much. We went to see the then-Leader of the Liberal Party, Sharon Carstairs. We would go through this building, and the students always appreciated that, but the pages here have an extra experience, a very deep experience. I hope you enjoy it, and I wish you the very best.

It has been mentioned already, three of these students are from River East School Division, but one is from River East Collegiate. I take pride in that, because I taught there, and I appreciate River East Collegiate. I am a little biased when it comes to River East Collegiate or the River East School Division.

I also welcome back the staff of the Legislative Assembly whose work is appreciated by all members. Here we have the Sergeant-at-Arms who is very helpful, the Clerks whom we often forget, the Hansard staff right here. We appreciate your work.

I would also like to recognize the six new interns who are working with both caucuses in this Chamber, and I wish you well in the coming years. I am sure this will be a practical experience after many years of academic studies. I have read their biographies, and I am impressed with your achievements in the college and university. Four have a BA degree, and two have

an MA degree. That speaks very well for our interns and speaks very well for our youth to have this kind of an education at such a young age. It is appreciated.

* (15:40)

I feel honoured to address the Speech from the Throne because it fulfils our election promises. Now, if you listened to the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), he would, of course, say very differently. We made promises two years ago, and we have kept those promises. We are continuing to fix health care. We promised to give our young people hope and balance the Budget and live within our means. These are just a few of the things, promises that we made that we have kept. I would say we have kept our promises.

As the MLA for Rossmere constituency, I believe this Government has presented a fair and responsible Speech from the Throne that balances realities of today with our visions for tomorrow. The Throne Speech reflects well for Manitobans as a whole. It is a Throne Speech that we can be proud of. That is because it well demonstrates where our values and priorities lie, which is with our families and communities.

Actually, the Member for Springfield spoke a long time, and I was listening to what he said.

An Honourable Member: He did not say anything.

Mr. Schellenberg: Yes, someone says here he did not say very much. It was a lot of political spin. It was an election speech, and he should save that for two years down the road.

Before I get into details of the Speech from the Throne, I would like to comment on September 11. The world has certainly changed for us in North America. We often hear of terrorism in other places or other continents. This act of terrorism has had a great effect on us. Fewer people are flying or going on holidays. It has had an impact on our economy and on our lives. September 11 has had far reaching effects on all of North America.

This last Remembrance Day, which took place on November 11, had a larger attendance

than in past years. The sale of poppies increased this November 11 because the terrorist acts on September 11 have changed our society. People are thinking more about safety of ourselves and our community. There is a real appreciation for our fallen heroes. There is a real appreciation for our veterans who have served over this last century. That came out in our Remembrance Day across Canada. It is very much appreciated.

After the terrorist attacks two months ago, we live in a less certain world. The Speech from the Throne addresses this issue very well. The Government will be introducing security measures to address the fears of our citizens. For instance, the recent security bill aims to amend several acts, which includes harsh punishment for using a phoney ID and improved security around everything from issuing birth certificates to the use of crop dusters and pesticides.

Public health officials will be given the power to detain an individual suspected of having an illness which is contagious or life threatening. Private security guards will have to upgrade their training before they receive a new licence. These are just a few of the security measures that will be before the Legislature for debate.

Also, the Premier (Mr. Doer) has appointed an all-party committee to study and make recommendations for security. I applaud the Premier for showing leadership and having a vision on security, a job well done.

I heard the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) speak here. He never once mentioned any of these security measures we are about to pass, not once. I heard the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) speak to the Throne Speech. I would like to respond to a few of the things that he said. Basically all he said was cut taxes, you know, for my friends. Last spring he kept asking for tax money for his Kenaston Underpass. This is a contradiction. If you cut taxes, you do not have money for public infrastructure. All the way through his speech he wanted to cut spending. At the same time, he and his side of the House want more money for farmers, health care, for bridges, for drainage, for personal care homes, for hospitals, for schools, and the list goes on. They want money

but, yet, at the same time they want to cut taxes. The two do not agree.

The Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) says we have no vision. Well, I want to point out that he and the people on their side of the House have a different vision. They do not have a human focus. I remember in the last election I was speaking to someone. They said they were going to vote for us. I am always interested what it is that makes people vote for you or not. I just prodded a bit, and they said: Your party has a human focus. I said: Where? They pointed out health care, they pointed out education, and they appreciated that.

Our vision is to assist working families. We gave tax breaks to small businesses and families and homeowners. This is not something the Member for Fort Whyte would advocate. Very different. We have a vision. They have a vision, but we are very different, and I am proud that we are different. All the way through his speech, he hardly mentioned education or health. These are not that important to people on the other side of this Chamber.

Of course, the Member for Fort Whyte, I find it rather interesting, spoke about the arena. I would like to say something about the True North complex, but before I say something about the True North complex, I would like to present a little historical perspective on arenas in Winnipeg.

In the '95 election, which I was involved in, the Tories gave hope that Winnipeg would get a new arena. Filmon even promised \$10 million to a new arena. Of course, he would keep the Winnipeg Jets here, and we would have this professional NHL hockey team here. All these promises. I must point out the Member for Fort Whyte was front and centre of this movement to construct an arena, keep the Winnipeg Jets here. Well, two days after the election, the deal fell through and the Jets were gone. *The Winnipeg Sun* headline said: People were duped. The people were very disappointed. They had all this hope built up, and it fell through after the election.

The point is the Member for Fort Whyte and the people on that side could not put the

puck in the net, and today they are criticizing us, you know. The end result is there is no arena, and we do not have the Winnipeg Jets here in Winnipeg. That is the story of the Tory policies on arenas.

* (15:50)

Also, I remember how the Tories were campaigning the year before the 1999 provincial election. Their MLAs, their Cabinet ministers could be seen touring hospitals. Of course, they would have their cameras along because they are great at image politicking. They are great at that. They would be seen in the local paper inspecting the hospitals, but all they wanted was a few photo opportunities, a few headlines, just image politics. All they wanted was news headlines, which they got, but the people knew better. They did not fool the people. We know what happened in the election. There was a total rejection of their health care policies, total rejection of their vision of health care. As the election was approaching, they curtailed their hospital tours because the hallways were full and it was sort of becoming embarrassing.

My own experiences of Concordia is this today: You go through Concordia, it looks cleaned up. Very few if any people are ever in the hospital at Concordia Hospital. I am not saying it is perfect, but it is much better. It looks like it is cleaned up. Actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the misfortune of going to the emergency ward before the '99 election, and you know what? There were about 35 people in the hallway. All my neighbours were there. I could not campaign out in the street, but you just go down the hallway, half of North Kildonan was there. Today you go there, it looks much better.

Then there was the frozen-food fiasco. Well, I will not go into that. A real mess. Then there was the issue of firing a thousand nurses. No wonder nurses did not support them. Of course, there was the issue of the firing of a thousand nurses. Of course, they did not support them in the last election. Also, they were at war with LPNs, with RNs, with doctors, with home care workers, you name it. They are tremendous at going at war with different groups. They had no vision in health care. We have done more in two years than they have done in ten years.

I remember the Home Care Coalition coming to Rossmere. They put up these signs. It looked like Christmas, signs all over. The Tories, their policy was to privatize, make a little money out of home care. Privatize it. That was their vision. But the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) did not mention health care in his address to the Speech from the Throne. The people have not forgotten the mess that they left. They have no credibility on health care in this province. They changed ministers three times, and it was not the ministers who were necessarily doing a poor job. It was the vision, a policy of the party to privatize, to cut back. That was the issue. The Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) was in there a short time. It was not a reflection on him. It was a reflection on their health care policies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to turn to education for a minute, and there is a lot to say on that. Here again the members opposite often made tours to schools. I remember they would visit River East Collegiate, and you could see their Minister of Education and some of their MLAs inspecting a computer room. What they wanted to tell the public was they cared. I always found it very humorous when they visited schools. They did not do anything for schools. I do not know why they would go there. But, anyway, they were in schools. Of course, they wanted a few photo opportunities for the local press and for their election literature. But parents, teachers and administrators knew better. There was no leadership in education. They did not work with teachers and parents to better education. They would attack and blame the teachers, blame the educators. It was always someone else. Last election, the people dealt with it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were at war with educators. Many people across this Chamber know they made a mistake. It will take a long time for people to forget the relationship they had with educators in the province.

We have a very different vision than members opposite. I just want to correct the record on this. Adult education now is a topic in this Chamber and in the news, but there was a mess left in adult education from the previous administration. We had to sort of clean up frozen

food. We had to clean up the hallway medicine. Now we have the job of cleaning up adult education. I am sure our minister and our Government will do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to point out some of our achievements in health. More nurses are being graduated than at any other time and twice as many as five years ago. Tories fired a thousand nurses. Many are still in Texas, California, Arizona. Some just changed profession and they got out of nursing. They had enough, left it.

I remember speaking to a friend of mine, and the person said: We are going to visit our daughter in the United States. I said: Texas? She said yes. I said: Is she a nurse? Yes. That is where our Canadian nurses went. Many went south.

We have opened 15 additional spaces in medical school. Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$73 million has been dedicated to new and replacement equipment like CT scanners. We have done the amalgamation of two levels of bureaucracy and health.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information has recognized our plan for ending hallway medicine as the best in the country. Many provinces are using our plan to reduce hallway medicine.

I have already said this. When I go to the Concordia Hospital today, the halls are basically empty. I have congratulated the staff and the CEO for solving this problem.

