

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

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

### PRAYERS

### MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for River Heights, on a matter of privilege.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I rise to raise a matter which occurred yesterday and that I consider was of great disrespect to our Legislature and its proceedings. I would like first to put this matter in context.

Yesterday a very important event occurred, the proclamation of legislation that provides for Aboriginal communities to have control of their own child and family services legislation, a move that is the first of its kind in Canada, a move that was rightly set at a ceremony yesterday afternoon to be a very important step. The ceremony was excellent. It was well put together and it drew people from the Aboriginal community and other communities from all over Manitoba.

The difficulty I have, Mr. Speaker, is that this very important ceremony was scheduled at the precise time the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) was scheduled to give his reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I may or may not agree with what the Opposition Leader has to say, but I am here to defend the importance of his being able to speak in his major speech, reply to the Speech from the Throne, at a time when the Government has not scheduled a major event so that all other members of this Legislature can be there to listen. There needs to be respect shown by this Legislature and by the Government for all members here, and on particularly important occasions as when the Leader of the Opposition is to give his reply to the Speech from the Throne, there should be respect and consideration given by the Government.

To schedule such a major event at precisely the time the Leader of the Opposition is giving his reply to the Speech from the Throne is, Mr. Speaker, wrong, wrong, wrong. Not only is it disrespectful, it is an insult to this Legislature. It shows great disrespect for the Legislature to have the Government schedule an event of such significance at the same time as the major speech in this Legislature by the Leader of the Opposition, whoever he or she may be.

I attended the ceremony yesterday to transfer control to the Aboriginal child and family services. I attended that ceremony because of its historic importance and I also wanted to know what was the reason it was put on in this Legislative Building in Room 200, a prime place, at the same time as tradition has it that we have the speech from the Leader of the Opposition.

With respect to this matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I was not reassured. To the Leader of the Opposition, I say to you at this ceremony it was specifically mentioned that you, as the Leader of the Opposition, had been invited. It was clear to all that you were not there and it was easy for people to believe you were not there because you did not care or were not interested. It was never explained to people in the room that this ceremony had been scheduled at precisely the same time as tradition has it and when you were scheduled to give a major speech in the Legislature. Not only was the scheduling done in a way that you could not be there, but indeed there was a mistaken and misleading impression left with most of those attending. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, it was a sad day for the Legislature.

\* (13:35)

I bring this up, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of personal privilege because I feel that the rights and the dignity of the Legislature that we all belong to are very important, that the democratic traditions that we all hold dear are very important and that those rights were trampled on yesterday and they were diminished.

I now move, seconded by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that this matter of privilege that I have raised be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before recognizing any other member to speak, I would remind the House that contributions at this time by honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Just on the background, of course, as to the prerequisites for a matter of privilege that it be raised at the earliest opportunity, we are not going to take issue with that, although the member certainly had full opportunity to raise this in the Legislature yesterday. But is there a prima facie matter of privilege?

Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* sets out the privileges of Parliament, our rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers. *Beauchesne* goes on to say they are enjoyed by individual members because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its members. I just note that, under Citation 31, statements made outside the House by members and indeed I think it has been expanded that matters outside of this House are not used as the basis for a matter of privilege, and that is Citation 31(3), in terms of statements being made by members.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the facts then, is this a matter about the essential prerequisites for the execution of the powers of members or the House? Absolutely not. In terms of background, the usual practice has been, and I think it has been very rarely not followed, for the Leader of the Opposition to rise on the first day of debate following the mover and seconder in the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray), and rightly so, made a decision to avoid having the speech perhaps interrupted and spoke instead on the second day. There was no predictability about that decision that was made rightly by the Leader of the Opposition, and he made it.

But one thing was certain, Mr. Speaker, that this very important ceremony, this historical ceremony, had to be planned carefully because it involved not just many people but involved representatives and indeed the leaders of Aboriginal governments, people who are very busy. I know from the experience in my office how difficult it can be to get together as few as three people, let alone hundreds of people. So that was an event that had been planned for many, many weeks, if not months, I understand. So that was the circumstance and how it turned out was as a result of circumstance.

I might note that the ceremony, I understand, began about half-hour after Question Period and lasted one and a half to two hours. The Leader of the Opposition, I understand, spoke from about three o'clock to three-thirty. So we are not talking about removing the ability of the Leader of the Opposition, who could have asked for different scheduling, I might add, if he wanted to promote that but it did not prevent the Leader of the Opposition from attending a large part of the ceremonies. It did not prevent anyone from coming in to the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we also have Hansard that is available, and members here know that sometimes important speeches are given in this House with very few actually in the House, albeit with quorum, and the matters are reviewed in Hansard. That is a good value. It recognizes that members in this House are very busy and try to balance their attendance in the Chamber along with other commitments to their constituents and to their policy areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the circumstance that arose was one that is certainly nowhere near a matter of privilege. It was a matter of an event that had been planned for some time and a change or a scheduling by the Leader of the Opposition of his speech that happened to coincide with that event, a speech that was half an hour, an event that was an hour and a half.

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do believe that the member did rise on the first occasion to raise this matter to the attention of the House and to you. Indeed, this is somewhat

of a delicate situation as well because I think yesterday was a historic day for Manitoba and for the First Nations people in this province.

The minister's statement that was made in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, which is indeed the official place where we make statements with respect to very important events like this, was responded to by members of this side of the House and that is the official congratulatory message that we were able to convey, not only to the members who were responsible for ensuring that this event took place yesterday, but indeed to the First Nations people as well.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Leader of the Opposition not having the opportunity to attend, I think the issue here is more of the message that was communicated at the ceremony rather than the fact that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) was not there. The Leader of the Opposition has an obligation to reply to a very important statement that is made by the Government and that is the Throne Speech. So he took his place in this Chamber to respond at the regular time that the Official Leader of the Opposition usually does in responding to the Speech from the Throne.

I noted, Mr. Speaker, as well, that the Premier did come back to listen to the reply to the Throne Speech. Certainly that is respectful and that shows that indeed there is importance given to the comments that are being made by the Leader of the Opposition as it relates to the agenda of the Government. So that we respect, Mr. Speaker.

What I think is wrong in this situation is not something that happened in the Chamber; rather, it is the impression that was left with many of the leaders of the First Nations people that indeed the Leader of the Official Opposition did not feel this was important enough to attend. There was no explanation given as to why he was not there. That, Mr. Speaker, I think, can be corrected and should be corrected.

In terms of the Leader of the Opposition being slighted, I do not believe that is the case. I believe he was doing his duty as a member of the Official Opposition, as the Leader

responding to the Throne Speech. That is his first and the most important obligation.

I think for all of us in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and the Government, if there is a lesson to be learned from this, that is, when we have historic events of this nature which involve a very significant organization, a very significant group of Manitobans, we must respect each other to the point where we lay aside our partisan politics. We check them at the door, if you like, and allow for all of us to recognize the importance of historic events of this nature by not giving false impressions. I am hoping that we have enough dignity not to do that very thing.

So to that extent, Mr. Speaker, I simply think this was an error and I hope that it can be corrected and will be corrected. I note that the Leader of the Opposition was at the Assembly of First Nations organization when they in fact were signing the agreement. I think it was the AFM. The Leader of the Opposition was there at that event, and that shows that indeed, to this side of the House, that is an important issue.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations people are not all simply partisan to one party. They are like the rest of us in society; they look at all philosophies and subscribe to the one that suits them best. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Speaking to the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) has spoken to the issues of the merit of the point of privilege. If the issue is the possible perception that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) was away and was not involved in his duties, I would suggest that it would be appropriate for the Government to send a letter to the attendees or the representatives making it very clear that he was responding to the Speech from the Throne at the time and was unable to attend the event because of those duties.

I think that, if there are any false impressions, we certainly do not want to be leaving those to anybody in Manitoba about the duties of the Leader of the Official Opposition. Perhaps that can deal with the possible misperceptions that might be there.

I had been in that job for a few years, and I understand the various requirements. I think we can make that kind of information available to clarify the record.

\* (13:45)

**Mr. Speaker:** I think I have probably heard sufficient argument. If the honourable member is rising because he feels there is some point that has not been touched upon, I will hear him briefly. But I think we should move on.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yes, very briefly because we do appreciate what the Premier (Mr. Doer) has just indicated. The issue at hand has a great deal to do with just the respect of the Chamber which we are in, Mr. Speaker.

We would have known back in September that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) would have been speaking, in all likelihood, on Monday or responding to the Throne Speech on Monday. It is a courtesy. It is a long-standing tradition. We do not want to lose that particular point, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate what it is that the Premier has put on the record. We do believe, because there are ways in which things can be misconstrued.

The member from Thompson, yesterday as an example, in his speech to the throne, stated: "Did the Leader of the Opposition even show up at the Aboriginal debate? No, I mean, talk about showing a complete lack of concern."

Comments, Mr. Speaker, are often taken out of context, which can really do a disservice to what responsibilities we have as legislators inside the Chamber. The point that we are trying to get across is the issue of the dignity of this Chamber and providing respect thereto.

We know the Government went to great effort in terms of organizing yesterday's event. We respect that, Mr. Speaker. We respect what it is that has been done. At the same time, the Government, maybe it is hindsight, overlooked the importance, we believe, of the Chamber. That showed, in terms of the numbers of people that would have even been here, and who was here on what side. Without wanting to break the

parliamentary rule, I suspect I should just leave it at that. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I am going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities. I will return to the House with a ruling.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### Provincial Road 313

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** I wish to present the following petition. The background of this petition is as follows:

Provincial Road 313 to the east of Provincial Road 315 is the only road connecting Pointe du Bois with Lac du Bonnet to the west.

The 19 kilometres of Provincial Road 313 to the east of Provincial Road 315 is in very poor condition, has narrow shoulders and winds among granite outcroppings and through swamp, creating very dangerous and very treacherous conditions for residents who live in Pointe du Bois, for Hydro employees and others who work in Pointe du Bois, and for visitors and tourists who frequent the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services consider rebuilding and reconstructing the 19 kilometres of Provincial Road 313 east of Provincial Road 315 to Pointe du Bois at the earliest opportunity.

Signed by Lori Campbell, V. Lange, Eileen Jones and others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

\* (13:50)

#### Highway 32

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I wish to present the following petition. These are the reasons for this petition:

Rural highways are part of the mandate of the Province of Manitoba.

Under the previous commitment, the Province of Manitoba would be covering the costs of four-laning that portion of Highway 32 that runs through Winkler, Manitoba.

The Department of Transportation and Government Services has altered its position and will now undertake the project only if the City of Winkler will pay half of the total cost of construction. The provincial government's off-loading of its previous commitment will cost the City of Winkler several million dollars.

The City of Winkler has now been informed that it will have to wait several years before this project could be undertaken.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider honouring the previous commitment and complete the four-laning of Highway 32 through the city of Winkler, absorbing all costs related to the construction as previously agreed.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Government Services for the construction of rural highways.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the significant and strategic importance of the completion of four-laning Highway 32 through the city of Winkler, especially as it relates to the economic growth and the development of the city of Winkler and its trading area.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the valuable contribution of the city of Winkler and its trading area to the provincial economy and reprioritize the four-laning of Highway 32 for the 2004 construction season.

These are submitted by Alma Brown, Carol Schulz, Helen Letkeman, Dave Penner and others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

### **Co-op Program for Nursing Students**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The background to the petition is as follows:

A co-op program for nursing students at the University of Manitoba was approved by the Senate and the Board of Governors.

This program will provide the opportunity for students to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace through supervised work terms for which they are paid.

Students are hired by participating agencies under supervision of a workplace employee who serves as a mentor.

Students assume responsibilities suitable for their level of knowledge and expertise and will provide patients with much-needed nursing.

The co-op program will enable nursing students to acquire valuable experience by working with a seasoned mentor, become more proficient and better able to handle heavier workloads and increase their knowledge, skills and confidence.

This program will enable students to earn income to help reduce their debt load.

The Department of Health will benefit through reduced orientation costs for new graduates and an increased likelihood that new graduates will remain in the province.

Although the Honourable Minister of Health was unable to attend the round table held on November 7, 2003, he graciously sent a representative who restated his position to work with the students to reach a creative solution.

Several Canadian universities have successfully implemented nursing co-op programs. Several faculties within the University of Manitoba have such a program available to their students. Therefore, students within the Faculty

of Nursing should have equal opportunity and access to a co-op program.

This program will offer students valuable experience and provide the confidence and strength they will need in the future.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly to consider supporting the proposed co-op program.

Signed by Benita Cohen, Penny Davis, Prakash Verma and others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

#### Sales Tax Proposal

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Mayor of Winnipeg is proposing a new deal which will result in new user fees and additional taxes for citizens of the city of Winnipeg.

One of these proposed changes requires the provincial government to approve an increase of the sales tax.

The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Accountability Act requires a referendum to take place before the provincial government can increase major taxes, including the retail sales tax.

The Doer government has been silent on whether they will make the necessary legislative changes required to give the City of Winnipeg additional taxing powers.

\* (13:55)

Taxpayers deserve to have a say before having any major new taxes imposed upon them.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) notify the City of Winnipeg that the provincial government will not allow an increase of the sales tax without a referendum being held as required under balanced budget legislation.

This petition is signed by Barb Siemens, Brenda Roscoe, Vera Mueller and others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

#### Walleye

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition. The background to this petition is as follows:

Fish stocks in Lake Winnipegosis began to decline in the 1960s. The walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis has been in serious trouble for many years.

A similar situation happened in Lake Erie but it was handled much more effectively. In Lake Erie, a sound science-based management program was implemented and the stocks rebounded. As a result, production of walleye on Lake Erie for 1980 to 2001 averaged 182 percent of the estimated sustainable yield.

In contrast from 1980 to 2001, the average annual harvest of walleye on Lake Winnipegosis was about 14 percent of the estimated sustainable yield for the lake.

Much better management of a walleye fishery on Lake Erie shows that good management of a walleye fishery is possible.

The fishermen of/on Lake Winnipegosis have been deprived of an estimated 72 million of income between 1980 and 2001.

Economic models of the effects of such primary income loss usually estimate a significant multiplier effect and that may well mean a loss of several hundred million dollars in economic activity for the region.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:



To request the Minister of Finance and the Auditor General to consider undertaking a thorough investigation of the provincial management of the walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis.