We have added over 400 training spots in health care for professionals such as doctors, nurses, health care aides, ultrasound technicians, lab, X-ray technicians. Health capital spending is proceeding with major projects at the hospitals in Beausejour, Thompson, Winnipeg, and just recently we announced a \$58-million project with the Brandon hospital, tremendous. When have you ever heard that before?

We are also establishing a family doctor register to make it easier to find a family doctor. Our Government bought 80 new ambulances. These are just some of the achievements of our

Government in the last two years. I could go on with that list. That is just some of the things, some of our achievements, some of our successes in health care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a vision in health care and our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has done an excellent job. He has done more in two years than the Opposition in ten.

I would just like to turn to education for a minute. As a long-time educator, I would like to list a few of our achievements in education. University and college tuition for education was reduced by 10 percent, increased tax credits for students. We introduced bursaries. As a result, there has been a 12% increase over the past two years. More of our students are going to university and colleges, because we promised in the election that we would give them hope. The attendance proves that we did give them hope.

After years of neglect, we invested \$50 million at the University of Manitoba to be matched by the university's own funding. We have invested \$14 million at the University of Winnipeg, \$5 million to Brandon University, \$30 million for the downtown campus at Red River Community College. We have given our youth hope. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this shows the leadership and vision we have for our universities, our colleges.

* (16:00)

In the public schools, we have rebuilt trust with educators and groups. The Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) has visited over 150 schools over the past two years and reversed the Tory practice of fighting with educators. Also, we have invested \$47.5 million more in our schools in the past two years, and the Tories' increase was \$15 million from 1995 to '99, and, of course, cuts in the early '90s.

In the coming year, there will be more emphasis on history, geography, citizenship, another point that I really appreciate as a former history teacher. I would like to point out the morale of our teaching staff has been at an all-time low, but the Minister of Education has made great strides in improving the morale of the teaching profession. Of course, our Government, during the election, promised to cut YNN.

We did, and it is quite popular with the people of Manitoba. We have a very different vision than Tories in education. Investing in young people is an investment in our community and the economy of Manitoba. That is what we believe, and that is how we are very, very different.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to say a few words on agriculture. Although I am not on the farm at the present time, I grew up on a farm, and I appreciate farming. I hear members opposite pretend they are the defenders of the family farm and also they are the experts on farming. What I cannot understand is why they gave up the Crow rate. They should have kept that Crow rate money in the west. If they did not want to use it for supporting railways, keep it here for other things. They gave the money back to Ottawa when they should have kept the Crow rate money here for crop insurance or for other uses. They could have used it for the young farmers. Members in the Opposition lost it. They gave it back to Ottawa. Now they want Ottawa to return it. Well, once Ottawa has that money, it is very difficult to retrieve.

Also, I am very concerned about the Wheat Board. If the Tories ever get back into power they would probably get rid of it just like they did the Crow rate and just like they did MTS, and the people will pay for it.

We have improved drainage for the farmers. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) has pointed out very clearly, drainage was cut. The money was not there in the Tory years. We have developed the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, which monitors the increase in all these hog barns that are going on. It makes all the stakeholders have input into the expansion of hog barns. We have equalized hydro rates right across Manitoba, which is very much appreciated by the farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I was to give you just a general overview of things in Manitoba, we see good things happening here. For instance, business is doing quite well in Manitoba. I know there was a setback after September 11, but it is doing very well. Investment is up. We have a low unemployment rate. Youth are working. We have the business nominee program, which brings in immigrants. We have tax cuts for small

businesses. We have a balanced Budget. We are paying down the debt. Our stabilization fund is growing and we are paying down pension funds. We have had great times for Manitoba, and yet from the Opposition we hear gloom and doom.

There are times when people ask me about taxes, that in Manitoba the taxes are too high. What I do is I give them the 2001 Manitoba Budget. In the back I point out to compare Manitoba to the other provinces of Canada. When I do that, they never call back again, because they are very satisfied. They will find out that our hydro rates are also very low. They will find out we pay health premiums and Alberta still has them. The Autopac is one of the lowest and the living costs are very reasonable. So when I hand out this Budget to them and they compare our province with other provinces, they appreciate it and they appreciate living in Manitoba.

There is another area that I would like to just touch on. The Minister for Family Services (Mr. Sale) does an excellent job. I would just like to point something out on Family Services that we have done. This often does not get noticed too much in the news media but is very much appreciated by many families in Manitoba. We increased day care by \$9 million in the year 2000, additional \$4 million in the year 2000 for an overall increase of \$13 million, or 27 percent, because we care about our children. We have more spaces, more resources for children with disabilities, and of course there have been wage increases for workers.

There is another new direction we are going. We are developing parent-child centres, a program that was cut in '93. We now have 25 parent-child centres that support early childhood development in schools, community centres, friendship centres across the province—a tremendous investment in children. This will often break the cycle of poverty.

We also have the Healthy Baby program, which is doing very well. I would like to refer to the National Child Benefit restoration which we have done. We restored the National Child Benefit for children six years old and under on July 1, 2000. So we are restoring the National Child Benefit. We sort of say on our side of the

House that children are important. Children come first. It is very much appreciated by Manitobans.

The Neighbourhoods Alive! is another program that is doing very well. We have invested \$8 million over four years for the delivery of Neighbourhoods Alive! programs. The programs through Winnipeg consist of housing and helping the homeless people in our cities.

Social assistance has dropped in our province, a drastic drop, which is a very good sign. So I appreciate what the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) has done for Manitoba and Manitoban children.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that our economy is in good shape considering the times. Manitobans appreciate the work we have done in the last two years after ten years of Tory rule. As I go door to door in Rossmere or in other places in Manitoba, people appreciate the work that we have begun. We have not finished our work. We have two more years, and they are looking forward to more of our policies to come into effect. I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): I would like to welcome the new pages to the Legislature. I know Katie Parsons, one of the pages, lives in Fort Garry. It is just a pleasure to have the pages who help us so much on a daily basis here in the House, so I would just like to welcome them here for this session.

I would like to speak to the Throne Speech because the Throne Speech is sadly lacking in any substantial plan for justice. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the Throne Speech actually is quite silent, is totally silent on the real issues surrounding justice in the province of Manitoba.

* (16:10)

It is alarming when a Throne Speech comes out devoid of a plan to take care of the high crime rate here in the province of Manitoba, especially when every day we see paper clippings. Our papers come to our doors. We hear over and over again the headlines showing

the violent crime, the violent things that are happening here in the province of Manitoba on unsuspecting people, people who are relying on this Government to come forward and live up to their election promise.

One out of the five commitments that the NDP government came forward with in the last election was they promised Manitobans, and I quote: We will make our communities safer by tackling the causes of crime with improved youth programs and by ensuring immediate consequences for gang violence and home invasions.

What the Throne Speech neglected to address and what the Doer government neglected to address is the fact that the crime rate has escalated since the NDP have come into government. Indeed, the Hells Angels themselves have come into town along with the NDP government. Having said that, Winnipeg now has 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. quite obviously we live in a city that is not safe. The citizens here in the city of Winnipeg and in Manitoba, and across Manitoba, if we look at the stats for across Manitoba, in most areas it is the second highest in Canada. There is a real problem here. There is a real problem that the Doer government has failed to address with the people of Manitoba.

Winnipeg is at the top of the list of statistics in many areas, but what the stats do not show is homicide stats do not count the bodies found outside of Winnipeg. For instance, the body found by the Morris River would not be included in the Winnipeg stats, although investigation is showing that there is a strong possibility that the particular victim could have been murdered in the city of Winnipeg. So, even when we say Winnipeg has the highest crime stats, that does not necessarily reflect even as high as the stats actually are.

Crime stats in other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may be lower in the actual number of crimes being committed in the city. In the core area there is a big problem. The members opposite have often said they are the party for the people. I have a problem with that. Members

on this side of the House have a problem with that.

The opening of liquor stores on Sunday did not add anything good to lowering the crime rate in the inner city here in Winnipeg. It is an irresponsible government that throws out press releases and photo ops saying: We are a government for the people. When in actual fact, they have opened the pubs on Sunday; they have played a shell game with the crime stats here in Manitoba; and they have had photo op after photo op, press release after press release, which is all smoke and mirrors. It is all talk and no action in the core area, especially in the core area, and a lot of members across the House are MLAs in the core area. Those MLAs should know that a lot of the core area buildings are not insured because of the high crime rate. We have the highest incidence of robbery, and yet people in the core area are especially at a disadvantage. A lot of them do not even report the crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, individuals are afraid of retaliation, and they are afraid of reporting the crime because of the gang activity, because of the high crime rate here in the city of Winnipeg. All these kinds of crimes, when members opposite debate the statistics, the high crime rate here in Winnipeg in the province of Manitoba, they neglect to mention the unreported crime.

I want to put on record that we are in crisis here in the city of Winnipeg, and I fear that that will be travelling all over Manitoba, because I am getting reports now of store fronts being put up for laundering money in small-town areas. I am getting reports of gang activity, more and more gang activity up North and on the reserves. This is a disservice to the people we serve. Members of this Legislature are supposed to have the responsible attitude that the safety of the citizens here in Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg is of paramount importance.

There is another crime that people do not talk about very much, and that is the crime of lulling the people of Manitoba into a false sense of safety with the irresponsible spin on the crime rates and the irresponsible spin on what members opposite are doing when really crimes are taking place more often than really are reported.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, gangs are responsible for the high rates of crime in a number of areas. There is a vicious circle of gang-related crime that involves drugs, stealing cars, robberies, break and enter, drive-by shootings and homicide. So gang activity affects all crime stats.

The Hells Angels, for instance, are notorious for the cycle of crime. Hells Angels, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are national and even global, and the resources far outweigh the resources of the police force. I will get into the fact that we are undercomplement in the police force, and I will back that up with what has happened through this current government, to play a shell game with the numbers and assure the citizens of Winnipeg, that indeed, we have a full complement of police officers on the street when in actual fact that is not the case.

Here in the province of Manitoba, police are limited by resources, support and legislative restraints that have come forward from this current government. The Hells Angels proper are far removed from the front lines. They are hard to find and trap using traditional methods. Manpower is a significant barrier to overcoming this type of crime. Right now in the province of Manitoba, RCMP are withdrawing people to work on terrorism initiatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we look at the headlines—and I want to point out some of these headlines that members opposite need to be aware of. They need to search their conscience and they need to take a look at what is best for Manitobans. I want to ask members opposite is it best for Manitobans: a beaten man's daughter, angry after the attacker gets six weeks; a headline in *The Winnipeg Sun* on November 8, the Thomas Sophonow case, where the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) flip-flopped over his decision, raising expectations that much money could be given to the Sophonow family and getting their hopes and dreams up when he knew full well, full well, that this was not possible due to the time that had passed.

This is the way members opposite are dealing with the citizens of Manitoba. It is no wonder that in this House we are calling on the Minister of Education's (Mr. Caldwell) resignation every day, because with the Minister of

Education, crime is all right. It is okay that he fudged the books. The present Premier (Mr. Doer) is okay with this whole exercise. Our present Justice Minister is okay that the Minister of Education fudged the books. That is okay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no matter what political party we belong to, on either side of the House, it is not okay when we do not service the people of Manitoba and come forth in a very forthright, honest way about the kinds of things that are going on in the area of crime, whether crime occurs by a minister, or a possible alleged crime occurs by the minister or other people. That is something that has to be brought forward, and people have to be accountable.

* (16:20)

Last year, 9568 vehicles were stolen in the Winnipeg area, an average of one per hour. About 8 percent of those auto vehicles, almost 800, were never seen again. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a problem. There are families who depend on their car. They depend on their car to go to work. They depend on their car to take their kids to hockey and soccer and music lessons. When you have an average of one car stolen per hour, disappearing, we have a problem.

When this present government says that there are a lot of police officers around, we are totally safe, well the fact is that six constables were in charge last month of dealing with the auto theft. That is not enough officers to even put a dent in this kind of crime.

We see headlines like "Shooter Gets Eight Years in Jail," "Man Shot in Back After Failed Drug Deal," "Man, 26, Gets Two Years for Sexual Assault." We have heard about the graffiti problem. We have heard about the minister and members opposite saying we are going to clean up this graffiti. We are going to put funding into it. We are going to end this problem.

Well, in *The Winnipeg Sun*, November 20 edition, we have a demand from the public to say that governments must draw a line on the graffiti problem. The paper is quoted as saying: It is not going to go away anytime soon unless

governments start treating graffiti as a serious property crime, not a minor misdeed.

Now, we have heard of a lot of photo opportunities. We have heard of a lot of press conferences in this province from the current members across and especially, from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) saying: We are going to clean up this graffiti problem. The problem is there have been no consequences for people involved in this exercise. Unfortunately, a lot of the graffiti has to do with gang markings. A lot of the graffiti has to do with the need first to clean up the gangs so the graffiti will go away and they are not marking their territory.

The other problem is there are little or no consequences for these people that put graffiti all over the walls in Winnipeg. This is not a pretty sight for people coming into Winnipeg. This is not a pretty sight for people wanting to come in, do business here in Winnipeg, live in Winnipeg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under this Government the perpetrator would have to be a double-digit offender, meaning he would have to be convicted at least 10 times or more for graffiti-related crimes. Under this Government, in order to spend time at the Manitoba Youth Centre, they have to be caught and convicted of this crime at least 10 times. I ask you: What is wrong with this picture? Is it any wonder that we have the highest crime rate in Canada? Is it any wonder that people are being lulled to sleep when members opposite do not come clean with the real numbers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go on: Rape charge dismissed after a woman's invitation revealed. In this story it goes on to say that a man convicted of breaking into or alleged to have broken into an ex-wife's house had the charges dismissed. He was convicted on a sexual assault charge in February and sentenced to three years in jail following that. After that the ex-wife did not report it until four years later. Now, this is a very complicated case. It took hours and hours of man hours and woman hours working on this case to come to the real solution. Unfortunately, with the police complement that is out there right now, this solution could have been arrived at, this charge could have been dismissed much sooner had the manpower been out there to

examine the crime, to interview the alleged victim and get this straightened out. This victim who was charged and later had the charge dismissed should not have had to live through this kind of experience, to be charged for a crime that he did not commit.

A single suspect being sought in a string of five robberies. Court attempts to determine who fired a paintball gun. Now, if it was paintball guns, that is bad enough, but we have in our papers time after time when bullets were fired on the streets of Winnipeg.

So we have a real problem here, and I say to you that this Government said: We will make our community safer by tackling the causes of crime with improved youth programs and by ensuring immediate consequences for gang violence and home invasions. Not only was it very limited in the commitment, but the gang violence and the home invasions continue at a very rapid pace where people do not feel safe on the street. Seniors across Winnipeg right now feel unsafe as soon as dark comes. They lock their doors. Often they will not open it if someone knocks to come over and see them because they know that on the streets of Winnipeg we have a crime problem.

I was visiting a gentleman this morning who was stabbed in a vicious attack with scissors at the Esso station on Pembina Highway. He is out of hospital now. He is back at his job. As I was listening to this gentleman, I was listening to the fear and the uncertainty they have about their safety every time that man goes back to work. That man has gone back to work because he is the wage earner in the family. Now he has fears about being alone. He is trying to overcome them. There are real problems in this justice system with the victims of crime as well.

There is a big difference between the Doer government and members from our side of the House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) pointed that out, and I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a huge difference. We do not solve crime on this side of the House by opening the pubs on Sunday. That is not something that we do. We do not look for photo ops and issue press releases, sometimes two a day, circulating all the

things that we are supposedly doing in the justice system.

Members opposite and the present Justice Minister (Mr. Mackintosh) were silent on crime in the Throne Speech, not so silent on a daily basis when he is out in the hallway talking to reporters. Unfortunately, the plan has been very bad because nothing has happened to solve crime, and a big part of this is officer morale. There is a lack of funding and resources. Police officers in this city and across this province are overworked and underappreciated. Sometimes they themselves wonder why they put themselves on the line when the fact of the matter is they have nothing to support them in the courts and very little to support them in any other way. Someone with a bone to pick with an officer can file a complaint, and the officer will be tied up with internal investigations and that kind of thing for months and months. That takes police officers off the street. It is getting to the point where many young people do not want to be police officers. They do not want to get involved in situations where their decisions might be questioned.

Police officers are very accountable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are very community-minded people. They care about law and order. They care about the image that they put forward to the public. They care about their jobs. There are times when they work all night, and then they go and work most of the day. They work long, long hours, and this Government has not put in the kinds of supports and resources that the police need to do their work. Police are not reimbursed for their participation in inquiries. Police associations have to pay all legal costs. When the second Sophonow inquiry was supposed to occur to find out how much the Sophonow family was to receive in compensation, what happened was that if the second inquiry had occurred, as the Justice Minister first announced, it would have tied a lot of police up, and the incompetence of the Justice Minister in not realizing that the time element had passed is really alarming since in the Justice Minister's office he has a lot of supports. The Justice Minister should have taken some time to take a look and see what he was able to do before he rushed for another photo op and he rushed for another press release to look like the

knight in shining armour. Regrettably, it is all smoke and mirrors. Regrettably, nothing has happened.

* (16:30)

There should be more formal co-operation between police forces and the RCMP, and that is something that this Government should be working on in a more aggressive manner. Funding is no longer available to support this kind of initiative.

So we hear from members on the other side of the House talking about the Young Offenders Act, and we hear about the minister's trips to Ottawa. He makes a big noise about the Young Offenders Act, but we need some concrete things happening here in the province of Manitoba. A lot of good things could be happening to control crime in this city and in this province if the Government would get a plan together, a plan that would show some action to make the streets safe.

Under the funding arrangement by the Province, money is supposed to support fully trained officers ready for the streets, but the number of officers on the street that we hear about includes officer recruits who will not be trained and on the streets for at least one year. Now, they come off and they are visibly on the streets, but they are on another year of probation before they are actually considered fully trained police officers. So our newest recruits who have graduated out of their schools are now on the streets with another year gaining experience.

The current complement is a very unfortunate shell game between this Government and, unfortunately, City Hall. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was an agreement where monies would be put in for 40 additional officers on the streets, and \$2 million was put toward that. I ask this House: Where did the money go? Why are not those fully trained uniformed police officers on the streets?

Well, the answer is very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The answer is because this Government is turning the other way. They are doing a shell game with the numbers. They are avoiding the question. Unfortunately, the recipients of this

gross neglect by the current NDP government are the citizens of Manitoba and the citizens of Winnipeg.

The Justice Minister has increased spending in the Justice Department by 20 percent since 1999, but there certainly has not been a 20% decrease in crime. In fact, as I stated earlier, we have the highest crime rate in Canada. In fact, if anything, the crime rate has gotten 20 percent worse, if not more. Shortly in November, at one point in time, there were 139 car thefts in four days, and there were two murders in one night.