Signed by Ernie Wright, Russell McKay, Clarence Fleming and others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 10—The Gaming Control Amendment Act

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 10, The Gaming Control Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de régie du jeu, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Sale:** This bill will strengthen and clarify the accountability requirements of gaming in Manitoba, both under parts 207(a) and 207(b) of the Criminal Code of Canada, and will strengthen the accountability for all gaming commissions both in municipal and First Nations communities.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### Bill 13—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming)

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau), that Bill 13, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (programmes d'éducation appropriés), be read for the first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Bjornson:** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce this bill ensures that school divisions

provide access to appropriate educational programming to every pupil, and in respect to programming, allows the minister to prescribe standards in a dispute resolution process.

*Motion agreed to.*

\* (14:00)

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, we have seated in the public gallery from Shore Elementary School 25 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Shawn Gaber. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

Also I would like to draw attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Bill and Edie Docking. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

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

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### City of Winnipeg Revenue/Tax Proposal

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** On CJOB last Friday afternoon, the Premier's Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) was asked, and I quote: Can you tell us if you have any plans or if it is possible that you will try to change the balanced budget legislation to allow you or the City of Winnipeg to increase the sales tax?

The Minister of Finance responded, and I quote: The question of whether or not there would be a referendum if there were any sales tax allocation to the City or municipalities was raised in the Legislature today and on that file we have been very clear. We have said let us see what the City proposes, and we are not going to comment on it until they do.

If the Premier has no intention of increasing the sales tax, can he explain why his Finance Minister has admitted publicly that the door will

remain open until they receive a formal proposal from the City?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I will peruse the media Hansard, but we have made it clear on Friday and yesterday and make it clear today, we made it clear a couple of months ago that we are not raising the provincial sales tax from 7 percent to 8 percent.

**Mr. Murray:** Very interesting, Mr. Speaker.

I am sure the Premier was aware that during the same CJOB interview his Finance Minister was also asked, and I quote: Can you give us some kind of a definitive answer, though, as to whether or not this Province will go to the people some time in the next year to ask permission to increase sales tax revenues? The minister responded, and I quote: I certainly cannot do that because there are no proposals to do that by any level of government on the table, so it would be sheer speculation.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier says one thing, yet his Finance Minister says another thing, and he clearly is not closing the door to the Government granting the mayor the opportunity to increase the sales tax. Will the Premier just be up front with Manitobans and tell them if he will be increasing their taxes by granting the mayor the power to do so? What will it be?

**Mr. Doer:** I heard the words "sales tax" and I heard the word "revenue" as part of the transcript in the question, and I recall an *Op Ed* piece by Councillor Steeves talking about if we only had 1 percent of the GST tax rebated, not increased but rebated back to municipalities, cities, provinces, et cetera, for renewal of infrastructure, that would deal with all of our infrastructure needs into the next period of time.

So I would ask the member opposite to recall that Brian Mulroney introduced a tax called the GST. It is also a sales tax. It is a tax that allegedly was going to be revenue neutral. The members opposite were involved very closely with the former Prime Minister of Canada. In fact, I think he is a very close personal friend of the Leader of the Opposition. So, Mr. Speaker, I think our statement has been very definitive to date on the issue.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, while we on this side of the House are opposed to increased taxes, we can at least thank the Finance Minister for being up front with Manitobans. At least he admitted higher taxes are in the cards, considering he was the only member opposite who publicly admitted that the Doer government's promise to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million, we all remember the big promise by the Premier, the Finance Minister admitted it was irresponsible.

I think the Manitoba public will take the Finance Minister's word over the Premier's. Will the Premier take a lead in leadership from his Minister of Finance and come clean about his plans to give the mayor new powers to increase taxes?

His Finance Minister had the courage to be open with Manitobans. Why will he not?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this hypothetical dog will not hunt. We have already stated over and over and over again our view on this one issue in the proposal. I would point out to the members opposite, this is a government and a Minister of Finance for the first time since the Second World War that has lowered corporate income tax and continues to lower corporate income tax into January 1, 2004. This is a Minister of Finance and a government that has lowered the small business tax from 8 percent to 5 percent and raised the threshold again on January 1, 2004. This is a Minister of Finance that has lowered the property taxes on the education portion, unlike members opposite who feigned indignation today after they shafted the education property taxpayer for nine years. Shame on them.

### **Balanced Budget Legislation Amendments**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** The First Minister (Mr. Doer) forgot to mention the minister's raid on Hydro. That is probably his most famous claim to fame.

Mr. Speaker, during that same CJOB interview when the Finance Minister said there were no immediate plans to change the balanced

budget legislation, he was asked very specifically: Does that mean it will not happen? Can you tell me that it will not happen?

And of course, this minister refused to answer.

Mr. Speaker, we know the rainy day fund is now estimated to be less than \$150 million at the end of this year. This is substantially less than the \$350 million required by The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act and down considerably from the \$427 million that was in the fund when this minister took office.

Can the minister indicate how he intends to restore the funds balance to the required level of \$350 million, or is he not concerned because his plans are in the works to weaken the balanced budget legislation?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, in the '99 election, the then-premier of the day who led the Conservative Party of the province of Manitoba, promised the people in northern Manitoba that there would be a dividend from Hydro. That was his promise. He set the precedent. He said there would be a dividend based on the tremendous export sales that that utility had generated as a result of the previous government before the Conservatives having built the Limestone project. I would like to know from the members opposite why he flip-flopped on that election promise and did not provide the dividend and reneged on that promise.

**Mr. Loewen:** I can assure the minister that no one on this side of the House would have taken \$203 million out of Hydro in a year when they only had \$75 million worth of profit. That he can be assured of.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask him to focus on this question. He admitted publicly just days ago that changes to balanced budget legislation will occur. He said it was a possibility. The reality is that despite receiving \$141 million from the federal government that was not budgeted for this year, this minister is still planning to take \$98 million from the rainy day fund to give the illusion of balancing this year's Budget. Clearly, he has no plans to reduce or control spending

and he has no plans to replenish the rainy day fund.

I would ask this minister to be up front with Manitobans and tell them how he was planning to weaken the balanced budget legislation.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, not only did the members opposite promise a dividend from Hydro, but they took the ultimate dividend when they cashed out Manitoba Telephone System. They put \$450 million into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund on top of the \$200-million deficit they ran when they came into office.

Now the member asks how will the Fiscal Stabilization Fund be replenished. The simple answer is that the Fiscal Stabilization Fund will be replenished not by selling off Crown corporation assets, as the members opposite did to enrich their friends and supporters, but by balancing the Budget and having revenues and expenditures in alignment with each other.

\* (14:10)

#### **Fiscal Stabilization Fund Balance**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, this minister continues to ignore the truth. His illusion of a balanced Budget has only resulted from his million-dollar-a-day raid on Manitoba Hydro and his reliance on draws from the rainy day fund.

Since he refuses to come clean about his plans to weaken the balanced legislation, will he at least tell us more specifically how he plans to live up to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, section 3.1, which indicates that the minister shall make every effort to ensure that the amount standing to the credit of the fund reaches at least its target level, which would be at a minimum of \$350 million? How is he going to do that?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** In the last two Budgets before the '99 election, the members opposite took \$185 million in each of the last two years out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. We have never done that. We actually put money into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in our first two Budgets. We are the only Government in the history of this province that actually put

operating revenues into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

The only way members opposite ever replenished the Fiscal Stabilization Fund was by selling off the Crown jewels of this province to enrich their friends.

### **Hells Angels Associations Trial Stay of Proceedings**

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, in 24 hours, the five accused Hells Angels members charged with a number of serious offences including conspiracy to commit murder and extortion could walk free if lawyers to represent them are not in place.

While the Premier (Mr. Doer) did not have the courage to answer the questions on the matter yesterday, the idea of a stay of proceedings one day from now is a very real possibility, and he should not avoid answering the questions just because the Hells Angels were set up under his watch.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier today advise the House if lawyers have been found to ensure this case proceeds and that these accused do not walk?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, this House and Manitobans deserve a retraction from the member opposite. I just refer, if the members opposite have not been paying attention because I do not think they have to this issue, to Mr. Julian Sher, in his book, again, where he said: In Manitoba, the Angels were blessed.

He said politicians had done little to put up roadblocks against the incursions that the bikers have been making in the province throughout the 1990s. I ask the member, the Leader of the Opposition, to apologize for the shoddy research, Mr. Speaker, and for misleading Manitobans on when Hells Angels came into this province.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Justice Minister, they love to pick and choose their quotes.

As is confirmed on pages 380 and 381 of *The Road to Hell, How the Biker Gangs are*

*Conquering Canada*, the Hells Angels took over Manitoba's Los Bravos as a prospect chapter on July 1, 2000, almost a year after the NDP were in government, Mr. Speaker. These Hells Angels prospects became full Hells Angels members—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would just like to remind all honourable members that when the Speaker is standing all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. I would also like to remind all honourable members that we have 40 minutes for Question Period and the clock is ticking. It is your time.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, again I just repeat that these Hells Angels prospects became full Hells Angels members on December 16, 2000, a year after this Premier took power.

However, the real issue is that five Hells Angels associates charged with very serious crimes could have these charges dropped if the Government does not find lawyers to represent them by tomorrow.

Can the Premier please advise if his Government has complied with Justice Holly Beard's order that lawyers be in place by tomorrow, or is it going to allow the victims, the witnesses and their families to continue to live in fear?

The police and the Crown prosecutors have done their jobs. Why has this Premier not done his?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, given the admission that the Leader of the Opposition has the book, I really plead with him now to read it. You know, it is not like somebody goes down to Land Titles Office and files a certificate. The record is clear as to what happened in the 1990s. The road to hell in Manitoba was paved with inattention, inattention by members opposite when they had the ability to do something about this challenge.

Mr. Speaker, I will just conclude my remarks by saying that it is a good thing we have in Manitoba an independent court system. That is where the matter the member raises is being dealt with.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue before Manitobans. This is about witnesses. This is about people that have been intimidated. This is about an incredible inaction by this Government. Rather than wanting to deal with an issue that faces Manitobans, a serious issue, they are worried about a book. How dare they. Shame on you.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the proper research and the proper facts. I lament that the Opposition will not spend the time to know what happened. Indeed, what happened in October of 1997 in this province seems to be lost on members opposite. In terms of the issue, we have been working diligently. I am sure the member will like to quote about the recognition given to the Manitoba government on how we moved quickly on coming into office to put in place the strongest anti-gang laws on a provincial basis in this country.

#### **Hells Angels Associations Trial Stay of Proceedings**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, the Justice Minister was given seven days by Justice Holly Beard to get his act together on the Hells Angels case. The minister has had more than six months to do so. Yet we have seen no plan of action by this Justice Minister.

Can the minister today guarantee that the five Hells Angels associates will face prosecution and will not walk away free men?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite has practised law and may continue to practise law. It sounds that he wants to continue to practise law. The courts are the place where one practises law.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Another non-answer, Mr. Speaker.

Given that the police have done their job and they have spent millions of dollars and thousands of hours investigating the five Hells Angels associates who are charged with conspiracy to commit murder and witness intimidation

offences and the Crown prosecutors have done their job, it would be a slap in the face to the police and to the prosecutor should the Hells Angels associates walk away from their charges because of the lack of action by this Justice Minister. Will the Justice Minister guarantee to Manitobans, that the five Hells Angels associates will be severely dealt with and the charges will go forward?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, I can certainly assure all Manitobans and members opposite that the department and the lawyers on the case have been very, very active, along with the assistance of outside counsel, Mr. Speaker, and those are matters that are being adjudicated under the supervision of Justice Beard.

**Mr. Hawranik:** The five Hells Angels associates could be free men tomorrow. They could walk away from the courtroom with all their charges dropped because of the incompetence of this Justice Minister. We expected the minister to announce today that he would solve this crisis. Instead, he held another worthless press conference at 12:30 today to tell us that he commissioned another review which he will not expect a report from for another four months.

We need a solution now. Will the minister guarantee that those five Hells Angels associates will be tried in court for their serious charges? Will he guarantee it today to all of Manitoba?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, the matters that the member raises are matters that will be presented to the court. I can say that there certainly has been professional diligence applied to this issue by people in my department and others. We are doing everything in our power to ensure that there is a vigorous prosecution of this matter.

#### **Hells Angels Associations Trial Stay of Proceedings**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** The buck stops in the Minister of Justice's office. He is the chief enforcement officer of the Province of Manitoba. Will he guarantee Manitobans today that the Hells Angels will be prosecuted, and they will not be let off? A simple answer, Mr. Speaker. Who is in control, who is making

the decisions, and who can guarantee Manitobans' safety?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thought this would eliminate the division of responsibilities, not in a banana republic but in Manitoba where there is a separate and independent court system, and there is the politically charged Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking at headlines though from the *Montreal Gazette* from September 30, large black headlines: Justice Minister denies meddling in Hells trial. That is the kind of headline that we are going to make sure is not printed in Manitoba. I respect the court system. That is where this matter is being dealt with.

\* (14:20)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** This is incredible for the Minister of Justice to stand up in this House and try to deflect away from this very important issue. My simple question to the Minister of Justice is: Can he guarantee Manitobans' safety? Can he guarantee today, because he has been given an opportunity to fix the problem, that the Hells Angels will not walk away free men tomorrow because of his lack of inaction?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The Justice who has supervision of this case has laid out certain actions that now fall to the lawyers to deal with, and I can ensure members opposite that Manitoba Justice has and will continue to comply with all of the expectations of the court in this matter.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** My answer to the Minister of Justice is very simple. Can he assure Manitobans that the Hells Angels will not walk away free men tomorrow because he has not acted expeditiously to ensure Manitobans' safety?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, I sought election as an MLA, not appointment as a judge of the Queen's Bench.

#### **Education System Funding Levels**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Once again, we have seen this Government's lack of commitment to public education in our province. The

FRAME report revealed that the level of provincial funding has fallen from 60.9 percent in 1999 to 56.7 percent since this Government took office.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Education inform Manitobans today if he feels that the current level of provincial funding at 56.7 percent is appropriate for our education system?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** First of all, I would like to thank the honourable member for her question. I wanted to thank her yesterday for inviting me to participate in Question Period yesterday for my first question. I did not do that yesterday. I would like to do that today.

We continue to fund education at the rate of economic growth as we have, and we have been funding it at record levels at the rate of economic growth.

As I mentioned yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I spent 13 years in the school system where I saw what was happening with zero percent, zero percent, zero percent, negative increases, negative increases across the board, a dependence put on the shoulders of the local school boards to levy taxes that increased the dependence on this tax burden to the tune of 68 percent. We are working very hard in the best interests of the teachers and the students of Manitoba and we will continue to fund education at an appropriate level.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, prior to the 1999 election the NDP promised to increase the share of provincial funding for education to 80 percent, significantly higher than the 56.7 percent that currently exists.

Does the Minister of Education agree with his party's position while in opposition that the Province should fund 80 percent of the cost of public education?

**Mr. Bjornson:** Mr. Speaker, we are funding education at the rate of economic growth, as I have said. We have been putting more money in capital projects, fixing those leaky roofs that we inherited from members opposite, replacing buildings that were full of mould, and so on. The

list goes on. We are funding the pensions. We are approaching that number and we have been committed to improving the funding for education in this province.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Could I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very difficult to hear and I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers in case there is a departure from our rules. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

The honourable minister, to conclude your answer.

**Mr. Bjornson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite failed to invest in the school buildings and allowed our public school infrastructure to disintegrate. That has been a big part of the challenge that we faced when we came into office.

#### **Property Taxes Education Support Levy**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Perhaps the 80 percent the Government referred to while in opposition was the percentage that it would offload onto the taxpayers in the local community. If that is the case, then they are working pretty quickly toward that number.

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Education. Will the minister follow the advice of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and commit to eliminating all education taxes from residential property and farmland?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** We have committed to reducing the education support levy. We have increased the property tax credit. It is curious that the members opposite would play this card when they were the government that was responsible for increasing the dependence on the education support levy at the municipal level to the tune of 68 percent.

#### **Poverty Rate Provincial Comparisons**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, four years ago when the NDP govern-

ment was first elected there was hope for those who were less fortunate. Over four years we have seen the support for those on social assistance, for a couple with two children, for example, decrease in constant dollars, continuing a trend started under the Tory government of Gary Filmon. We see the results in the child poverty statistics released yesterday. While the rest of the country is improving, conditions in Manitoba deteriorate for those who are on low income.

My question to the Premier: Why is the NDP government allowing Manitobans to fall behind the rest of Canada?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we all are concerned in this Chamber about children living in poverty, and many of the measures that many of the activists and other individuals have recommended to the Government, we have put in place in every Budget we have been in office. The numbers, of course, are 2001 that were released yesterday, but we put in place an increase in the minimum wage every year. There are three more increases in the minimum wage that will be reflected in ongoing statistical reports.

We put in place an elimination of the Child Benefit clawback that started and continued on mostly 2002, 2003 and is over in 2004, so we have reversed that policy. We put in place an increase of some 40 percent in child care, particularly targeted for more spaces for families, Mr. Speaker, to try to make a difference for individuals.

The tax measures we put in place, and I know the instrument that is being used is pre-tax as opposed to post-tax, but the tax measures we have been putting in place, notwithstanding that measurement, are some of the most progressive tax measures at lower income levels with more credits for families, Mr. Speaker.

We are also this year in this Budget, beyond the progressivity of our taxes which were identified by the accountants of Manitoba as being some of the best in Canada for low-income families, we are also putting in place measures to deal with the employable individuals with the recognition of telephone coverage as now, starting January 1, 2004, as a condition for treatment under social assistance here in Manitoba.

I could go on. I am sure the member will ask another question.

\* (14:30)

### **Economic Growth Government Strategy**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the protests of the Premier, I table material released yesterday which shows indeed that Manitoba is falling behind. Economic growth, job growth, population growth in Manitoba have all lagged the growth in the rest of Canada during the last four years. Support for those who are poor has lagged the rest of Canada.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce just released a report highlighting the Government's disturbing lack of attention to business issues. Accompanying the report were the results of a professional poll showing 60 percent of Manitoba entrepreneurs felt the NDP government was doing a poor job in creating a good environment for business.

When will the NDP government stop making excuses and present an action plan with substance? Why was the Speech from the Throne so empty of a plan to improve private sector investment in Manitoba?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** The private sector investment is at record levels. The growth rate in our four years in office is above the national average. The growth rate this year, by all evaluators, is above the national average. Mr. Speaker, the employment growth is double and triple the rates in the 1990s, and we have raised our minimum wage, which has been opposed by the Chamber of Commerce I might add, to make a difference.

So you have to have an integrated approach. You cannot just take one issue in your first question and have an opposite view in a second question. That is why we govern for all the people, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we have raised the minimum wage every year in office.

### **Hells Angels Associations Trial Stay of Proceedings**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. The

origins of *The Road to Hell* could be a dispute over the facts, but there is no doubt they have turned this gravel road into a four-lane highway road. Quite frankly, Manitobans are concerned about this Government's failure at being able to deal with the Hells Angels in our province. Commitment by this Government is, in essence, we will study the issue. It is a government that stands to the side and allows the Hells Angels to rule.

What we are asking for is the Government to take action. Where has the Minister of Justice given any consideration whatsoever to do what other provinces have done within the legal system and look at the possibility of having staff lawyers, whether it is in Alberta or Saskatchewan? Will this Government actually take action as opposed to studying, or as opposed to standing by and letting the Hells Angels rule?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** The member opposite appears confused certainly about what has taken place and what is happening, Mr. Speaker. We are moving to significant change in the Legal Aid system. It was announced today.

The Hells Angels might like people in Manitoba to think they are in control. It is regrettable that the member opposite appears to be onside in promoting that view. That is not the view of this Government nor the police. We are taking action to do whatever we can to make this a hostile environment.

### **Post-Secondary Education International Students**

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Advanced Education please update the House on the number of foreign students attending our universities and colleges and the benefits associated with their attendance?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

Yesterday, I attended the meeting at the Canadian Education Centre Network's 2003 international conference, held by the way in



Winnipeg, and shared certain information with them which I now bring to the attention of the House.

Mr. Speaker, during the past few years we have more than doubled the number of international students. Last year alone the number of international students was up 32 percent. Our preliminary numbers for '03-04 indicate 3147 international students, which is expected to result in over \$50 million of growth contribution to the economy. I think that is something we can all be proud of. Of course I have not even mentioned the cultural and social benefits to the province or our desire to be a member of the international community.

### Health Care System Waiting Lists

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the Doer government had promised in the last two elections to dramatically slash waiting lists, but the October numbers show they have failed miserably.

Can the Minister of Health explain why waiting lists for CT scans have more than doubled since the 1999 election?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, what I can indicate is when we came into office the longest waiting list and the waiting list in most danger was the cancer treatment waiting list that was beyond dangerous levels because the members opposite had allowed that list to get to dangerous levels.

One of the first actions we took was to allow patients to go to the United States to bring down that list and to pay radiation therapists appropriately. We cut that lifesaving waiting list in half from the time during the 11 lean years of the members opposite.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker, 11 CT scans have been renewed or put in place since we came to office. No longer do hospitals have to fundraise to raise their own CT scans, as took place when members opposite were in power.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the minister rants and raves every time he has to answer a question.

The Doer government has pumped almost a billion dollars into health care, yet waiting lists do continue to grow. Can the Minister of Health explain why patients have to wait 22 weeks for a heart stress test, 7 weeks longer than in September 1999? This surely cannot be encouraging for patients with heart problems waiting for a test, perhaps waiting for surgery.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Member for Charleswood that when Doctor Koshal looked at all of the waiting lists with respect to diagnostic services affecting Manitoba Health, he found our waiting lists, in most cases, in the seven or eight, were either better or beyond average for all of Canada, something the member opposite fails to list.

I might add it is only when this Government came to power that we put in place the waiting lists and actually made them public. We were able to analyze them. We were prepared to look at them and deal with the problems associated with them, not cover them up as had happened during 11 years of lean Tory cutbacks, slashes and a thousand nurses laid off and doctors leaving the province in droves.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The Minister of Health conveniently forgets to mention that nine patients have died waiting for cardiac surgery in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the wait for an MRI has skyrocketed from eight weeks to eighteen weeks since the NDP formed government. It is the highest these numbers have been in four years. When is the minister going to keep his word to decrease waiting lists in this province? Or is he just too tired to do his job?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I might point out that within the next several months we will be opening another MRI at Health Sciences Centre. In springtime, we will be opening another MRI, the first MRI in the history of Manitoba outside the city of Winnipeg in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, although members opposite cut the numbers of doctors in enrolment, cut the nursing classes, laid off a thousand nurses, we went to work the first day we came to office and we worked every single day to improve the situation and will continue to do that starting

with the children's pediatric inquiry. We have put in place systems so that we are not afraid to put our record on the line, not like members opposite.

\* (14:40)

### **Highway Infrastructure Projects in Winkler**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** My question is to the minister of highways. First of all, I would like to thank the minister for his apology in *The Winnipeg Free Press* where he says, and I quote, "It was a mistake and I apologize for it."

My question to the minister, however, is: Does he feel that he has fulfilled his responsibility to the city of Winkler, the fastest growing community in southern Manitoba when he says, and I quote, "I likely should have known the right answer because Winkler and Steinbach are both in southeastern Manitoba."

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services):** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, we put so much financial support into southern Manitoba, whether it be a new school in Mitchell, a new school in Winkler that is going to be coming aboard very, very shortly.

But, you know, I did apologize. There was a mistake in communities, and I apologize for it, but there is a difference. Members of the Opposition, when they were in government, they specifically pointed out communities like Thompson, like Flin Flon, The Pas, and did zero, nothing in highway infrastructure support. That is the difference. We are supporting all of Manitoba, not a specific segment of Manitoba.

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

### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We are moving on to Members' Statements, and we should be able to hear the members who are making a statement. I

ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

### **Ramadan**

**Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the right to remind the House that today is the last day of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar.

It is during this month that Muslims observe the fast of Ramadan. It is a time of worship and contemplation, a time to strengthen family and community ties. Ramadan is the holiest time in the Islamic faith, commemorating the revelation of the Koran through Mohammed.

Mr. Speaker, this month of introspection provides Muslims a time to focus on their faith and practise God's commands. Throughout our history, people of different faiths have shaped the character of our province. Islam is a peaceful religion, and people who practice Islamic faith have made great contributions to our province and the world.

As Canadians, we cherish our freedom to worship, and we remain committed to welcoming individuals of all religions. By working together to advance freedom and mutual understanding, we are creating a brighter future of hope and opportunity.

Through fasting, prayer, contemplation and charity, Muslims around the world renew their commitment to lead lives of honesty, integrity and compassion. I hope that all Muslims in Manitoba have enjoyed a happy and peaceful Ramadan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **L. J. Baron Realty**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** It is my privilege today to speak about L. J. Baron Realty, for 50 years an outstanding business success in the community of Teulon. What exists today did not come without hard work and vision.

Mr. Speaker, the Baron name exemplifies free enterprise all the way back to the early fifties, when Leo Baron sold Rawleigh products door to door. He was shy but persistent and

determined he would not work for others all his life.

Struck by Teulon's hospitality, he knew this was the place he wanted to raise his family. They were hard times. Renting space in various places to accommodate a business as well as family living quarters was not easy. Eventually Leo bought an insurance business from a man approaching retirement who offered to teach Leo all that he knew. That was the beginning of L.J. Baron Insurance.

Leo rented many sites. As the business grew he met more people, opportunities arose to sell real estate, the first being a farm. Now in a position to buy a building, Leo rented out half to the Agriculture office and ran his insurance and realty business out of the other.

Marrying Leo's daughter, Claudette, Roger Griffin soon joined the family business. Two years later he was a full-fledged partner and by 1968 was devoting much of his time to the insurance side of Baron & Griffin Realty.

Leo passed on a strong work ethic to his daughter, Claudette. In 1980 she passed the real estate exams and joined the business. She recalls buying a microwave oven with her first cheque, then drapes with her second. By the end of the first year she was hooked. In the mid-eighties, Leo retired and Claudette studied to become the firm's broker and a new era began.

Claudette gives all the credit to her parents for their encouragement, mentorship and help when Roger and Claudette needed it. She says the key to success of this second-generation business was her dad. He was always there when problems arose, working in the background, giving advice if requested, but allowing creativity and embracing change. When problems arose, family conferences found solutions.

### **Evelyn Constable**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, November 10, 2003, was a very significant day in the northwest Manitoba region, particularly in the communities of Cranberry Portage and Flin Flon. A beloved citizen from the region, Evelyn Constable, celebrated her

100th birthday. She was surrounded by family, friends and many well-wishers from the community.

Evelyn and her family are well known in the community as the owners of Constable's Lodge on Lake Athapapuskow, Cranberry Portage. She founded the lodge with her husband, Fred, and after his death in 1971 ran the lodge on her own. Now her daughter, Ivale, and her family continue to operate this famous lodge.

Evelyn was born in Rat Portage, now Kenora, Ontario, in 1903. Her parents came to Manitoba in the late 1800s travelling in a Red River cart. Her father was a noted freighter and a road builder in the northwest area of Manitoba.

Mrs. Constable currently resides in Flin Flon and in the summer is often in Cranberry Portage visiting her daughter Ivale at Constable's Lodge. She continues to enjoy playing cards and doing crafts. Evelyn has lived in northern Manitoba all her life. Some of the places she has lived are Flin Flon, Thompson, The Pas and Cranberry Portage.

During her lifetime Evelyn has seen many changes and developments in northern Manitoba, including the construction of the railroad in 1928 and the continuation of the No. 10 Highway to Flin Flon in the 1950s.

I have known Mrs. Constable for many years. I first saw her in 1972, when my wife and I moved to Cranberry Portage. On November 10, it was a great pleasure for me to visit you, Mrs. Constable, at your home at 279 Green Street to bring you greetings on behalf of my colleagues in the Legislature, your numerous friends, your neighbours and of course myself and my wife.

Thank you for your friendship. I appreciate your wisdom and good advice. So happy birthday once again, Evelyn Constable. May you live another 100 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Palliative Care Fundraiser**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make mention of an event that took place in my community on the weekend, one which I think probably happens in many

communities, that is, a fundraiser gala event for the palliative care unit in our hospital.