We never used to hear this. We never used to hear on the radio that there is a leg found floating in the Red River or there is a body found in Assiniboine Park. I mean, every day you open the paper there is some very critical, horrible happening that has occurred, and so the people of Manitoba are not fooled. They are not fooled because, in the former government, the former Attorney General of Manitoba did much to put resources into play that would defeat the rising crime rate and get the crime under control. He did much, the former Justice Minister, Attorney General of Manitoba, did much to address victims and the victims of crimes.

In the former government's time, support was provided to the Winnipeg Police Service, where \$30,000 in grants were provided to assist with police officer training and with establishing curfew registry for young offenders. In addition, the Province provided \$2 million per year to fund the additional Winnipeg police officers.

Now, this present government has thought that was a good idea, and they have done the same thing. Fortunately, they were wise enough to follow what the former government had put in place, what members on this side of the House felt was needed. Unfortunately, after this happened, this present government started to play a shell game with the police complement and a shell game with the numbers, and to lull the citizens of Winnipeg into the feeling of safety when they wanted to do that, when in actual fact the citizens of Winnipeg do not feel safe at all.

The former government advised, out of that 40 additional Winnipeg police officers, 8 of those officers were deployed to the Street Gang Unit, 20 were assigned to the neighbourhood

street patrol and the remaining 12 are deployed to the community services centres. So the former government actually targeted where these police should be and were continuing to do that in a more concise manner until unfortunately in '99, when the Government was handed over to the members opposite and the NDP.

Under the NDP watch, things became much worse. So even some of these policies that were copied were administrated and implemented in a very slipshod, bush league way. As a result, the police complement is down on the streets. We have police officers who are overworked. We have police officers who are stressed. They are trying to do the best that they can, but there needs to be more police on the streets.

There are many things that the former government did. The development of Citizens on Patrol was a community program that was started as a ground swell, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the community level. So the former government, under the Filmon leadership, put things into place that addressed not only the police complement but also the community initiatives where youth could be worked with and where citizens would be on patrol, visible, looking out for their homes and for their businesses. So Citizens on Patrol programs during the Filmon time resulted in crime being reduced drastically in those communities where those citizens on patrol were actually operating. They became very, very successful. The former Filmon government provided support for those organizations out of crime prevention funds, and they assisted in start-up costs, such as signage and cellular phones and flashlights. Now, this seemed like a very simple step, but it was one having a very significant impact.

All these good things that happened during the time when members on this side were in office was a pattern for this next government or anybody who came after them. Unfortunately, the present government is proving to be very irresponsible in the way that they are putting the money into place and where they are putting it into place and the lack of accountability in these organizations.

Another thing that the former government did, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the Urban

Safety Program of the Winnipeg Development Agreement, the former government established urban sports camps, with the first one actually being at Turtle Island Community Centre in north Winnipeg. This first site saw 1100 individual youth per month attending a variety of programs, ranging from ball hockey to racquetball to arts and crafts and cultural teachings. It made a long-term impact on the development of the youth in this particular area.

Other Urban Safety Program projects, such as the Downtown Biz Patrol and the Counter-Action program of the Winnipeg Police Service show that where service providers are given an opportunity and funded to be innovative, they can produce very positive results.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about domestic violence, because domestic violence was something that the former government took very seriously and put things in place that actually went out to the community, had dialogue, consulted with communities, consulted with victims of violent crime and produced the Prairie Research Associates' study of victim services, where 15 recommendations to steer future delivery of victim services in the province were produced. The Lavoie report provided a total of 91 recommendations for dealing with family violence, including nine recommendations concerning the Women's Advocacy Program.

* (16:40)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we hear members opposite saying that the former government did nothing to deal with the crime issue, I take them to task over that erroneous statement, because in actual fact there were many initiatives that were started, supported, planned and carried through in a very logical manner to make a difference.

In order to address the recommendations from the Lavoie report, the Government introduced new victims legislation, as well as an act to provide comprehensive civil remedies for stalking and to enhance civil remedies for domestic violence situations. Prior to the '99 election, the Lavoie report implementation committee was set up to actually monitor the

progress on these recommendations. In addition, four additional prosecutors were hired to expand the Family Violence Prosecution Unit, and cameras were purchased for use by the Winnipeg Police Service officers to videotape victims' statements in serious or historically violent situations.

This is the kind of thing, like the Victims First cellular program, which prior to this side of the House losing government had been in effect for approximately a year and had proven to be a very valuable tool for victims of stalking or domestic violence. This program provided a free cellular phone to victims, which connected them directly to the city's 911 emergency line. This was an initiative that was implemented for the first time in Canada here in Manitoba. This program has now been emulated by Ontario, British Columbia and several other provinces.

So the former government left a legacy of crime prevention practices and support for police officers on the street that did many, many good things to support and address the problem of crime and violence in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on, but I know that time is going and I have just a short time left. I have to say that when our stats show that Winnipeg has the highest homicide rate, violent crime, robbery, sexual assault, auto theft in Canada, we have a real problem. When the Hells Angels came in at the same time as the NDP government came in, we have even a bigger problem. It is time to put real supports in for police officers, to stop playing a shell game with the police complement and get more police officers on the street so those police officers can attend to the rising crime rate here in the province of Manitoba.

I think that for all the photo ops and press releases that have been put out by members opposite, in particular by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), and all the soft talk, it is time that the present government took action and addressed some of the problems that are out there.

We have to, in a time of crisis, when September 11 has just passed and we are faced with new issues, look at the issues facing

Manitoba in a very realistic way. We have to address some of the security issues in terms of crisis in the area of terrorism. I can tell you there is terrorism homegrown here on the streets of Winnipeg. We do not have enough police out on the streets to make sure that that crime rate goes down. We do not have enough support for victims of crime to be able to reassure them that they can live safely here in Winnipeg. In the rural areas we have seniors in seniors complexes who are afraid now that their crime has risen so drastically in the province of Manitoba they now fear for their own safety in the rural areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I grew up in rural Manitoba, and we never locked our doors. We never had to. Where I live in Fort Garry, we never feared crime. It was like a '50s neighbourhood where everyone knew the price of tomatoes and everyone knew their neighbours and still know their neighbours. Unfortunately, we are part of a big city where the NDP government has no idea of how to put a plan in place that will effectively combat the crime. The increase in violent crime has found itself on the streets of Fort Garry with a young man being kicked to death at a hotel in Fort Garry, with the stabbing, the scissor incident, which is something you never heard of, someone being stabbed with scissors in Fort Garry. I have heard of other things as well that have occurred, some crimes that even in Fort Garry were not reported.

So how can we deal with this? This Government, if it is possible for this Government to do this, has to take a serious look at crime. It is really plain and simple in many instances. Get the crime under control. Put the community programs in place where children will be educated, youth will be educated, and citizens will be a part of the solution, not live in fear and be part of the problem.

Another thing, this present government has to stop playing politics with the crime on the streets, especially here in Winnipeg and also in the rural areas. It has risen at such a crisis level at this point in time that we need a plan in place. Instead of all the press releases and photo ops, we need to have a plan that will put the experts on the streets, that will put the police officers, support the police officers, that will enhance the community programs and the youth programs to make sure that crime does indeed decrease in the

very next little while, because things are out of control. I want to tell this present government, this present government has failed. Every one of us has been touched by some form of crime. Very, very few of us have missed that opportunity. Quite frankly, that is an opportunity I would like to miss.

So I put the responsibility on the current government that is here. I will be listening and looking forward to what is going forth in the area of this crime element here in the city of Winnipeg. Thank you.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise here in the House today to put a few words on record. Although a short period of time, 40 minutes, I have attempted to put some things into highlight, certainly what I am very, very proud of in the Throne Speech that continues to maintain a positive vision for Manitobans and in fact speak a little bit as well to the amendment that was put forth by the Opposition.

First, I would certainly like to welcome everyone back to the House. I know we have had a number of new interns that have been working very hard over the last couple of weeks. I welcome them to the House, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and as well all the staff that with their exceptional knowledge keep the rest of us in line throughout many times in here. Their professionalism continues to formulate a vital role in this House and certainly keeps things running very, very smoothly. So I would like to welcome them back as well.

* (16:50)

When we introduced this to the House and we had the Lieutenant-Governor read the vision for Manitoba, I stood very proud. I stood proud because it continues the accomplishments that we have seen over such a short period of time, a period within two years that we have seen health come back on line. We have seen it go from the terrible state that it was in from the prior 12 years of abuse from the previous government. We have seen education come back in line to be funded at the levels that it has been over the last couple of years and in many, many other areas.

One of the highlights in the Throne Speech that I was very proud of was when it was introduced and a big part of it was introduced is The Security Management Act that has been brought forward toward this House. There were nine bills that were presented by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) just this week and certainly a lot of work that went into that. There were a lot of different departments, a lot of different ministers involved.

I know right after the tragic events that occurred on September 11, the Premier (Mr. Doer) took very quick action in contacting members opposite and within a short period of time formulated an entire security task force that involved all members in the House, the Leader from the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) and also the other official leader of opposition as well as four ministers from this side. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have met frequently over a period of the last few months to tabulate and formulate options for this House in some areas of concern that are brought to each and every one of us in our constituencies and acted very, very quickly on that.

We had legislative staff work very quickly on putting together bills for us. We had ministers and their staff staying very, very late to do that work. I am very proud of the work that has been accomplished and presented here in front of the House within a very short period of time.

We certainly have had wide-open, general discussions on all sides concerning some of the security efforts that have been done federally, some of the national efforts that have been put into place at the provincial level right down to each and every one of our municipalities. The conversations that took place over many, many hours in those last few months by all members represented in this House have put together what we see before us here today, which is a bill that strengthens Manitoba on some of the security issues and certainly sets a balance between security issues and human rights and rights that people expect here in the province of Manitoba and nationally across our nation.

We had good input from everyone. Everyone certainly had ample opportunity to present any issues that they would want to bring forward

at the level that we had met with, certainly had resources and staff provided to everyone on the task force to ask questions, to get answers back, to be proactive in bringing forth any ideas that anyone might have had. I think it was a fine process that everyone saw a really good conclusion on the act that was brought forward to us here in the House today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister responsible for Health certainly has a substantial bill that is presented within that. It is a bill that I think, after a little debate in this House, will be seen to be one of the best measures that we have taken and the action taken very quickly on his behalf.

The official Leader from the Conservative Party has brought forth a motion that had amended our Throne Speech. I certainly believe that it is everybody's opportunity to present in this House and speak in this House to issues that they feel are important and speak in this House on changes and positive changes that could be put forward, but as I read through the motion, I was more than disappointed, the information that he had provided in here. I do understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Official Opposition Leader is green, if you will. He has been in the seat for less than a year. Certainly some of his other members that have been around for a while might have put some more information in front of him prior to bringing forth the amendments that he did. It is certainly a right to disagree, but the lack of responsibility on the behalf of members opposite in not providing their leader with the facts and true information absolutely astounds me.

When I looked at the first contentious issue that they felt was something that they would like to challenge, I was amazed to see that it was some information regarding health care and some changes in health care. I guess it amazed me from a standpoint where there is mention that there is not a lot done in health care. So I took the opportunity and the time to go back and get some information and start to look at some of the changes that have been made in the last two years as opposed to the previous 12 years. I was quite astounded to look at the accomplishments that this Health Department, directed by our Health Minister, had made in such a short period

of time. I looked at some of the *Free Press* articles that I had saved, and we had saved. I saw the previous leader, Mr. Filmon, walking down the hallway with stretchers lined up on each side of him, and there were 30-some people in the hall each and every day in one hospital during that time in January of '99. Certainly, there were a few members opposite that were with him at that time. Now I look at some of the pictures that are out there; they have been cut drastically. This minister has acted on eliminating the hallway health care that was so prevalent during the previous administration's term.

It was certainly unfortunate, when I looked through some of the other articles, some of the misinformation that was placed forth and misguided, I guess, if you will, information that was placed by some of the members opposite. I saw some of the members speaking that there had not been many positives in cancer therapy and radiation therapy. When I read some of the reports that I had had that were by the press, and I know the members opposite would never say that the press would print material that was not factual, so as I read through this and I look at it, the waiting lists have gone down so substantially in prostate cancer treatment in the province here in Manitoba that they are nearly cut in half in the time that they are used. I guess, when it hits, it hits a little closer to home when I look at and I read some of the articles certainly going back to the early '90s, when in my community in Brandon we had some promises that were made by the former government.

I know the member opposite from Lakeside is speaking. I heard him speak through the '90s and in fact prior to that, where they were saying that, in fact, they were going to commit to some substantial capital funding for the Brandon General Health Centre. You know, I took it at face value at that time. I thought it was certainly needed, that we were going to see some improvements in the health system out in my region, in Brandon. They made the promise just prior to the election, and certainly right after the election that promise was broken.

I guess during some difficult times there are hard decisions that have to be made and, certainly, could be defensible, but the second time, in the next election, they came in the mid-'90s, and

there was another promise made that there was going to be capital investment; there was going to be reinvestment in health care; there was going to be investment put into Brandon General Hospital. I took it at face value again, and then immediately after the election that commitment was broken.

I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that many, many of the people in Brandon and the Brandon region, certainly Brandon, prides itself on a community that represents a large regional base. We have a lot of people who come from areas in and around the Brandon area to Brandon General Hospital. They no longer had any faith in the government of the day. They no longer had any faith in governments that were making broken promises on health care. They were being made over and over and over again.

* (17:00)

I think the thing that amazed me is, again, prior to the election in 1999 you were getting the same promises made by the same tired old government on improvements in health care that were going to happen in the Brandon region and throughout Manitoba, and, you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, myself and a lot of other people included did not believe them. They did not believe them with the other previous broken promises before that.

But certainly now when I look at then, at the broken promises and the destruction of health care that happened throughout this province, and I look at today's headlines and I look at the headlines of October 31, again from my local newspaper, and I see within there—*[interjection]* I am asked to quote what it says and I certainly will, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was not going to, but I think seeing how I was asked, I will certainly oblige.

I will use a quote here that was made on the \$58-million grant to fix up the regional health centre in Brandon. The CEO out there, a well-respected man in the community, a person that has been in and around the community, has been a city manager in Brandon for a number of years, and then he has been the CEO at the hospital in Brandon for five years or six years, quoted: What a red-letter day; 15 years of

frustration about to come to an end, said the CEO of the Brandon RHA. This would conclude certainly a dark, dismal era that they saw in health care over a decade and promises that were made, promises that were broken.

Here is a commitment. Here is a Health Minister and a government that has made a promise, come through with the promise. Promises made; promises kept. This is why people in Manitoba certainly believe in this Government. They believe in the direction that we are taking. They believe in the positive effects that have happened in health care over the last two years.

Certainly when I talk to people—and I know a number of members here talk to people—they say the destruction was so vast in health care that how you have made the progress that you have in the last two years is remarkable, and we just hope that you can continue to make progress.

I will tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, each and every day the rest of us, just like the Health Minister (Mr. Chomiak), get out of bed, roll up our sleeves, get out there and make a difference for Manitobans. It is evident and it is obvious when you look at promises made and promises kept, not hollow promises that are not kept.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I look through and I see the criticism coming from the members opposite, from the other side, I know it is difficult for them to do that with a straight face, and I know that they have the spin doctors on their side writing things that they really do not want to say and do not want to condone about a government that has made so many positive changes.

I know the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), over the number of years that he has been in this House and sat and watched some of the shenanigans going on, often sits and reads a book and shakes his head while the other members are sitting there and flogging this Government on no commitment to health care, because he knows and he has seen the improvements that have happened over the last couple of years, certainly, while he was sitting on the other side. In many ways, and in many cases, I believe that history, combined with the present, combines a positive product. There is no

sense in recreating the wheel. There is no sense in making poorer and bad judgments and errors that have been made in the past. I know the member respects that.

I know the member, when he sees a positive thing, will obviously get onside with positive attitudes and positive work that is being done in health care. As he sits there and nods in response, which certainly he would agree that over a previous 10 years when we look back on health care—and I will speak just for a little while on health care because this is one subject that we could go on for a long time.

Certainly, when we looked at 10 years, certainly the '90s, when you looked through the '90s and you saw people that I worked with, certainly people that I worked with, emergency service people, people that were committed to the frontline service, nurses, and the ambulance service and the paramedics in the province and the firefighters and the police service, they are seeing a commitment in health care that certainly makes their job a more plausible and likeable place to go to.

When we saw the members opposite with over a thousand nurses released and fired under the previous administration, and they brought in an American consultant. The American consultant, and I am sure they can remember the name, came in and made suggestions in health care that the members opposite said, okay, we will look at this, as they fired off a thousand nurses. Then they looked around quickly after that, without making too many more other commitments to that consultant report. They saw a health care system starting to go down because they sucked the front lines out of health care. Certainly the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou), I believe, is saying I agree. When we saw the front lines of health care slowly begin to deteriorate and go down, that was the start. He agrees. I cannot hear him, but I believe he is saying I did not agree with that at that time, and I certainly do not agree with it now. I agree with that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at more nurses being trained in the province now than at any time in the last decade and twice as many that are being trained, certainly than from five years ago, we are looking at triple the number of

graduate nurses in 2002 as opposed to '99, 15 additional spaces in the medical school, 9 for rural and northern families.

I know members opposite in the northern communities have got to say what a positive initiative into health, what a positive initiative that this Government is making. We had the opportunity, they are saying to themselves, in a decade, did not think of this initiative, did not do it, did not act on it, but this Government is. So I know they see this as a positive.

The \$73 million dedicated to new and replacement equipment, CT scanners to replace 10-year-old equipment at Victoria and Seven Oaks, patient dedicated MRI for Health Sciences Centre. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as this Government continues to rebuild the front lines of health care, they continue to rebuild the capital investment in health care. They continue to rebuild the frontline people in the health care system. They continue to rebuild the dedication to physicians in the rural community. They continue and we continue to dedicate and build rural communities with the commitment to the ambulance service that is out there, the ambulances that have been purchased and placed in the rural community. The continued dedication to rural communities and health care where they saw it slipping very quickly with the previous government, they are seeing a positive, positive response from this Government.

When we see an added 400 training spots in health care for professionals such as doctors and many of the others that are trained in the emergency care in our facilities, we see health care aides, ultrasound technicians, lab and X-ray techs, occupational and the physiotherapy training that is going on in the province. We see positive changes to the system.

A member opposite is asking who wrote that. It is interesting when you look at the *Free Press* articles. The *Free Press* wrote some of the articles. The *Winnipeg Sun* wrote some of the articles. The *Brandon Sun* wrote some of the articles. I know the member is not looking at the integrity of those folks. I know that he is looking at some of the factual information that is being put forth.

We look at the achievements in the training and the doubled numbers of nurses, more rural physicians, 68 specialists secured for the Manitoba specialist Recruitment and Retention Fund, retraining of 200 nurses, support for more than 300 nurses, reinstating the two-year diploma nursing program.