Palliative care, Mr. Speaker, is something that affects most of us at one point in our lives. I want to pay tribute to the people who organized this gala event as a fundraiser to help to renovate and to put in place an appropriate palliative care unit in the Russell hospital. A lot of work went into this event. Many people came forward not only to buy tickets for the gala event, but, more importantly, to show their support for a palliative care unit in the hospital.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that in the health care system that we have developed today, no appropriate measures have been taken and not enough emphasis has been given to the importance of palliative care in hospital units across the province. There is quite a difference if you look at a city palliative care unit and then you go into a rural community and take a look at some of the palliative care units in our rural hospitals.

But I have to say congratulations to many of the staff from the hospitals who put their energy towards this event. It was on their own time. It was not during working hours, Mr. Speaker. Some 450 people or thereabouts showed up at the event, and of note was the fact that the people did not just come from the area, but, indeed, they came from the province of Saskatchewan, they came from communities that were 30 miles from our community.

I just wanted today to rise to pay tribute and to say congratulations for a job well done for those people who put their energies forward to put on this gala event in the name of palliative care in the Russell area. Thank you very much.

### Housing Programs

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity just to express some concerns in regard to housing in the province of Manitoba, but more specifically in an area which I have represented for many years, Shaughnessy Park at one time and the Weston area of the city of Winnipeg, in particular the North End, where I am really growing more and more concerned as to the Government's inability

to be able to turn around or to assist in turning around these communities to the degree that they could be.

\* (14:50)

I look at Gilbert Park and I see the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) who while he was Minister of Housing put in a great deal of effort in assisting the Gilbert Park residents and non-profit housing residents in trying to really make a difference. I believe we have seen a deterioration since the NDP have taken office in that area. Non-profit housing is absolutely critical and the movement towards self-management, ultimately towards co-ops, is a very strong, positive thing. I do not believe this Government has continued in areas where the Tories did do a relatively decent job, Mr. Speaker.

Then there are other areas, areas like the old infill housing program. The community of Weston benefited tremendously by it, where derelict homes or homes that were completely dilapidated were taken down, and new government homes put up.

I raise it today only because I think it is an absolutely critical issue. We have to start dealing with the housing stock, not only in the North End of Winnipeg but in the entire province. Every community throughout the province needs to ensure that we are giving attention to the housing stock. If we do not do that, the real price is going to have to be paid 10 years from now. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### House Business

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts as scheduled for Wednesday, the 26th, at 6:30, is now cancelled. It will be rescheduled to Monday, December 1, at 6:30.

Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is consent for the House to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, November 26, instead of the usual 5:30 adjournment time, with the understanding that the sitting is considered as a day of Throne Speech debate?

**Mr. Speaker:** Proposals one at a time. It has been announced that the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that is scheduled for Wednesday, November 26, 2003, at 6:30 p.m., is now cancelled. The meeting will be rescheduled to Monday, December 1, at 6:30 p.m.

Is there consent for the House to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 26, instead of the usual 5:30 adjournment time, with the understanding that the sitting is considered as a day of Throne Speech debate? *[Agreed]*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATE (Third Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** Resumed debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Radisson, who has 29 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, what an honour and pleasure to speak in response to the November 20, 2003 Speech from the Throne.

I rise today to speak as a new MLA, a father and a grandfather, a Manitoban by choice, a former businessman, and, last but not the least, a lifelong social democrat. Equality, social justice and public service were more than just words to the family I grew up in. As a child and as a young man, I dreamed that some day I would have the opportunity to be a part of the process to build a better world.

This past June, I realized that dream when the voters of Radisson constituency elected me as their representative to this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Radisson for their ongoing support and for the great trust they have placed in me. I appreciate the challenge and the opportunity they gave me.

Radisson is a unique suburban area comprised of several older and some newer

neighbourhoods on the east side of Winnipeg. It is home to many different kinds of people, including working families, seniors and young people. There are new Canadians and people of First Nations, Anglophones and Francophones, and, certainly, in many homes, neither English nor French is spoken much.

Radisson truly represents the fabric of a new Canada, a colourful mosaic rich in its diversity and symbol of the new emerging world. What the people of Radisson have in common is a shared desire for the well-being and welfare of their families, their friends, their neighbours and their fellow Manitobans. It is indeed a privilege to be their representative in this Government as it works to fulfil their desires and aspirations.

How happy I am to be able to report to my constituents that their Government is committed to introducing the legislation managing provincial finances and acting on issues as promised in the recent election. The first Throne Speech of this Thirty-eighth Assembly is a road map by which their Government will meet its campaign commitments.

This recent Throne Speech outlines the agenda of the Government that recognizes the challenges and the realities facing all Manitobans. It builds on the desire of Manitobans, as expressed in the June election, to give all Manitobans a voice and place in our success. It outlines measures that build on and enhance the efforts of the Premier's (Mr. Doer) first government to address economic and social inequality.

Mr. Speaker, what better illustrates the balanced approach of this Government than the outlined 6% tax cut that will take effect on January 1, 2004? This cut is one in a moderate series our Government promised in its first term and will continue in its second. The middle-class income earners who make up a large portion of Radisson continue to benefit from this.

They also have benefited from this Government's property tax relief, which has kept the property tax level flat, while the value of real estate, particularly in the Radisson area, has continued to rise.

Those low-income and middle-class families contribute substantially to our economy and our

society. I am sure we all know and hope that they can agree that this is a government which must keep balanced economies as well as balanced budgets.

As a father and a grandfather, I am inspired and made proud by this Throne Speech. It articulates and gives shape to the vision Manitobans have for their province. It is built on a foundation of fairness and equality and balance. It is the vision of a people who want for their families, their sons and daughters they raised, the opportunity to stay in Manitoba. They want an economy based on the resources and needs of our province and our people. This is a plan about shared prosperity and opportunity.

It also recognizes the need of our younger citizens to be part of an active community that provides the opportunity to grow and learn in a fun atmosphere. I commend the Government for its commitment to the Lighthouses programs in providing safe, fun, after-school alternatives for young people.

I see a government that does not rest on its laurels. There was much accomplished in our health care system over the past four years, but there are still challenges and we are continuing to grow in that area. As it was said in the election promises, Much Accomplished and More to Do, we have a lot more to do and we are working on this.

We are committed to further shortening of waiting times, modernization of equipment and improved services for all regions and people of the province. Indeed, the appointment of a Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) speaks to the very way of this Government's end vision as futuristic of the public health program.

\* (15:00)

As a Canadian and Manitoban by choice, I am especially heartened. Manitoba is a great province, and this is a fantastic time to be here. There are days of growth, hope and renewal. Some 30 years ago I arrived in Manitoba. I had \$7 in my pocket because that was the maximum that the government of India would allow for people to leave, but I had hopes and aspirations, the dream of a better life for myself, my family

and my children. I was a fortunate man, thrilled to find out upon my arrival a place where the policy of social justice prevailed.

Mr. Speaker, right-wing, cut-and-slash governments have not yet conditioned Manitobans to expect little of our Government in terms of leadership and the protection of our futures. Manitoba, under the leadership of Ed Schreyer, offered my family and me the opportunity to realize our dreams. We made a home, raised three wonderful children, and found a community that welcomed and encouraged us all.

However, Mr. Speaker, I feel sad to say that, through the dark years of the 1990s, I was fearful that I would never see this province thrive the way it had in my younger years. I watched my eldest son, who assisted me in my business, leave Manitoba in 1994 because there was no possibility for him to grow in business here. My second son, perhaps the first medical doctor also to win a Rhodes scholarship, could not return to Manitoba because he could not really find a suitable opportunity for practising for his qualifications in Manitoba during those days.

My daughter, Mr. Speaker, a radiologist who is now a director of MRI at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., watched a wave of cuts of health care in 1990s. It destroyed her confidence that she would find a job here in this province.

My children, and doubtless children of many other Manitobans, all forced to move out if they were to build a future for themselves. Those were the dark days. Our public health and education systems were nearly destroyed. Worst of all, families suffered deeply because our young people, our dearest resources, greatest resources, were driven away in record numbers during that period.

Now I see, Mr. Speaker, a government prepared to set a course for the future, a government committed to the development of new business and community partnerships, welcoming annually some 10 000 immigrants to make their homes in this province. The challenge heralded in this Throne Speech, investment in our economy, our environment, our health care,

our infrastructure, will assure Manitobans that Manitoba will be an attractive place for newcomers to make their home in this province and raise their families.

As a former business owner, Mr. Speaker, I see a thriving economy and a corporate climate that benefits rather than sours the natural environment. The protection of our shared goods such as water and infrastructure undoubtedly is good for business. As an international business consultant, I have traveled the globe, and I have witnessed emerging economies and developing societies.

Since the Earth Summit in Rio in the mid-nineties, the new philosophy of national and international responsibility has risen. I take great pride in being part of the Government introducing legislation and programs to develop a renewable energy strategy. Manitoba will be a world leader in the creation of a successful environmentally responsible economy.

Mr. Speaker, I heard with dismay the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) in the debate of yesterday on the critical Kyoto accord. Again, this clearly distinguishes the Government from the Opposition on issues which are important for our environment, social safety and future. I foresee a thriving economy based on the use of innovative science and technology, and the development of the energy sector. As an engineer by training, I take great pride and interest in being part of this alternative energy renewal initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I feel proud to state that Manitoba is poised to become a leader in the biotech industry. We have experienced impressive growth in the field of biotechnology, thanks to the great minds and great drive of Manitobans. The reductions in corporate tax rates will encourage growth in this industry as well. Biotechnology exemplifies the vision Manitoba has for its own future. It is smart; it is forward thinking, and it will make a positive difference in many lives. Manitoba is quickly becoming a hub of global biotech activities.

Not only does the industry itself hold an economic benefit to Manitoba, creating jobs and economic advantage, but the products of the

industry will also benefit Manitobans. Innovative applications for existing plants and grains diversifying the agriculture industry ensures that agriculture will always be one of the key components of Manitoba's future and economy.

At times, I just shake my head as the members opposite at times do not understand how a businessman can also be a social democrat. Simply put, the Throne Speech provides an excellent illustration of why a businessman should also be a social democrat. A social democrat who is also a businessperson knows that an economy does not prosper without the participation of a skilled and healthy workforce. It must respect the needs of the individuals who produce the wealth, the workers.

I wish to congratulate the new Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) for the introduction of much needed job protection provisions. These changes will allow all our citizens to leave the workplace temporarily to provide needed care and support to their families without permanently sacrificing their place in the labour force. I see the Government keeping its promises to regularly review and adjust minimum wage requirements for workers at the lower end of the wage scale.

*Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

As a social democrat, I am also proud to see the emphasis this Government will put on managing our resources and providing Manitobans with the tools and opportunities we need to make our lives better. It understands the fact that all the resources are not privately owned and lays out a plan for the protection of those goods we own in common. Among those things are our environment, our water supply, our infrastructure, our communities and our future.

This Government's dedication to the protection and preservation of water recognizes what a tremendous resource and, indeed, blessing we have in our lakes and rivers. This Government's commitment to water stewardship benefits not just those who live on the shores of Lake Winnipeg or those who enjoy the wilderness, it provides for the protection of our ecosystems, drinking water, green spaces and even the very earth we walk on.

The creation of a Ministry of Water Stewardship is extremely good for all Manitobans and, in fact, Canada and the world. A safe drinking water supply is not a given. We all know the tragedies of recent years. Clean and abundant water is, quite simply, the key to the prosperity of Manitoba and its citizens. It is an absolute necessity for all life.

I commend this Government for recognizing and taking the steps to secure this for all Manitobans, including those of the future.

Energy, too, is a shared resource that must be managed and protected. We will ensure that current and future Manitobans reap the rewards for our practical and affordable energy resources. We are dedicated to developing sources of renewable energy. We will encourage the responsible use of water energy and provide means by which energy will be used but not depleted. Wind, ethanol and hydrogen fuel are alternative sources of energy that will hold the promise of clean and efficient fuel.

Our vision of Manitoba is of a province that grows and improves in such a way that the lives of all Manitobans are better. Infrastructure is also shared wealth. This Government has further demonstrated its dedication to a strong and balanced Manitoba by proposing to dedicate gas and diesel taxes to infrastructure. Without a healthy infrastructure, businesses cannot connect to their customers, communities deteriorate and families cannot connect to one another.

Manitoba is my home. It was a place of promise when we came here some 30 years ago. It has given us a lot: peace, opportunity, hope. Sadly, there were times when my confidence and hope were tested, but my faith in the future of our province has been restored. I see a sustainability, a rejuvenation of our future. The commitment and vision demonstrated in this Throne Speech again offer hope and hold promise. In pursuing prosperity based on a sense of responsibility and an enthusiasm for realizing the full potential of our future, this Government offers hope and promise.

\*(15:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Throne Speech, I find reminders of our national anthem. We

stand on guard for our home and native land. I believe that it is in the spirit of this oath that our Government has taken up the challenge of protecting the land, our resources, our lakes, our waters and rivers and the future of our province.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to reiterate what a great honour and privilege it has been to speak in this Chamber today in support of the Speech from the Throne. Manitobans deserve a government that acts decisively and with clear direction.

I am proud to be a New Democrat. I am proud to be a member of this Government, and I look forward to serving the people of Radisson and, indeed, all the people of Manitoba in the months and years ahead. Thank you.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is an honour to address the members of the House, the people of the province, the people of my constituency and the guests in the gallery today. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the class of 2003. With the BSE, drought, forest fire crisis hitting our province this year, it has been a steep learning curve for all of us.

I would like to welcome our new pages and extend greetings to our table officers. The orientation sessions were very helpful. I look forward to the continued direction as I learn the ropes of the Legislative Assembly.

I would like to thank the Speaker of the House, George Hickes, and the Clerk of the Assembly, Patricia Chaychuk, for accompanying me to Teulon Collegiate and Lundar School to address the students on the role of the Assembly. I am sure it will have a lasting effect on them and hopefully will encourage them to take part in the electoral process when they become of age.

Next, I would like to thank my constituents for making it possible for me to serve as the third MLA for Lakeside. Throughout the election campaign, many of them shared their hopes and expectations with me. On June 3, their overwhelming vote of confidence ushered me to a new adventure wrought with both promise and challenge. I intend to represent them earnestly



and pursue solutions to their concerns, seeking the co-operation of all House members.

In addition, I would like to thank my leader, Stuart Murray, for his confidence in me to hold the critic portfolio for industry, trade and mines and deputy critic portfolio for Agriculture.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The convention in this Chamber is to address members by their constituency.

**Mr. Eichler:** I will get better. Thank you.

Before going further, I would like to honour several of my constituents today, acknowledging their contributions to both the political life and to the development of their communities. First, I would like to mention Harry Enns, former Member for Lakeside for 37 years. He represented his constituents and helped shape the future of Manitoba by holding several portfolios. He will be remembered for his tenacity and oratory and his contribution to growing the economy in Manitoba.

I would also like to honour Ed Helwer, who, from 1986 to 1995, represented part of the Lakeside I reside in today. At that time, Teulon was in the Gimli constituency, and Ed represented us well in the House. He continued to represent Gimli until his retirement this year and had responsibility for the industry and tourism in Gimli under the Filmon government.

Secondly, I would like to honour Mr. Ted Revel from my home town of Teulon. Ted has been known as a builder, strongly committed to his party of choice, never wavering from his Conservative principles, serving in many capacities, especially as president of the Manitoba Conservative Party. As past president, he continues to be an important influence in the party. He was an invaluable member in my election team, and my mentor.

I would like to thank Mr. Bill Docking and his wife, Edie, who has also been a strong and dedicated PC supporter and a community builder. He has served on council and many boards and committees and is largely responsible for the existence of the current doctors' clinic in Teulon.

At this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to comment on the wars taking place around the world, especially Asia and the Middle East. I have the outmost respect for our soldiers, both men and women, who every day put their lives on the line for freedom. If we think we are immune to war, we are mistaken. Terrorism can visit any country, any time. We must be constantly on our guard against such horror. It would be easier to live in evil than to do good.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must respect those who are willing to pay the price for our freedom, including the United States. I am concerned about America-bashing, anti-semitism taking place in Canada and around the world. It is important that we stand against it in the interest of peace and freedom.

Now, I will spend a bit of time informing the Assembly of my background. I have been married to my wife, Gail, for almost 32 years. I have two boys and a daughter, a son-in-law and two grandchildren.

I have been involved in the agri-business since the early 1980s, owning and operating Prairie Farm and Ranch Supply in Teulon for 16 years. Our family business manufactured, retailed and distributed livestock equipment throughout western Canada and the United States. We supplied panels, gates, horse stalls to a number of venues, including the permanent ones at the Red River Exhibition grounds.

We sold our business in 1999 and marketed inventions for local inventors and became an important employer in the community. As well, we hired summer students, Rockwood Correctional Institute inmates, and, at one time, we had working for us an ex-convict, an ex-policeman and a pastor.

During this time, we raised purebred Simmental and commercial cattle and ran an auction business that I still own. Having a marketable product like the StockDoctor livestock medicating system, I was privileged to accompany the Government on five trade missions, three of them to Mexico and one to South America. This experience has become invaluable to our business and on a personal level.

Prior to 1982, I was the secretary treasurer of Interlake School Division during the building years. I was privileged to work alongside Bobby Bend, the superintendent at that time and former leader of the Liberal Party, one of my greatest mentors. In the early 1970s, I worked as assistant manager in the Royal Bank getting viable experience in business management and investments.

I have always believed in the importance of community involvement, serving on executives of various community boards, committees, service clubs, using what I have learned to help my community become a better place to live. Enough of me.

Now, I turn my attention to the constituency. Lakeside people are resourceful, hardworking, community-minded, self-sufficient individuals. They see themselves as taxpayers and rarely consumers of government handouts. Benefit socials for the disadvantaged and victims of unforeseen circumstances are always well supported. Probably the most recent example of our citizens pulling together is a large number of beef barbecues held for the Manitoba cattle producers after May 20. Caucus members have helped host countless number of benefits to offer moral support to our producers through the worst crisis in rural Manitoba history.

Manitoba has consumed a record amount of beef over the past few months as a show of confidence in the safety of our beef and other ruminants. Our citizens also pulled together to create accessible, inclusive community projects such as sports arenas, parks, golf courses, fairs, festivals. Lundar, for example, hosts the fair and rodeo which features a 4-H calf sale, for which I was privileged to be the auctioneer for several years, and the Miss Interlake pageant, which welcomes contestants from all over the Interlake.

We have nine Hutterite colonies in the constituency, some of which have embraced the free enterprise system with the production of livestock panels, rafters, windows and the processing and packaging of pork.

With hard work and vision, Lakeside hosts various thriving tourist attractions, such as the renowned Oak Hammock Marsh and

Interpretative Centre in Rockwood and the West Interlake Trading Company and the Prairie Dog Central in Grosse Isle and Warren.

However, like other small communities, we struggle to keep our youth occupied, expand their opportunities to create meaningful jobs and provide meaningful recreation. We expect government to show leadership in coming up with the economic initiatives to stimulate the economy and encourage our youth.

However, we look in vain to this present Government because their Budget holds no hope for rural Manitoba, no hope for job creation, no hope for youth. Manitoba business continues to struggle under unfair labour laws. The initiatives such as expansion of hydro-electric generation are irrelevant if these megaprojects drain the dwindling number of trades people from the rest of Manitoba and if our young people are not trained and ready for the jobs. When the federal government eliminated subsidies to community colleges to train youth for trades, this Government could have exercised vision like other provincial governments by taking up the slack. Today, we would be reaping the benefits as more of our youth would have reason to stay in the province and money earned would flow back to our economy. Our youth are still leaving, and government strategy should not be there to simply replace them with more immigration.

\*(15:20)

The Throne Speech boasts of job creation over the last four years, but the civil service has increased by 7 percent since this Government took office. More government jobs in a bloated civil service will not stimulate the economy. This Government continues to misunderstand and misinterpret the needs of our primary producers. While we watched government subsidies flow to unionized companies such as MCI, we also watched the backbone of this province, the primary producer, broken under the weight of something they had no control over.

We wonder what it would take to wake this Government up. The Government has admitted in its own Throne Speech that the closing of the U.S. border will cost Manitoba an estimated \$117 million in livestock receipts. If this is the

case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how can we expect our producers to simply bounce back with no effective help, no cash advances? Government ads have led the people of Manitoba to believe that tens of millions of dollars of government money, \$180 million to be exact, have bailed out the livestock industry. On the contrary. In reality, \$60 million has flowed to producers. Of this \$60 million, 11 has come from the federal government. Of the remaining \$49 million, \$30 million was given out as loans repayable with interest. So, by its own admission, this Government has given livestock producers in Manitoba \$19 million in the form of feed and slaughter subsidy to offset \$117 million loss in livestock receipts.

When will this Government acknowledge that the rural-urban split at the last poll tells of a fundamental problem with their disregard for rural issues? The NDP government lacks a long-term strategy to address the unavoidable changes in the livestock industry. The refocussing of provincial resources on water quality and water management makes light of the losses sustained by farm related industries and commerce.

When will this Government stop pandering to the urban vote at the expense of rural Manitobans? If rural Manitoba wants to benefit from all of this budget speech, we will have to realign ourselves with the new energy initiatives, including ethanol production. Producers will have to choke down the so-called benefits of the agricultural policy framework. We will have to hope that the Government will at least come through with its promise to share fuel tax with the municipalities for roads, highways and infrastructure.

This Government boasts about debt reduction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but at what cost? Where are the reserves left from the former Conservative government? Depleting our savings has made all Manitobans vulnerable to excessive taxation because of this Government's continual mismanagement when crises come again, such as drought and low water levels, forest fires and other unforeseen circumstances. Where will the money come from? This present Government will have no answers other than more taxation and more government regulations. We all know that the day must come when we

will have to pay it all back. Christmas is fun, but the January bills eventually have to be paid.

Health care costs continue to skyrocket. Manitoba has the highest per capita for health in Canada, yet waiting lists are among the longest. This Government's socialistic attitude has led us into undue debt by such actions as the purchase of the Pan Am Clinic at a cost of \$7 million, but let us keep a watchful eye on the Government's use of the clinic. Will they in future require all Workers Compensation Board claimants to use government-paid chiropractors and therapists in the clinic, thereby creating unfair competition with private practice professions?

We have a growing seniors population. Many of our seniors are shuffled off to strange communities, away from their families and natural supports because of the lack of care facilities in their own communities. This is shameful. It disrupts families, placing undue stress and unfair treatment on those who should be receiving the utmost respect.

Before I conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to express my concern over the state of Highway 6 and the many deaths that have occurred there. I earnestly ask the Government to take whatever measures are necessary to reduce fatalities there. I am also concerned about the lack of sufficient east-west transportation links within the constituency. We have good hospital facilities. We work hard at attracting qualified physicians. Yet most good roads lead to Winnipeg. It is time that 415 was paved to facilitate east-west sharing of services, and it is time that Highway 227 was paved linking us to the Yellowhead trail and diverting some traffic off Highway 1.

I will conclude by saying that I have the utmost confidence in the people of Manitoba to survive the challenges facing them today. They have shown resilience in the past; they will continue to have resilience in the future. They have pulled together in the past; they will continue to pull together in the future, but, as they do, it will be despite this Government's policies. Regretfully, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is very little hope in this Throne Speech. Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity for rising in the House today to respond to the Throne Speech. It is a real honour to be able to stand in this Chamber. I just want to pass that on to the new Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) that all 57 members in this House serve a very critical role, regardless of whether or not they are on the front bench or the back bench or even spilling over onto the opposition benches, as are a few of us over here: the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), myself, the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), and, of course, the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg).

All 57 of us play a vital role in here. I do not think it was very appropriate of you, sir, to have disparaged the Member for Selkirk in the media, and I think you should apologize to him. That is just my personal opinion. You might consider that the gentlemanly thing to do.

On the Throne Speech, I want to speak mainly about agriculture issues, as I am now the new Legislative Assistant to the Ag Minister. But I do want to begin by complimenting our leadership once again on putting forth a strong agenda for the Government based on responsible finances first and foremost. We have balanced the Budget four years straight now. We have paid down debt. We have addressed the pension liabilities. I think this is indicated not just by the local media, but this is recognized internationally in that our credit rating has been upgraded, not once, but twice since we have taken office, a sure sign that the world internationally recognizes that this is a competent and forward-thinking government, forward thinking, I might add, in the last Cabinet shuffle.

The fact that the Premier (Mr. Doer) saw fit to create a new Department of Water Stewardship is something that is very, very positive in my mind. Water issues are absolutely fundamental to how things are done in rural Manitoba. I can speak from experience, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can safely say that 75 percent of the casework that I get somehow or other has to deal with water. Either it is the fishermen, and I know that for a fact, because all of Lake Winnipeg and all of Lake Manitoba are in the Interlake constituency, so I deal with fisheries issues across the board. Believe me, they are

considerable, what with the different communities, the north, the south basin, complex issues of lines and mesh sizes and different seasons, et cetera, a very complicated issue. It is certainly worthy of fitting into a new department. Of course, drainage issues have always been one of my pet peeves in that we just do not have enough money to spend to fix all the problems that we do, but, certainly, our Government is ponying up to the plate in this regard.

I might just remind members of the House that when we left office back in—when was it?—1988, there was roughly \$10 million in the capital works budget. When we came back into office roughly 10 years later, the Filmon government had cut that to less than a third. There was about \$3 million left in the capital works budget, a fact that was acknowledged by the former member of Lakeside, the Honourable Harry Enns. I believe the current Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) also acknowledged that.

\* (15:30)

For a party that purports to be so much in support of rural agricultural Manitoba, a pretty sad record. We have endeavoured to rectify this problem and have made incremental increases to our drainage budget. It is not as much as I would like to see, but we do have to work within the confines of balanced-budget legislation, which we are committed to do, and therefore we proceed at a steady pace.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the conservation district program, something also in the new Water Stewardship Department, is absolutely critical, I think, to sound resource management, to watershed planning, not just in terms of drainage, but also in terms of water storage. Water quality issues play a major role in this.

We have to deal with the pollution in Lake Winnipeg, something that our minister, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), is committed to do, reducing levels to where nutrients were prior to 1970, a very noble commitment. I wish him good luck in that regard. It is going to be an uphill battle. There are a lot of problems, but the minister is committed to doing this. This is a very, very worthy objective.

All of these things combined into a new Department of Water Stewardship, I think, was a stroke of genius on the Premier's behalf. I want to compliment him and the Government for going that route.

In the same vein, I might add that the creation of a new Department of Healthy Living is a good idea too. The Department of Health, roughly 41 percent of the Budget goes into the delivery of health care in this province. To burden one minister with that responsibility, although the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has done an exemplary job over the last four years, I think creating a secondary Department of Healthy Living to help him in his task was also a very good move.

I am very proud to be a member of a government that focusses on energy development. I think our record speaks for itself, in the past how we have been the Government that builds hydro dams. We are committed to building another one, which is critical. This is a good source of revenue for us in conjunction with the energy saving programs put in place such as Power Smart, which I think has the potential of creating enough power or saving enough power to be a virtual dam, I believe they have termed it.

These things in combination, intelligent usage of our power and also increasing capacity are going to be a part of our legacy, I am sure. Also, focussing on other aspects, on wind technology, on the development of hydrogen, which needs cheap electrical power and a lot of clean water to produce, something that Manitoba has an abundance of. These are also part of our energy strategy from now on into the future and, I think, will hold a lot of potential, and, as I said, will be a part of our legacy going on into the future.

Also, I might add, the ethanol initiative, something that will be a real boon to rural Manitoba. It is a renewable fuel. It is very clean. It dovetails nicely into other associated industries such as the cattle industry in terms of creating a good feed for finishing cattle. So, certainly, that is a process that is well under way and will also be a part of our legacy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to focus the remainder of my remarks on the crisis in the

cattle industry. I am the representative for the Interlake constituency, which was one of the regions that was hardest hit in this crisis. Of course, all cattle producers across the province were impacted by the border closures, but there were select areas in our province, in the Interlake. The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), I am sure, would agree with me. Also, in southwestern Manitoba it was very dry.

So this is an issue that was of critical importance to me right from the midst of the election, when the crisis hit us on May 22 until now. This has been my No. 1 concern and my No. 1 priority, far above and beyond everything else.

I recall when I went up into my region, shortly after the election in mid-June, the message that I was getting from my producers was that their backs were up against the wall. They were in an absolutely critical situation. Normally when they were hit with a drought, farmers would either buy feed or simply sell off some of their stock to get money to buy feed. They would balance their production out on that basis, but getting hit with the border closure at the same time that we were hit with the drought put these producers of mine in an absolutely impossible situation.