* (17:10)

Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I know that the members opposite have said to themselves: Why did we not do that? Why did we not have the guts to stand up for health care in the province, have the guts to stand up for health care in their communities. You know what, Mr. Acting Speaker? Many others have asked the same questions and continue to ask the same question. Why did they not do it when now the criticism comes forward? It is absolutely amazing that in the amount of years that they had, over a decade to make those changes, nothing was done but hollow and broken promises.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am proud to say in this House and I am proud to stand in this House and say that in our Throne Speech we certainly are going to continue to commit to health care in the province of Manitoba in the same way that we have over the last two years, in rebuilding health care in our province the way it should be for Manitobans.

I believe, in the last election, Manitobans stood up and voted for a government that they could believe in, and they can believe in the restructuring and the rebuilding of health care by this Government. That was highlighted as one of the initiatives that was in the Throne Speech.

When we look at the next part of the amendment that was made by the Leader of the Opposition, and, here again, members opposite, many sitting across from me now that had been in government, had realized the starvation that had gone on in health care, and they had realized the starvation that had gone on in education. It is amazing when you go through the 1990s, and you look back to the 1990s and its cuts; -2, -2, 0, -2, 0.

The property taxes in Manitoba raised substantially throughout that period of time, but cost of education, and I can use certainly my home riding where we have a fantastic facility, the Brandon University. We have Assiniboine Community College. And when you look through the 1990s at what happened to families, with the inaction and the poor decision making of the members opposite, you look at university that raised over 110 percent in a 10-year period in costs of tuition for students and their families to go to school. You look at the costs of the Assiniboine Community College for people to go to post-secondary training. It was over 200 percent increases in the cost of tuition. Did the members consider the families? Did the members consider the costs of those students? Did the members consider what would happen with those students trying to go to school, and trying to put themselves through school and struggling through that process in the inefficient funding that they made to the education system here in the province?

We have the members over there stand up and they have the audacity to speak to the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) and ask what have you done. What have you done in education, and the groundless conclusions that have come up in this House, certainly over the last week, have certainly been non-factual. They have been like they have supplied their leader with inefficient information.

One can stomach that, I guess. Ignorance is one thing, but certainly personal attacks are something not favoured, certainly, by myself. It leads me to rethink and look at some of the members opposite when personal attacks are being taken with inefficient information. Certainly the ignorance of an issue can lead to improper conclusion, and that, certainly we have seen that from across the way over the last week. It has been unfortunate.

You saw a government through the '90s that had some very, very good years. They had revenues that were increasing; they were skyrocketing; they were bringing in a lot more revenue. They had cut most services to the quick.

So what do they do to balance their budget through those years? Instead of taking the rainy

day fund that was created by members opposite, selling off a Crown corporation that was owned by Manitobans; instead of taking that money and investing that money during times that were good, during times that saw revenues coming in, in this province, that had never been seen before, what did they do? They overspent through the best years that Manitoba had seen through some of the '90s. Instead of balancing their books, and really balancing their books for Manitoba, taking that ill-gotten gain from the sale of MTS and investing that money. Today there could be a billion dollars in there. When now, when the economy is slowing down and this Government is managing the resources, they spent the money. They spent off the rainy day fund during sunshine times.

When you look at the members opposite when they get up, and they talk about their savvy with business, and with the management of resources, and the management of fiscal, and the responsibility, and the fiscal responsibility, you have to ask yourself, if that was your house and you were bringing in more money than you had for years, would you put some away and leave it there and save it for a rainy day, or would you spend and overspend? No, you would not. We saw them do that. And we see them now saying: this Government is running amuck; this Government is spending too much money. They want us to spend more on one hand, and yet they want us to cut on the other hand. You cannot have it both ways. We have not.

From the day we were elected we have had balance. We have looked at the families in Manitoba, and the impacts the '90s had on them, and we have made changes. We have made positive changes in their household. We have frozen and reduced tuition fees for families and students. We have looked at the intellectual ability to generate jobs and an economic vision, here in our province, by enabling students to go to school, their families to send them to school, and not to worry about what they did when the Government opposite was in: is continued increasing costs in their education and stresses on their property taxes because of the inefficient funding on education. So it was terrible times.

Now you are seeing a real change and you are seeing a turnaround. When we look at

education, we have made the university and colleges more affordable. We have increased tax credits for students. Manitoba bursaries introduced in 2000 for the first time in decades. Members opposite, I am sure, look at it now and they look at their friends, and their friends must mention to them, we are going back to a time when it is predictable. There is a plan. There is a vision for the future in Manitoba. We are not continually getting our pockets picked in various different forms. This happened in the previous government.

We are seeing a government that is willing to stabilize the education system with a long-term view of what is possible here in the province. We saw \$20 million go into universities in Winnipeg. We saw 14 million at the U of W. We saw five at Brandon University. We have seen assistance go into Assiniboine Community College and Red River community college that were unheard of for a decade.

So, when I look at what was brought forward, it was amazing that the member opposite, the Official Leader of the Opposition of the Conservative party, was not told this by members that have been around for a while. It was not told of the true facts. It is amazing, when you look at a time of a slowing economy, and you look at what he has got here. It is the Government's failure, he says, in a time of a slowing economy, to provide meaningful measures. Well, during times that were good, members opposite overspent. They spent away the rainy day fund from the Manitoba Telephone System that they sold off, and said they would not. That, to me, is so unacceptable when you look at what happened on that end.

The ex-premier seemed to have this vision that if we sell off the Crown corporations in the province of Manitoba and we privatize everything, well, that will make for a better economy. You look at what has happened on the under-selling of MTS and the shares that many had, and it tripled within such a short period of time. Now, if they were going to do it, why did they not get fair market value for the product? Why did they not get triple what they took in? It was a shame, and it has fallen back in their lap as a shambles.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the members opposite from Arthur-Virden is asking about

Hydro, and that is another one that I know the members opposite, if gotten a chance, probably would have taken the time to put a price tag on Manitoba Hydro. Do you know what? People in Manitoba no longer gave any credibility to the government opposite when they said, we will put more money into health care, and broke that promise. They had no credibility with Manitobans when they said, we will not sell MTS, and sold it. They had no credibility with Manitobans when they now say, oh, but we will not sell off any more Crown corporations. Manitobans, rightfully, do not believe them.

When you look at the vision of Manitoba Hydro, and I know the member from Arthur-Virden mentioned Hydro, that is one of the economic stimulators that Manitoba has an advantage in. When you get into Manitoba Hydro and the benefits from Manitoba Hydro and from the growth in Manitoba Hydro by this Government, I might say, Mr. Acting Speaker, through many decades in this province, we see on the economic side the advantage of Manitoba Hydro.

* (17:20)

Now I know members opposite when they think of their counterparts from Alberta, Premier Klein in Alberta had a vision to sell off some things, and sell off the hydro and sell off many of the resources that they had out there, and we are seeing the economic advantage start to spin to Manitoba. Quite frankly, I think the decision he made was maybe looked at it in giving Manitoba an advantage, maybe wanted to assist Manitoba in an advantage and help Manitoba out by bringing business from Alberta to Manitoba. We are seeing that with stable, guaranteed hydro in this province, the lowest-priced hydro in North America. The advantages are starting to come very clear and the expansion in that area, not the sale of that utility, is a vision of this Government.

Manitobans saw over the last short period of time an economic advantage that they have not seen for years. The main things that have been done to assist people in their homes and businesses in the communities in Manitoba, certainly a 10.5% cut in provincial income taxes by 2003 is an advantage for people in Manitoba.

What did we see in 10 years prior for tax cuts for people in this province? A goose egg, but members opposite can sit there and say, you should have done more. You should have cut deeper. You should have done what B.C. did. You should have done what we are seeing Alberta do.

Now as we kept a balance and a vision, a moderate cut, we saw increases in people's tax credits for their homes increase over the last few years, up to \$400 from \$250. We have seen the stabilization and more money go back into the school system, which, on the municipal end, does not have to be charged by local school divisions. We have seen, for a family of four in Manitoba with a \$60,000 income, a total savings from income and property taxes in 2003 will be \$2,545. Now members opposite can say, you did not go far enough, you did not do what B.C. did, you did not do what Alberta did. I am proud of that fact. I am proud of the fact that we had consistent, doable cuts in areas that make a difference to the people here in the province of Manitoba.

Members opposite might want to see a government run a huge deficit that I guess really, in effect, they did when they spent money out of the rainy day fund in good years. But we look at B.C. now and the great vision that members opposite were bowing to and saying, this is the way to go, this is the race to the bottom, Mr. Acting Speaker. We are looking at some pretty incredible transition now in B.C. We are looking at probably one of the biggest deficits that that province has ever had. We are looking at Alberta with a huge amount of resources and dollars that are coming into that province being overspent in some of the areas. Members opposite want to spend, spend, spend on issues. They want to spend, spend, spend on underpasses. They want to hang Manitobans' hard-earned tax dollars out on frivolous things. This side of the House has a vision. This side of the House has balance. This side of the House wants to assist agriculture. This side of the House wants to assist children in school. This side of the House wants a better medical system. This side of the House is doing it within their means.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, as we go into a downturn in the economy after the members

opposite spent and overspent through the good years, Manitobans are now saying to themselves: Thank goodness we have got a government that can manage funds. Thank goodness we have got a government that has got a vision and a plan for Manitobans, not a do-nothing government that decreases funding for the public and looks at spending, spending, spending. As we see in this province, a payoff of the debt in a more substantial way than we have ever seen before, members opposite through those years where the economy was very, very good and they had overspent, did they start to pay down the debt in a good way? No. They let a liability on the other side, on education, rise and increase. They let the health care system deteriorate, and they let the roof leak at the U of M. They let the engineering class shuffle their papers around from table to table as the roof leaked.