I recall going up into the Moosehorn-Ashern area in mid-June, as I said. I could see the desperation that these people were in. They were coming up to me, basically telling me that within the next week to two weeks, they would be out of money, their pastures would be finished, they were only getting 10 percent to 20 percent of the normal hay that they normally got. They were feeding it to their cattle already, and soon that would be gone. They had no more credit at the bank and they had no market. They were weeks, if not days, away from collapse.

That was the message that I got and that was the message that I brought back to my caucus mates, to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk), and they listened. The honourable Member for Swan River came out, not once, but twice, into the northwest Interlake to view the crisis, yes, to view the crisis. She recognized that these people were in dire straits. She moved very quickly. She

came back to Cabinet, and it was not too, too much longer after that that the \$100-million BSE recovery loan program was put into place. This was a major step forward in the right direction.

I know that members of the Opposition were heckling and calling for a cash advance. That is all we heard for days on end, not that they would ever put an actual figure on that, what a cash advance would amount to, whether it was for 90 percent of the value of the whole herd in Manitoba. I asked members opposite, in committee and places like that, for some numbers, and those numbers were not forthcoming, so it became fairly obvious to me that this was just a lot of noise, it was a lot of smoke, that they were just interested in division in this House at a time when we were faced with crisis. When we were all supposed to be working together, what we were getting was misinformation going out to the public and the producers, not conducive to solving the problem. We were at a moment in this House when we had to all pull together, think together, put politics aside, and, from my prospective, unfortunately, in this Chamber that was not the case.

I might say that out in my riding the opposite was true. Now, a lot of the cattle producers up in the northwest Interlake, I just happen to know are not necessarily good New Democrats, let us put it that way, but that was not of interest to me, certainly. I put politics aside on June 3 when the election was over and I worked with everybody.

A great number of them came forward to me very quickly. I will mention some names here: Buddy Berliner, who is the auctioneer in Ashern, phoned me very quickly. I went over to visit him. As I pulled into his yard, there was a Betty Green campaign sign in his garage, quite visible. I could see that Buddy was a little embarrassed about that, but I assured him that politics meant nothing at this point in time. Once you are elected to this Chamber, you are here to serve all people, regardless of their political stripe, which is something that our Government has done.

\*(15:40)

I might add some other individuals up in the area who did take matters into their own hands. I give them all the credit in the world for it.

I will name some names as well: Mr. Blair Olafson, who is the owner of the Narrows Lodge, Mr. David Reykdal, Mr. Garth Lussier.

These men combined put together a proposal called the Ranchers Choice Beef Co-op to try and constitute some type of slaughter facility within our province to deal with the cull cattle, because at the end of the day, the border will open to the feeders, to the heifers, to the cattle under 30 months of age. We know that. Whether it is in January or May, at least we can see light at the end of the tunnel.

The crunch to these men and women, our cattle ranchers, is what to do with the cull cattle, because, typically, they will sell their heifers and their steers and that covers their operating expenses. It is the sale of their cull cattle which is actually what their profit margin is, so if they do not have some avenue to put these animals to market, then they are in serious trouble.

We have relied on other packers in other provinces in the past. We have moved cattle across the border into the United States, but this crisis brought out the best in some people and I might add that it brought out the worst in some people.

Part of the deal with the federal BSE program was that Manitoba should and would have some access to slaughter facilities in other provinces, and that was not the case. At the end of the day, we had great difficulty in moving our cattle out of this province into our neighbouring provinces, which just made it all that much clearer that something is necessary within this province. I want to acknowledge the vision and the efforts of the individuals I named, the people who are putting together the Ranchers Choice proposal, because this should save us at the end of the day.

This Government is strongly committed to this proposal. It is still in the working stages. It is going to be a complex deal, and all that. I do not want to speak about the details because I would not want to jeopardize any of the negotiations or anything like that, but we have cost-shared to begin with in phase one of the feasibility study. Deloitte & Touche has now completed that and, I understand, their message

to us is there is nothing they can see at phase one that would jeopardize this project, so we are moving on to phase two.

I want to also speak briefly, because I do not have that much time, about the Manitoba Drought Assistance Program, which is something producers were calling for very vociferously. I know that the members of the Opposition also mentioned that as part of the solution.

I want to give credit once again to the honourable Member for Swan River, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk), for also facilitating this program. She brought it back to her Cabinet and caucus and explained that we had to move some straw into the area. It is pretty bad when you have to be feeding straw to your cattle to keep them alive, but that was basically the only option that these people had left. The northwest of the Interlake is complete cattle country. There is no annual crop production whatsoever there, so that necessitated a movement of straw into this area, often in excess of distances of over 100 miles, sometimes upwards of 120 to 150 miles, putting an incredible burden on these people. Not only did they have no market, no source of revenue, but they were faced with sometimes \$20,000, \$30,000, \$50,000 feed bills to move straw into their area. So this was a deal breaker without a doubt, and the minister stepped up to the plate.

I would like to put on the record today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the words of Peter Schroedter, who is a constituent of mine. He lives in the Moosehorn area. He is a sheep farmer and also a well-recognized writer of agricultural issues. He said in the *Winnipeg Free Press* today, and I quote: "All too often, politicians just don't seem to know what's really happening. In the case of the Manitoba government's drought assistance program, however, Agriculture Minister Rosann Wowchuk got it right and she deserves full credit for a job well done."

I think truer words were never spoken, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Her timing of the delivery of this program was good as well. There were initial criticisms that these programs were not rolling out quickly enough, but we know from

past experience that if you introduce a program too early on, that other individuals will start to calculate how they can capitalize on that, and, in times past, freight rates have risen dramatically when feed-assistance programs were orchestrated.

So, basically, what the minister did was hold off for the time being to allow the farmers to go out and source feed supplies and make arrangements for their own transportation, bargain for the best price possible. Then she introduced a freight-assisted program which was retroactive to cover those costs. Mr. Schroedter acknowledges that in his article as well. I know it was painful for our producers initially, but the feedback that I have got from my own constituents is that this program was fundamental to their survival, and it has been very well received out in rural Manitoba.

Now, in speaking of the freight-assisted program, I want to take a moment here to acknowledge and pass on our sincere thanks, I think, on behalf of all producers in Manitoba to the Mennonite Central Committee that got organized very early on in this program as well. I can refer back to a founding meeting that I attended in Arborg at Vidir Machine which is in the Okno area. They wanted to know what was happening, how they could help. They had a strong organization with their churches. They have a strong presence in rural Manitoba. *[interjection]* I am sorry. I thought the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) had a comment. I am acknowledging the efforts of the Mennonite people, and I thought that you might appreciate that. I know I certainly do.

They were critical in mobilizing the annual crop producers, finding out where the straw was available. Very soon they came into communication with our Ag reps and all that, and those efforts were very well received and much appreciated, I know, by the people that I represent up in the Interlake region. So my hat is off to the Mennonite Central Committee in that regard.

The list goes on and on and on, the different types of programs that this Government has put in place to deal with this crisis. As I have made mention already of the \$100-million loan

program, the freight assistance program, I might also make mention that Manitoba has signed on to the Ag Policy Framework agreement. Although we did not think that that was necessarily the best agreement that our producers could have had, we were fighting with the federal government for our producers, trying to get the best deal possible.

The message from Ottawa was, basically, take it or leave it. I think the Prime Minister said: If you do not take this, I will put the money towards the debt and there will be no program for the producers in this country. When you are dealing with a hardheaded attitude like that, eventually you have to take what is offered.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Given the fact that negotiations on this agreement were taking place when this crisis hit is also worth putting on the record. They leveraged us in that regard as well, to be quite honest with you. They knew that our producers had to get something in the bank quickly and they used that to even further leverage our minister into finally signing. At the end of the day, we are in the program. We have got roughly \$43 million, I believe it is, committed to this program, which is in essence a cash advance, which is what the Opposition was calling for early on. It is a cash advance just like the freight assistance program. That was like an outright grant. That is not even a cash advance. That does not have to be paid back. As I understand it, the payments through the CAIS program do not either.

These programs in combination, I believe, have put in place the mechanism for our producers to survive through this crisis. We have got a whole number of them—the slaughter deficiency program that was \$10 million, which topped up the price for cattle that went to slaughter. We had earlier on the Manitoba BSE feeder assistance program, which gave \$2 a day per animal up to a tune of, I think it was, \$15 million, that initial national BSE recovery program which did not really work for our producers, and that became evident to us. When that happened, we rolled our money into a feeder program.

There is more to be done. The borders are not open yet. We still have the cull-cow problem to deal with. I want to acknowledge the efforts of our Government, our Cabinet and our Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk) for doing everything in our power within our limited financial resources to address this crisis.

We are not finished with it yet. We will continue to advocate and disburse funds until that border opens and until such time that we have a solution to the cull-cow problem. We are there for our producers.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat. I thank you for this opportunity.

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak or make comments on the Throne Speech that the current Government put forward on November 20, where they lauded the efforts of this Government.

First of all, however, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say this, that as a member of the Legislature that was elected some 15 years ago, one must reflect, I think, at times of the achievements of one's own personal achievements and what one's goals were when one let their name stand for election in the first place.

I have done some of that lately, probably in my travels throughout this province this past summer, dealing with such matters as a very difficult time for many of our rural people. Some of them were not even livestock producers. Some of them were business people. Many of them were simply community-minded people living in communities that had never faced a crisis such as we had faced at this time, simply by the matter of other countries closing their borders to our products being exported to them.

I said to myself, here we are as a nation virtually brought to its knees at least in part and parcel of the primary sector, which I still believe is one of the most important sectors and that is our food production sector in this country, but I reflected and many times in driving along on



long distances I said, why do you come here, Jack.. What was your main reason for wanting to be a member of the Legislature?

In doing so, I had to reflect on how our country was established and what rules and laws were put in place as a country, why we adopted the British parliamentary system and why the British parliamentary system was, first of all, adopted as a ruling kind of a model for society, either in Great Britain or at least those that belong to the British parliamentary grouping and parliamentary process.

I said, what were the main principles under which we adopted the rules and laws under which we operate, the initial ones. I said to myself, were they not the Christian-Judeo principles which we still hold very dear today. Of course, all of us, whether we sit in opposition or on the government side, I think respect each other's ability. We respect each other's views. From time to time, we become rather animated in our approaches, but the reason we are here, all of us, I think, without question or fail, is because we believe we have something to offer.

I believe all of us come here, including myself, with strong beliefs in family, strong beliefs in community and strong beliefs in allowing for the religious beliefs we all have and allowing to be utilized and used by various groups in their own ways in that our laws must be such that reflect the freedom of those groups to practise what they believe in.

Under those principles, I said, our people came to this country when they thought they were in danger and repression by governments that did not want to allow them, in the Ukraine and in Poland before that, or in Prussia before that, and before that even in Holland, did not want to allow my people to practise their religion and educate their children in manners they themselves had thought would be beneficial to their own society.

So they looked at Canada and they came to Canada. They said this is truly the country that will allow us the freedom to practise what we truly believe in. I was reminded of this when a friend of mine, who is not of the same belief, who is a Muslim, came to my house one day and

said, Jack, I want to ask you a question. Why are we moving away from the principles that this country was developed under? He said, why are we moving slowly away from those Christian-Judaeo principles under which our British parliamentary system was established. Why are we allowing small, little things to creep into our legislative process that restrict?

He was very concerned. He said, we came to Canada only a few short years ago because, he said, we truly believed that this country would allow us to practise what we believe in. Because if you truly believe in Christian principles in parliamentary application, then there must be allowances made for every sector in society. And so, he said, why are we not allowed to do that today? And, he said, why are we slowly, slowly doing away with that kind of approach? It reminded me, Mr. Speaker, last year, when we debated the same-sex adoption bill in this province. And then this year, I look at what the federal government has for legislation on its docket dealing with same-sex marriage. Many of the churches have asked me: Jack, where are we going as a society?

I say to them, good question, very good question because what many of the churches believe today, once you adopt those kinds of legislation, that becomes parliamentary law. That you can now marry the same-sex person and even as same-sex couples adopt children, virtually in the same realm of process, they say will the next step be to force us as churches then to adopt and abide by those laws and be forced to marry, even though we might choose not to? Those are some of the questions I have been asked. I said, I hope never. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that will never happen in this country. But their fears are there. Why have we created these fears? Because, as my Muslim friend said to me, we are moving slowly, ever so slowly, away from the principles under which this country was formed, under which the Constitution was formed. I said, how right you are.

\*(16:00)

All of us should think long and hard before we adopt legislation, whether it be same-sex marriage or whether it be other legislation that infringes upon the rights of individuals. I think

we need to be very careful. When we do make legislation in that regard, should it be allowable legislation or should the legislation direct? Huge difference in my view. The allowable would give you, if you choose to, the latitude which I believe we have today.

I looked at North Dakota's laws not too long ago. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that it is still illegal in North Dakota for two people to spend the night together if they are of different gender, in other words, two unmarried people? It is against the law for them to spend the night together. It is on their books of law. I say we should be careful when we make law that we do not direct too stringently the rules. We should always look at the allowable.

Now, why do I raise this? The reason I raise this, Mr. Speaker, is, as I said before, all of us come here with conviction, and we all want to do what is best for our people, whether we are white, black, brown, or whatever, whether we are German, Dutch, British, Irish, Aboriginal, or whatever. What language we speak does not matter. *[interjection]* I said brown.

I think we need to reflect very closely on what our long-term vision is of Canada and what our long-term vision is of the province of Manitoba, how we want the province of Manitoba to evolve and what sort of atmosphere and environment we want our children to grow up in. That is our responsibility.

Even how we conduct ourselves in this House from time to time. I am probably one of the worst perpetrators. I know you often look at me and sort of caution. I respect that, Mr. Speaker, that is your job. I probably break those rules more often than many do in this Chamber, but I have a feeling for what we do in this House. My emotions run very high sometimes when we do the debates on the various issues. My emotions run just as high when we look at the legislative process and the laws we put in place.

I fear sometimes at the caution, that we do not use enough caution in our legislative agendas to make sure those freedoms we hold so dear today or have held so dear in the past will be held as dearly by our children and that they will

be allowed the same freedoms we have enjoyed. I fear for that. When my passions sometimes take over my better judgment in these debates I think is what I reflect on.

I know there are many issues that should have been dealt with in this Throne Speech to a much firmer degree. I know this Government has tried in many respects to do what is right for its people. The reason I say that is because we believe in some of the same things this Government does.

That is why when the Government came to us and said: Would you join us in an all-party committee to look at the flooding situation in the province of Manitoba to help us make a decision as to what would be best for the people of Manitoba? Should we expand the floodway, I think the question was before us, or should we build a dam at Ste. Agathe and protect the city in that manner, to build a larger lake south of Ste Agathe than we had previously done? Our response was, I think, relatively simple. The committee recommended that we should expand the floodway.

There have since, however, come to our attention other options that I believe we should have considered. We should have expanded our horizon just a wee bit, because there is another channel that could be built, probably at less cost, or at least no larger cost than what we are looking at today. There is another proposal that is used by other countries such as Holland to keep the ocean off their farmland, that is a pumping system that would pump the water, instead of having to expand the floodway in a large degree at a great expense. This might be done at a much lesser expense and might, in fact, be more environmentally acceptable than the expansion of the floodway. I raise this because these are issues that have been brought to our attention.

I say the other thing, I think, should have been addressed in a much more meaningful way in the Throne Speech is the crisis that Manitoba producers find themselves in today. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has tried her best. I give her credit for the amount of effort and energy she has put into addressing the BSE crisis. I think it is not always easy for the

minister. We have been critical of some of the things she has done and that is our job. As opposition, that is our job. If we think there are some things that could be done differently I think it is our responsibility to bring that before this House. If we criticize the minister for having put some things in place that did not work, I think that is also our job. Some people do not see it that way, but that is the responsibility of this building and the people that sit here and are elected to either govern or be in opposition.

So I say to the minister that if she would have accepted our recommendation that we put forward, up front, to use the cash advance system as we do in the grain sector, to put money in the hands of all cattle producers, not the selected few that have received money now, but all the cattle producers, giving them a cash advance on the inventory they have, it would have cost government far less money than what they have spent now or what they yet might have to spend in the programs they have put in place, because the cash advance system has proven to be a very effective tool that farmers can use to draw on and keep the commodities they raise in the grain sector in a competitive position and allow them the freedom to market when they choose, not when the market says you must or when their financial situations on their farms say you must, as the cattle industry experiences it now.

I have talked to many farmers who say, we have been forced to sell our cattle at far lower prices than our American friends get today. Why is that? Is that because the market system has found that when there is government money being put into programs, those programs are easily tailored and tooled in such a way that they can use it? I do not know that. But it is certainly evident that the price of our cattle is significantly below the American market today, as it has been constantly since the borders have been closed because of the BSE issues, and the effectiveness of many of the programs are very questionable at best. They have not served in the best interests of most of the producers.

\* (16:10)

I will give you the loans program. The minister has made a big to-do about putting \$100 million in place with MACC. I have checked

MACC records and it is not new money. It is their normal MACC lending portfolio that is being used, but MACC has been ordered and directed to lend money to the cattle producers. Only just over 900 producers out of 12 000 have been able to access that loans program. My good friend, the Minister of Agriculture, has made a big to-do about the amount of money they have put out through this program. Yet it has only benefited less than 10 percent of the cattle producers in this province. I think that is unfortunate.

The same happened when the federal government first announced this slaughter program. We said that this program cannot benefit Manitoba farmers. It cannot be utilized here because we have no slaughter capacity in this province, no slaughter capacity left in this province.

When we came to government, the slaughter industry had virtually disappeared. By 1988, it either totally disappeared or was in the process of disappearing. We had Swift Canadian, Burns, Canada Packers, OK Packers and a number of others that were operating in this province during the NDP administration, during the Schreyer years and the Pawley years. By the end of the term of the Schreyer years, they were all gone except Burns in Brandon and OK Packers in Winnipeg. OK Packers, I believe, if I am right, closed in 1990 or '89 and '90. They were already in the process of closing when we took over the reins of government.

Burns in Brandon had indicated they were going to close, and we negotiated long and hard with Burns to see whether they would keep operating for awhile, to see if we could not find others that would buy into the Burns plant. We met with farmers in Saskatchewan, in North Dakota, in Minnesota and in Manitoba to try and bring enough producers together to make that plant viable, and Northern Plains Producers was the organization we met on many occasions.

Mr. Tweed, Mr. Pitura and I met on a number of occasions with that organization to try and see if we could not get enough producers to invest in that plant and keep it going.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but when making reference

to other members, please do it by constituency, not by name.

**Mr. Penner:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I should have said, the Member for Turtle Mountain and the former Member for Morris and I. I apologize for that. I want to say that we could not get them to invest enough money to keep that plant going and therefore it shut down. I believe it was in 1991 or '92, when that plant finally closed its door for the last time.

I say to those who are looking for investors now in a new beef plant or in buying a hog slaughtering plant and converting it to a beef plant, they should make very sure that they have a business plan that will demonstrate that they can stay in business when the borders open, because when those borders open, they will have to compete with some very, very large corporate operations in the slaughter business. They will have to be very, very efficient in order to be able to stay in business.

That is a concern I have. I think we should never attempt to make huge investments in unknown operations when we cannot determine what the competitive factors will be when things unknown happen, such as opening the borders and how those prices will then reflect and what our margins might be and where our markets might be.

When the border remains closed, Mr. Speaker, if we build a large slaughtering capacity to kill all the cull cows and all the animals that we have, and the cull-cow products cannot be moved into an export position, then how large a cooler or freezer are we going to have to build to store all that product? Because we know we cannot eat our way out of this situation. We do not have enough people in this country to eat our way out of the problem. So I say, let us be very careful. Let us do a very intense study on what the impact will be and how we would be affected.

I want to also say to the minister that the programs, some of the programs that she put in place, such as the feeder assistance program, many of the producers that I have spoken to are owed money. The minister had announced a program that would be there until, I believe, the

end of October and then closed it prematurely, and the applications came in and the farmers have not received their money. Most of the farmers tell me they have received one month's payment under the feeder program, some of them actually a bit more than a month, but most of the others are owed that money, have made the applications and have not received the money, Mr. Speaker. I think that it is unfortunate when governments act that way. When you put in place programs, you set the program parameters and abide by them and keep your word. That did not happen here.

I believe that the freight assistance program, great program I think. That was the right thing to do. I commend the minister for that. I would suggest to the minister that she will not nearly use all of the \$12 million that they have set aside for the freight assistance program because many of the people do not have money, first of all, to buy, I believe, far too broad in scope and did not allow for products to be secured closer to home and assisted in that manner. I think it is unfortunate that the minister did that.

I will say this to the minister, that I talked only a couple of days ago to the Mennonite Disaster Services, some of the members there. They have asked for, and they were on the radio yesterday asking for 100 000 bushels of grain, either corn or wheat or barley or oats is what the ad said yesterday on the radio because they have large numbers of cattle, they say, in the Interlake, in the north Interlake.

I have not been to the north Interlake since—I believe July was the last time I was there. They have large numbers of cattle in the Interlake that are starving. They need feed. They need grain to supplement the straw that the minister's freight assistance program hauled into the north Interlake, which we commend her for. We think that had to be done, but they now need grain.

I say to the minister what I think she needs to do. She needs to go to Ottawa immediately and sit down with the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa and say to the minister that what we need is for Ottawa to extend to Manitoba the 10 percent or 12 percent of the total federal program that they have announced, pay it to Manitoba and allow us to match it with the 40 percent and

allow us to pay producers to assist them to buy feed for the cattle so they will not starve this winter. I think if that case was made well enough with the new Prime Minister in-waiting and the Minister of Agriculture, I would not be surprised that they would say yes. They use a similar formula and process in Québec to support that. I think that could be done here as well. I know that in Québec the federal government pays the provincial government. The provincial government then designates the money to the farm organization, to the UPA, and they distribute the money. I think that is a model that we might want to look at some time in the future for this program.

\* (16:20)

I want to end up by saying I think we have a tremendous opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to develop a fuel cell technology using our hydro capacity that we have and even expanding the hydro capacity. I give government credit for moving in that direction. We started this back in 1989, '90, '91 in negotiating with Ontario. Those negotiations fell flat. I believe there is a huge opportunity for the province of Manitoba to become a leader in hydrogen cell technology development. I think we should spend a lot more energy in trying to move that process forward and adopt it in Manitoba as an economic development strategy, including Manitoba Hydro and the fuel cell development.

I think that we will find that this whole matter of ethanol production and the large promotion that is in place now will eventually be deemed not quite as environmentally friendly as what many have put forward. I fail to see, and I have read five reports, three of them government-commissioned reports. All three government-commissioned reports, Mr. Speaker, identify environmental benefits from ethanol production. Both the private, commissioned ones say there is no benefit. I would suspect in the long term when we look at how much the fuel costs are on farms to raise the product and then the energy costs used to do the ethanol and the energy costs to get the feed into marketplace, we will find the benefits rather negative.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a pleasure for me to speak on this

Throne Speech and just indicate to you my views on the Throne Speech. As you look at it, and if you look at Manitoba, certainly, under this administration, we have a very strong Manitoba. We have consumer confidence in our consumers who are prepared to invest and, certainly, there is a strong growth projection of 2.2 percent. This is a stronger growth projection than the whole projection of what is happening all across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, you know we have heard people from the Opposition talking about how we are going to balance the Budget, how we are going to pay down the debt, but I can tell you that there are people other than the Opposition who think that we are doing a good job. When you look at how our credit rating has been improved, two successive upgrades to our credit rating, this is the result of a lot of hard work of people on this side of the House and people in government. This Government is not only committed to stimulating the Manitoba economy as well as balancing the Budget, we have been able to pay down debt. We have been able to pay down pension liabilities to a tune of \$384 million, and we have been able to follow through on the promises that we made to reduce income tax for middle-income people.

Certainly, if you look at all of the other things we have done, Mr. Speaker, whether it is lowering hydro rates or equalizing hydro rates across the province or having the lowest automobile insurance, all of these things are important to the people of Manitoba and help them develop much more confidence in the economy here and give people the comfort to continue to invest in this province. If you look at this province, and we have had questions earlier in this session about our population growth and our job growth, since our term of office we have been able to average job creations of 6000 a year, which is double the rate of what we saw under the previous administration.

I think, Mr. Speaker, if you look at Manitoba and some of the areas where there has been interest and areas that we should be addressing, the creation of a new division of water stewardship is a very forward-looking vision. We had some discussion where people were talking about water being the gold of the future. In

reality, if we do not protect our water, if we do not take steps to ensure that it is clean, there will be serious consequences. But, by putting in place a new division, introducing a new water protection act and taking many of the steps that we have with regard to improving the quality of water in this province, you will see that there is going to be an improvement over the years in the quality of our water. Manitobans are very happy about that.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, on the area of renewable energy, the member opposite just talked about hydrogen and what he sees as the future for hydrogen. We believe that hydrogen is very important, but we also believe that the production of ethanol and the development of an ethanol industry in this province is very important as is wind energy and as is bio-diesel.

We had put in place an ethanol committee to make recommendations to us on how the ethanol industry could be built in this province. One of the recommendations was to look at the bio-diesel industry for this province, Mr. Speaker, and, in fact, yesterday, my colleague the Minister responsible for Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Sale) and I were able to announce a bio-diesel committee, which is bringing the Canola industry, the trucking industry and a 14-person panel together to look at what Manitoba's opportunities are in bio-diesel.

All of these are very important because it gives us the opportunity to stimulate the rural economy, add value to products and also address environmental issues. If you look at bio-diesel, this is a way to use up a lot of waste material, greases from the restaurant trade and leftovers from the beef slaughter industry. These products can then be turned into a valuable resource. Anytime you can take a material that is of no value and then turn it into a valuable resource, that is very positive.

I have to share with you, Mr. Speaker, that I also had the opportunity, again with my colleague the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology and a group of economic development officers from across Manitoba, when we went to tour some of the sites in the United States where they are developing wind energy,

where they are developing ethanol energy, and one of the most exciting ones for me was a dairy farm that we visited, an 800-cow dairy farm where they were then processing the manure, capturing the methane and creating electricity. Out of this 800-cow dairy farm, they were producing enough electricity for all of their own needs, plus enough electricity for 75 homes. If you look at that and you translate that down to the hog industry where we have some challenges with odour, if we could take this technology and apply it to Manitoba and would be capturing the energy and addressing an odour issue, this would be a tremendous benefit to all people involved.

I see huge opportunities there as we look at renewable energy and ways that we can use these products that in many cases are considered a waste, capture the energy off them and then address other issues. I believe that those are very, very important issues.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take the time to talk about the department that I have the privilege of being the minister for. Certainly, under this term, we have created a new department where we have changed it from the Department of Agriculture and Food to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives. This is really to build on links that are out there, links between bio-science and the rural economy. This is about further expanding what we have done with the Food Development Centre. We are looking at the Food Development Centre as a tool for people in rural and urban Manitoba as well. They can all use the facility to add value to agriculture products or many other food products. By now bringing rural initiatives into the department, we will bring the agriculture staff and the economic development staff closer together. I believe that we will be providing a better service and have the opportunity for more economic development in this province as well.

\* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker, I could not go without talking about the beef industry in this province. The whole issue of BSE is one that consumed a huge part of my time this summer and also of many members of our Government who were very supportive as we tried to develop programs and put in place assistance for an industry that was very challenged.

Here was an industry that had been doing very well and an industry that had the ability to make adjustments. If they were short of a feed supply, they could sell a few cows. If they had a little extra feed, they could feed up a few more cows, depending on their resources. When they lost that market, that put a tremendous amount of pressure on the beef industry.

I have to say, as I said, it took a lot of my time this summer, and when some of my colleagues on both sides of the House came back to this Legislature looking rested and probably having a little bit of holiday, I was a bit envious of them because I really did not have that time this summer, but I felt very fortunate as well, because I had the opportunity to visit many parts of this province. I visited producers in just about every corner of this province, talked about the challenges they were facing and worked very closely with them to try to find some solutions to their challenges. So, in that sense, in everything you have to find a blessing. I found it to be an opportunity to meet some very good people, people who were facing tremendous challenges because of the pressure that was put on them with the border closure, but people who also came forward with some very good ideas.

You know, Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that we were facing is the fact that our market was closed off to us. When the market is closed off to us, people start to think about what the other options are. If we are not going to be able to export to the United States or anywhere else, how are we going to deal with that product alone?