An Honourable Member: The roof is leaking right there.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Acting Speaker, I can tell you, as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faursehou) points to the ceiling, that the Golden Boy is made to shine and the Legislature is rebuilt and that downtown Winnipeg sees commitments that are unprecedented. We see growth throughout the communities. We see building in the communities. We see cranes on the corners. We see people working in Manitoba, and we see a level of unemployment that is one of the lowest in the country. We see a vision for Manitobans. We see savings for families in Manitoba of over \$165 million by 2003.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

You look at the previous record of a government that was in decline probably for the last six years that they were in there, and you compare it to today where we see the Asper centre and we see CanWest Global Communications, 1200 jobs. We see Acsion at Pinawa with modern technology and a new vision for the future in Manitoba. We see hope for Manitobans. We see hope for Manitoban families, and we see a sad government on the other side saying: Why did we not do it? Why did we not make those changes when we had the chance? Why did we not look at taking the consideration of Manitobans into account?

I can tell you. It is unfortunate, and I have mentioned before, that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) is new to this Chamber, inexperienced other than the Brian Mulroney days and the cigar smoke that he had to incur throughout those years and the vision that Brian Mulroney had for this country. He carries that back into the House, but the lack of information I would hope that his members and the members opposite would bring all the facts when they bring forward with resolutions like they had.

* (17:30)

Certainly, in Justice, just on one more point, I would like to say that I welcomed seeing the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) in Brandon as our Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) committed the Lighthouses in the province of Manitoba, including many of the other things the Justice Minister has done in this province. I know she valued being there. I know that, as she mentioned, she was not running for a photo op, as she shifted in front of the cameras and mentioned that this is a good program; this is good. I am sure she would agree with me, but it is a positive step in Manitoba to utilize what is being done in Lighthouses, and expand the program. I am sure she would agree that the funding of the RCMP in the province of Manitoba, at its highest staffing levels, has been a positive by this Government. I am sure she would agree that the auto-theft prevention that was put in place to increase sanctions on convicted auto thefts is a positive step. Combatting the impaired driving and the strong, harsher penalties that have been imposed--

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): It is always a pleasure to stand up and put a few words on the record in regard to the Throne Speech, to stand to follow some of the other members who have put on record some of their views and expressions as to why they feel they are so justly deserving of all the accolades they seem to surround themselves with as they speak on the Throne Speech.

I would like to begin by congratulating the eight new pages who have been chosen to serve in the Legislature. It is quite an experience. It is

quite a time. As we proceed through the session and the committees, I think a lot of the pages will get exposed to a lot of the different scenarios and situations, and I hope they do not leave the Chamber with the idea that it is all antagonism and animosity between the members. In fact, a lot of times there is a lot of co-operation and co-ordination between members as we try to adjust our schedules and do our government business, as you want to call it.

The presentation of the Throne Speech is always a very interesting time for any government, because it sort of outlines and gives the blueprint as to which direction the Government and the party wants to take the Government and their philosophies as to how they feel it should be governed, and what areas of responsibility they feel they would like to move toward. So the Throne Speech itself is a very strong indicator or a blueprint for the Government's actions as it proceeds through the Legislature. The Throne Speech was delivered. I do have some comments to make on the Throne Speech itself, but I also would like to mention the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. Murray) motion to amend the Throne Speech.

I think it is very, very commendable on our leader's part to bring forth this type of amendment, because it actually outlines the shortfalls in a very short period of what the Government is doing and not doing, and why we are bringing forth this motion. There are many items in the motion itself that I believe deserve a lot of comment in regard to what a lot of the other members have talked about.

One of them was, naturally, the hallway medicine. I believe, as we know, in the last election the NDP, at that time, ran a very strong campaign saying they were going to end hallway medicine. They had the solutions. They were going to hire more nurses. Everything was going to be just like peaches and cream if they took office. They got elected. The people started to say, well, maybe they do have some sort of magic solution as to the cure of hallway medicine and the shortage of nurses. The evaluation and the outcome started to be measured as to what happened or what transpired in the short while the NDP have been in government: two years.

Well, we have seen the hallway medicine, they have renamed it. They have changed the hallways to corridors so they could say, well, there is no hallway medicine anymore. So they have changed it to corridors. They have spent money in some of the hospitals re-compartmentalizing the waiting rooms so they have various compartments now. They put the patients into these compartments. There is no hallway anymore so there is no hallway medicine.

They have increased the traffic on the highways going east, west and south, taking patients because we do not have waiting lists anymore. You know, we have gone to highway medicine and taken the patients outside of Manitoba so that they can get treatment. So the stats and the figures that the members have been talking about, why? We do not have these things here in Manitoba anymore, but when you talk to people on the street and when I get phone calls from people that are still complaining about the wait, whether it is for hip replacement or knee replacement or some other corrective surgeries that they are waiting for, the lists are getting longer and longer.

As critic for seniors' concerns, I do get a fair amount of conversations and meet a fair amount of seniors still, and this is one of the things that is brought to my attention a lot, that waiting lists for cataract surgery, for knee surgery, for hip replacement, is growing longer and longer. It becomes very, very frustrating for the seniors to try to get on the list to get these things remedied.

An Honourable Member: Shorter, shorter.

Mr. Reimer: Some of the members across are saying that they are shorter. The people may be getting shorter, but they are still waiting on the lists. This is what the member is referring to, I am sure, but I would think that the people were expecting some sort of change. It did not come about.

The members have said that, well, we are going to have more. In fact, the now-Premier campaigned saying that if we need more nurses, we will just hire them. Well, I want to just give a little bit of quotations and use the Manitoba Nurses' Union newsletter that comes out for

them, their paper. In fact, this is fairly current. It is October of 2001. This was from the president of the MNU, Maureen Hancharyk, and I quote—this is not the Member for Southdale saying this; this is the president of the union saying: Manitoba has the worst nursing shortage in the country. Today, there are more than 1400 vacant positions and a further 1500 nurses are eligible to retire right now. To meet the future nursing needs of an aging population, we need 50% more nurses in the system.

The Nurses' Union themselves are saying that there is a shortage, and there is a terrible shortage of nurses. We do need more nurses; there is no doubt about it. There is a tremendous shortage of nurses right across the country. I could not help but listen to one of the members. I believe it was the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), who said that we had fired something like 1500 nurses. I do not know where that comment keeps reoccurring because I could also say that this is the Government now that has closed two hospitals, but that is just the way the Government is working in playing with numbers.

I should point out, too, in the report that was submitted, it goes on to say two years ago, the newly appointed Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) spoke to their annual meeting where he announced the formation of a work-like task force. The task force spent the next year talking to nurses and developing the report. The report was handed over to the nurses. After studying the report, the MNU leadership concluded there were a number of very positive recommendations that would indeed improve the work life of the working nurses. This looked like a workable document, but what did the Government do? It goes on to point out that following the initial exchange, it was clear that those in the Government who had crafted their proposals had little regard for the report or its recommendations. In fact, not only did their proposal ignore the recommendations, they put further proposals that stood in the direct opposition to task force recommendations. Rather than dealing positively with the recommendations, they proposed rollbacks.

I mean, this is how this Government is now approaching nursing and the nursing situation

here in Manitoba. I do not know whether that is a healthy situation for health care and the provision of health care in this province by being confrontational with the nurses in their initial meetings with trying to come to some sort of resolve on the negotiations.

* (17:40)

There are a number of other things that I would like to talk about in regards to the Throne Speech, and some of the things that the Government is headed for. I would also like to, before I close on talking about nurses, quote some statistics from Manitoba Health itself. This is their nursing resource data, and like I say, this is from Manitoba Health, the Department of Health.

It has a comparison of the years '99, 2000 and 2001 and the amount of total vacancies for nursing positions. In 1999, there were 751 vacancies. In 2000, there were 1110, and then 2001, there were 1464 nursing vacancies. This shows you that the programs, the initiatives that this Government is so gladly crowing about, they just do not seem to be working. The stats themselves, the nurses themselves, Manitoba Health themselves are saying that these are the statistics. But I have heard members across stand up and glow about how there is no nursing shortage, how there are more nurses coming into this system and everything.

Mr. Speaker, I can only surmise that the spinners and the people that are writing their speeches, the members do not read them first. They come into the Chamber here with a preconceived set of ideas and notions. This is what this Government has become. They have become isolated and "turtleized." They keep their head in all the time, and they do not want to hear what is going on around them. So when you get the outside people like the nurses and their nurses' union, and even, as I say, the Department of Manitoba Health coming out with these statistics, and yet the Government will not admit to it.

There is a sensitivity there, that they realize that their policies and their programs are not working, but they will persist. They will talk in front of the mirror, and tell themselves how good

they are doing, and how we are achieving all these great things because the mirror cannot talk back to them, but they could still talk to it.

So, anyway, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are a lot of statistics. I guess it is like anything, you know, we can all play with the figures. These are outside reports that I bring to this Chamber, that I believe are accurate and reflect the position that is brought forth by not only the Manitoba Nurses' Union, but, as I say, Manitoba Health itself, in their analyzing of what is happening with the nursing shortage.

There is something else that I would like to spend a little time on talking about, and that is what we have seen happen with the advertising for casinos and gambling in Manitoba. It is unprecedented the way this Government has jumped into the bandwagon on advertising of casinos. They need the money, so they are advertising casinos. They have these great ads out now: Come for the fun of it. The cha-ching, cha-ching: Come for the fun of it.

I mean, they run these ads in the early evening when children are around. They have billboards. They have these signs. They have all these smiley faces and little fishies floating through the TV on the screen there; Come for the fun of it. It is incredible how this Government is going down the road of wanting to bilk the people out of more gambling dollars.

Then they talk about the expansion of casinos. They are talking now of the Aboriginal casinos. One in The Pas, I believe, has been approved. I believe the one in Brokenhead is coming on-stream. This is a government that is just going hog wild with gambling. They have opened up Sunday booze, so everybody can booze seven days a week. They want the people to buy. They not only open it, they are now advertising it on the radio, you know, for liquor, come to the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for your liquor.

Here you have this great moralistic government there for the people. They have government for the people. Come and gamble. Come and booze on Sunday. Buy your liquor. Next thing it will be 24 hours a day, you will be able to buy your booze. You have gambling,

liquor and just have a great time. Come for the fun of it. This is the new government. Come for the fun of it, because they need the money. Those are the things that they feel. This is the great moral government over there. We are there for the people. Yes.

I have not got the final figures on the casino gambling billboards, but I believe it has to be at least between \$4 million and \$5 million, for this year alone, just to advertise on television and on radio and in print for the fun of it, just for the fun of it. It is terrible how this Government is going down that road. They have opened up the gambling hours. You can now gamble earlier. You can go in for the VLTs. They have redirected VLTs from areas where they got low usage to the high usage so they can get even more money to come through their VLTs. This is a great government for going after the people with possible social problems.

But, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, they will sit here and say: We are there for the little people. We are there for the people who have got their problems.

An Honourable Member: They go to church on Sunday to gamble.

Mr. Reimer: That is right. Just for the fun of it. This is great advertising. But you see, this is a champ. Now if the Sunday shopping is a problem with the NDP, you are in government, you can change it. You can change it, you are government. I hear some of the members on the opposite side saying that they do not like Sunday shopping, so now you can change it. You have the ability to do the changing because you are government, so go ahead and do it. Do not tell me about it. Do it.

An Honourable Member: How about Sunday wine stores? How about the wine stores?

Mr. Reimer: The wine stores? They are open. There are four of them. How many Liquor Control Commission stores are there? So you had it here.

There are many interesting scenarios of juxtaposition between this NDP government. What they say and what they do; oh, that is a

little different. We have seen what has happened with the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell). Well, you know, it is okay for Agassiz to do it, but not Morris-Macdonald, you know, because you know, go ahead, you can fudge a figure. Those are just the double standards that we are expecting here. We expect that.

Speaking of doubles, what is going to be very interesting is what is coming up this weekend. This weekend we have got the big national NDP love-in, Kum-ba-yah, here in Winnipeg. This is going to be fun. You talk about walking the picket fence. There is where the members are going to be walking. Should we be with Alexa? Should we be with the other faction? Should we be supporting the terrorist organization? Should we be doing that?

It is going to be interesting to see how they are going to be handling this on the weekend, because the opportunities for skating—and I must commend the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mr. Lemieux). He, at least, was a professional skater. He knows how to skate, and he will certainly take his skates with him to the national convention. In fact, if I recall the Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Smith), I believe he played hockey, too, at one time. So we have got some good skaters over there that are really going to polish up the old skates on the weekend with the convention coming up.

I should refer to the Speech from the Throne. I think I have got it here somewhere. There are a lot of things that are said in this Speech from the Throne. It is hard to be relevant to not only the Speech from the Throne from the other things. The nuances in the Speech from the Throne are always very innovative and creative. There is a creativity of hatching a Throne Speech that, I think, is marvellous at times, the way the words and the wordsmiths do it and the people that get involved with coming up with the Speech from the Throne.

* (17:50)

I have got to just point out a few things in the Speech from the Throne. This is when they are talking about bills that will be introduced. I am really going to be watching for this bill here.

It says: in addition, bills will be introduced which will recognize the important role of community volunteers. Now, what kind of bill would that be? I mean, volunteers are important. They are in the community. Now, what kind of bill will that be that recognizes community volunteers? What will that be? That is going to be interesting to see what that one is.

There are other things in the Throne Speech, because I believe why we are here is to talk a bit about the Throne Speech, and to see what the Government is instituting. Some of the members in government have mentioned in their Throne Speech the tuition freeze at the University of Manitoba, 10 percent. I hear their accolades there. They like to pat themselves on the back. In fact, they are getting strains in their shoulders trying to pat themselves so hard.

I would like to know what they are going to do about the ranking of the University of Manitoba. I mean, it is down to the bottom. It is the lowest in the country. Now what are they going to do about that? I would like to know what the Government's plans are, or how they are going to help the university to get that low ranking by *Maclean's* magazine. I am not being critical. I am just saying that there is a fact there. When the comparisons are done, the University of Manitoba is at the lowest rank. What is this Government going to be doing, because you are the people in power? You have the answers. I am just asking for answers, that is all. I am just asking for answers. I am here on this side now to question what the Government is doing, and where they are going with their priorities, and I just want to know what they are going to do about addressing that factor.

As I mentioned, the nuances in the Speech from the Throne always, a lot of times, are accolades for themselves and for what the Government feels they might be doing right or wrong. Not very much in there about doing wrong, no, no. But I do find it odd when it is mentioned in the Throne Speech here with the great fanfare: My ministers have worked hard to meet their budget targets, to make progress each year on debt repayment and transparency; oh, ha, ha, and transparency. Oh, I wonder, that was written, I guess, before—did they know about Agassiz at that time when this thing was written?

I do not know. The word sticks out here so obviously. To make progress each year on debt repayment and transparency. That is what we like to hear. We like to hear that transparency, openness in government. We like to hear that hear-hear business over here, because we do not see it though. It makes a difference in what we are doing. *[interjection]* Sometimes I make notes on the side, and I cannot always say all the notes. *[interjection]* No, I read them all the time. I need a speech out of it. I got this in. *[interjection]* Yes.

I am going to hold the Government, though, to one promise they made in the Throne Speech here, and the year is coming up because in here it says: This year, your Government will establish a family doctor registry. I would think that you have now, what, about six or eight weeks left. We would expect an announcement from the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) very, very shortly on this. I mean, it is in the Throne Speech this year. So I look forward to that announcement, to have a family doctor registry.

This Minister of Health works very hard, and I will give him credit. He works very hard, because being a Minister of Health in any government is an onerous job. I question why the Premier (Mr. Doer) would want to add added responsibilities to this Minister of Health in trying to look after the people of Manitoba and all the departments that go with Health. It is a huge undertaking. Yet, the Premier has now added more to the Minister of Health because now he is the Minister of Health to mandate mosquito control measures. Now, I mean, is this Minister of Health going to have time to go out there and do the larvicide testing for mosquitoes? Why does this Premier add all those additional responsibilities of looking after the mosquitoes here in Manitoba? That is something that I think should have been talked over with Cabinet, someone else with less responsibilities, or not as much time. I should not say less responsibility, because every minister in Cabinet has a lot of responsibilities. But there are degrees of responsibilities. The minister of highways, a minister that looks after the highways for all the health patients that are going east and west and south, he might have time to look after the mosquitoes, because he is from the North and, I believe, there is a fair amount of mosquitoes up

there. So he might be well aware of the problem with mosquitoes. It should be a rural member, you see, and yet, the Premier gave it to another urban one.

I have been up to Thompson. There are mosquitoes there. There are mosquitoes, black flies, horse flies, and ravens the size of—

An Honourable Member: Not many Tories, though.

Mr. Reimer: That will wait until next time. I find that odd that the Premier of this province would add all that added burden on to the Minister of Health, that now he has to look after mosquitoes. That is something that is really uncalled for.

I will ask that there is also the introduction of photo technology for enforcement of traffic light infractions. The one question I would ask with that is, the money that is realized by the provincial government, because as you know, every ticket that is written there is a certain portion that is allocated to the provincial government. I would hope that this Government would look at that money as a way to redirect toward driver education, or something specific that would improve the driving habits for Manitobans.

Driver education is something that, I think, that everybody agrees, I believe that all members in this House, driver education for young people is one of the primary ways to help people understand proper etiquette for driving. If money was directed, out of that photo radar, or photo technology for the red light cameras, the terminology is not that important.

But the money realized should go specifically to one area. I would recommend, and I would commend the minister to take that forward. I am glad that the minister is listening, and I believe, as a responsible person, he may

have allies if he decides to go down that route. I do not believe it should go into general revenue, and not be directed toward a specific area of improvement for either driver education, or for some sort of safety initiative in regard to young people. I think that that is something that this Government can do. I believe it is a good way to look at the utilization of the funding.

I am glad to hear there was at least a mention in the Throne Speech about seniors. There was one line for seniors, and it says a new package of new safety measures for Manitoba's seniors is being developed across provincial departments. Now, I guess I have to ask who is going to be doing it? When will it happen? Because, if anything, seniors in Manitoba represent one of the most valuable commodities of our province. They are the fastest growing segment of our population.

In fact, I believe when I was Minister responsible for Seniors, I saw statistics were showing that Manitoba, within the next year or two, will have one of the highest proportions of seniors of any other province in Canada. There has to be a recognition of the concerns and safety and the wherewithal in regard to seniors. I would encourage this Government to look at appropriate and effective ways to deal with any safety measures in regard to seniors. As I mentioned, it is a very, very valuable commodity in Manitoba, and something that I feel deserves a lot of attention in provincial relationships between departments. I am glad to see that they are looking at that. I will watch for that. I am not too sure what that all involves.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Southdale will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 21, 2001

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