I heard the member opposite say that we were not going to be able to eat our way out of this. Well, in reality, if we would be able to take away supplementary permits and other ways of bringing a product into this country there would be a lot more opportunity for Canadian product. The other thing that has come about is a recognition that we are very tied to the U.S. market, but there are markets in eastern Canada. There are some markets on the west coast. We have become very much focused on a north-south market when in reality we have to change that and look at what our east-west markets are. There are markets in Ontario. Ontario is importing beef. They can not produce enough. So we have to look at this.

One of the things that did happen was that many of the supplementary permits have been cancelled. When those supplementary permits are cancelled, that is an opportunity for Canadian product to fill the Canadian market. A lot of that is happening as those are reduced.

I guess the other good thing, if you can look at this, that comes out of it, there are people that are looking at how we can have more slaughter in this province, the people at Ste. Rose. There is a small slaughter facility that has been built in Ste. Rose, and the people getting together, wanting to fill some niche markets, wanting to have a supply for their own community and their own customers. It is only a few animals at a time, but, again, it is those little things that make a difference.

Then we have the ranchers' co-op. I remember meeting with this group when I was up in the Ashern country. They were telling me about their interest in creating slaughter capacity. I met with them and then the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines met with them. Staff met with them and we began to work with them to look at how they could put a proposal together. Indeed, they talked about building a new facility and then they found out that there was a facility that was for sale. Although it is a hog facility now, it was a beef facility at one time. They began the work of looking at the potential of forming a ranchers' co-op.

I am quite pleased that producers have been taking the initiative to have an impact on their own destiny. When you look at it, there are close to 2000 producers who have now said that they want to be part of this ranchers' co-op and find a place to slaughter animals over 30 months.

People worry about the border. When the border opens, what will happen to this facility? We have to remember that the border is going to open for animals under 30 months, but we have a lot of animals over 30 months in this province and across western Canada that are not going to go south to the U.S. They are going to have to be slaughtered. It is a lot more than taking over the facility. It is working on a feasibility study. It is working on marketing and working with the producers to be sure that there is a good supply of beef to go through this facility.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend those producers who have taken the initiative to look at other opportunities, but I also want to talk about the things that we did as government. We recognized that there were challenges ahead of us. You know, sometimes trouble attracts trouble. We not only had the border closed to BSE, but we also had a drought in some parts of the province that put tremendous pressure on us. But right after the election, we were at the Western Premiers' Conference talking about this serious BSE issue and calling on the federal government to put in place a program to help our producers through this.

One of the things that I do have to say is that, as we were looking at these programs, we worked very closely with the cattle producers on an ongoing basis, whether we were at the Western Premiers' Conference and we were calling back to the Manitoba Cattle Producers, or whether I was at an Ag Ministers' meeting, we were calling back to talk about what the options were and how these programs could work in Manitoba.

The program, Mr. Speaker, that was developed was the slaughter deficiency program. When we were talking about that program, our main concern was equitable access, and we raised this with the federal government. We would raise this with the slaughter industry, and they told us we did not have to worry. We would get equitable access to market. Unfortunately, once the program was signed, that did not happen. Although we put almost \$15 million into the program, we were having difficulty in our producers getting access to market, and the producers and our officials looked at what the other options were. The suggestion was that we put in place a feed program for those animals that could not get to market. We, in discussion, and I can tell you clearly the Manitoba Cattle Producers told us at that meeting and in those discussions, they were not looking for new money. What they said was that they were looking for a way to help the money flow. We agreed that within the \$15 million, we would change the parameters to allow some of it to be used for feed and some of it to go to top up the price of the slaughter animals.

One of the things we found is that we were working on a number of about 40 000 animals

on feed. When the people began to register their animals, they came out to be almost 100 000 animals on feed. So you can say that that is a good news story and a bad news story. Good news that we have a larger feeding industry than we had realized in this province, and the bad news was we had money in place to deal with about 40 000 animals.

\* (16:40)

So, as a result, the member opposite referred to us ending a program early. We ended the program early because we had more animals. So I have to say what is so bad about that? We got money to more people rather than just those people who had the 40 000 animals. We have distributed money to more people and animals got to slaughter. Under that program, we got some 38 700 animals to slaughter. When you think about it, the cattle producers said there were about 40 000 animals on feed. We got a little over 38 000 animals to move forward, and we helped the rest of the producers with some of their feed costs. Yes, of course, we would like to help more, but you have a certain parameter of money to work within.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we recognized that we had to do some work to help our abattoirs. We had to look at how we could increase our slaughter capacity. So we put in place the Manitoba beef fund, a fund that assisted Manitoba abattoirs to increase their slaughter capacity. Some went to help enhance wages, some went to improve their cold storage, some help went in to help dispose of their waste. But we also put some money into expanding the market and promoting Manitoba beef, and I have to give a heads up and a great deal of appreciation to all Manitobans. Records show us that in other countries when there has been a case of BSE, whether it is in the U.K. or whether it was in Japan, the consumption of beef dropped right off. Exactly the opposite happened here in Manitoba, and that told us that Manitobans and Canadians have the confidence that we have a safe beef supply in this country. They knew that there was bargain price out there, and Manitoba consumers purchased and continued to consume beef at record levels.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that we knew was that there were people who could not



sell their animals; there was a cash flow problem. That is why we put in place the low-interest loan program. It was something that was recommended by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray). He said, put in place a low-interest loan program, or put in place a cash advance.

When we put in place the low-interest loan program, the Opposition said: That is not good. You should put in a cash advance. Unfortunately, the Opposition forgot that in the flood of the century when there were producers needing money, they put in the producer recovery loan which was a low-interest loan. Apples and oranges are in it, Mr. Speaker, that ours was a low-interest loan. The Conservative program was at prime plus, and so ours was a much better program than what the Opposition did. I can tell you their program was available across the whole province.

They were critical of our update, but I am very proud to say that this program is working. As of today, or this morning, 904 loans have been approved and \$35.4 million has been made available for producers at low interest rates.

The Opposition talks about give them a cash advance. If you give a cash advance, once the animals are sold, you have to pay that back. If you do not pay it back, you are paying interest on it at a much higher rate than our interest. This is a good program. I can tell you producers like the program.

I can also say when the federal-provincial program ended on the slaughter program, Manitoba recognized that there was an issue there for our producers. We put in a provincial program to help animals move to market. Under that program, we had in place \$10 million. Under that program, there will probably be about another 40 000 animals that will be slaughtered and people will have income from our government program.

The other program I am very pleased with, I am pleased that other people recognize the program for the drought assistance as being an important program, because that was a program that was recommended to us by producers. Some were asking for an acreage payment and some

were asking for assistance to move their feed. We thought it was more fair to have a program where you would assist in moving the feed. Again, it is a program that is working and very much appreciated by producers.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the things we have done. We now have the federal government proposal for a national cull program. Certainly, it is something we have been asking the federal government for since August. We have been asking them to recognize that there was a need for a cull-cow program.

When we first raised the issue, and I wrote the letter on behalf of my colleagues, ministers across the country, to the federal minister asking for a cull-cow program, the federal minister said there was no issue. Fortunately, the federal government has now recognized that there is an issue. They have come forward with a proposal on how we can deal with cull cows in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has put a proposal forward. The industry has told us they do not like this proposal because it is tied to slaughter, and it is my opinion that if we are going to have any cull-cow program, it must be tied to slaughter, because if we are not going to have markets, we have to make adjustments in the inventory and the number of cattle we have in this province.

We will see. We are looking at the program. We will work with the industry, as we have on other programs. We will look at whether this is a program that we can work on. I can tell you the federal government has to also give recognition to provinces for the programs we put in place. When the federal government was not at the table, when the federal government would not recognize that there was a cull-cow problem, the Province of Manitoba and this Government put in place money for a cull-cow program. The federal government has to recognize that and give us credit for those programs as well. The federal government was not at the table on this issue. We asked the federal government to address the drought issue and they have refused to do that. We also think that the federal government should be part of the solution as we look at increasing slaughter capacity. There is an

opportunity for the federal government to play a role in this and help with reducing the number of cull cows.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think what we have learned from this as well is that we have to look at new markets. We are very closely tied to the U.S. market, and it is natural that we would be tied to that market because it is very simple to access it. There is no water between us, there are good roads between us, and we have good relationships with our neighbours. But what are our other opportunities for marketing our beef products and other agriculture products?

Mr. Speaker, I really want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on this side of the House for the tremendous amount of support that they have given me as I worked through this issue with the agriculture community in this province. It was my colleagues that were very supportive as we looked at the kinds of programs, and, certainly, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) is here. He knew that it was a difficult time. We were dealing with fire issues, we were dealing with the drought issues, and we were dealing with BSE. But this is the Government that recognized the importance of this industry and put in place money, even at times when the federal government was not standing with us.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, it has been a challenging time. I do not think the challenges are over. We have cut meats going across the border for animals under 30 months. That certainly helped a lot because we saw animals starting to move through slaughter facilities. We have now a rule that has been issued that is putting in place the way live animals can go across the border. Manitoba will be contributing to Canada's position on this. We hope that we will see this move along quickly. We had hoped that we would see the border open this year. As it appears now, there is no way that it can open in this year. There will be some time before the U.S. makes a decision, but we are fortunate, I believe, that they are giving consideration on how we can rewrite the rule in a case where a country only has one case of BSE.

\* (16:50)

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about the cattle industry, and I would be remiss if I did not talk about other sectors, whether that be the sheep and goat industry, the elk industry and many other industries. The trucking industry, the packing industry and many other industries have been affected by this one case of BSE, but I think we have learned a lot. We have learned a lot about the rules as a result of this one case. The international rules are going to be changed and reviewed to see how we can better handle when a country only has one case versus an outbreak as we saw in Europe.

I have taken the most of my time to talk about the whole situation of BSE because it has been one of the most important issues on my table, but I am really looking forward to working on the issues of other rural initiatives and looking forward to working with communities as we look at other opportunities to add value to agriculture products, to look at new technology, whether it is wind energy or ethanol energy, and to look at ways that we can bring the electronic technology to many more communities and bring more equity to people right across this province.

What we have spelled out in this Throne Speech will certainly give us the framework to continue to do this through our mandate, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to provide a reply to the Throne Speech. Traditionally, I understand that a new member's response to the Throne Speech is treated as a maiden speech and an opportunity to introduce oneself and their constituency to this fine Assembly. While this is not technically my first opportunity to address this House, I would like to adhere to the tradition that has been set.

I have been told that it is a dangerous thing to tell jokes in this Legislature because they do not always translate well into Hansard. Despite that advice, I do want to relate a story that was provided to me a short time ago.

It seems that our current Prime Minister, Mr. Chrétien, was walking on his way to Parliament Hill one morning and, having just announced the

date of his retirement, he was reflecting on his place in history. As the sun shone down on the Prime Minister, he looked up at the sun and he said: Great sun in the sky, who is the best Prime Minister Canada has ever had?

Well, much to his surprise and delight the sun bellowed back from the heavens: Jean Chrétien, you are the best Prime Minister that Canada has ever known. Quite pleased and proud of himself, the Prime Minister went about his business secure in the knowledge of his legacy.

Later in the day, as the Prime Minister was walking back home to 24 Sussex Drive, he looked up at the sun again and, seeking reassurance, asked the sun: Who is the greatest Prime Minister that Canada has ever had?

Much to his shock, the sun responded: Well, it is certainly not you, Mr. Chrétien. You are the worst Prime Minister that Canada has ever had.

The Prime Minister was shocked and demanded to know why the sun had changed his answer from the morning. Well, the sun responded: This morning when I said you were the greatest, I was in the east, but now I am in the west.

Really, is not everything about perspective, Mr. Speaker? It is about perspective. Each of us, as 57 elected representatives, we bring forward our own perspectives. There are perspectives of our region and the perspectives of our party. My speech today will represent my own perspective and I hope bring forward the perspective of the constituents of the Steinbach constituency.

The perspective of a new MLA is often one of fear and apprehension. Fortunately, it is one that all members in this House have shared at one time or another.

My first days as an elected representative were made easier by the help of many people. The staff of the Clerk's office and members' allowances helped guide us in procedures, and I thank them for that. The words of encouragement from my colleagues, some of whom are with me here today, and the members of the Legislature on both sides help to ease the nerves.

The staff of our caucus were very helpful in preparing for the everyday tasks of a new MLA. To each of these people and more, I say thank you.

Of course, prior to getting here, each of us had to get through an election. I am grateful for the support I received from constituents of the Steinbach area. There are many individual efforts that go into a successful campaign. I have a remarkable collection of individuals whom I would like to thank, but simply cannot do so individually.

I would also like to thank those individuals who carried the banner for other parties letting their names stand in the Steinbach constituency. I certainly can appreciate that it is not a task filled with hopes of great reward to run as a Liberal or a New Democrat in a provincial riding which has, since its formation in 1990, been a strong Conservative riding, but democracy is well served by those who bring forward the whole spectrum of ideas. With that in mind, I would like to thank Monica Guetre, who ran for the Liberals; Connie Jantz, who ran for the Green Party; and Bonnie Schmidt, who ran for the New Democratic Party.

Now, I must admit I do not believe that Mrs. Schmidt actually found her way to the constituency during the election. I certainly know she was unable to make it for the all-candidates debate, but that should not diminish her efforts and I would welcome her any day to the great constituency of Steinbach to show her what she missed during the election. I do know that Mrs. Guetre knocked on many doors and her efforts should specifically be noted.

As virtually all elected representatives comment on the sacrifices made by their family, I will not do any exception. My experience has been like many in the Legislature. I particularly want to thank my wife, Kim, who has given up countless hours to help on my campaign and who has supported my political interests over the past six years of our marriage. They say married couples, the longer they are together, begin to look and behave alike. Perhaps that is why Kim has developed her own strong interest in politics over the past several years and now very much enjoys working in the office of our Member of

Parliament for Provencher and our former Attorney General. I thank her greatly for her support and all that she has done.

As well, I would like to thank my family: my mother, Anne Wiens; my sister, Connie Dyck; my stepfather, Peter Wiens; and my father, Henry Goertzen, who died when I was young. All have played a tremendous role in my life and in my beliefs. My mother instilled in me a strong work ethic which I sometimes thank her for and other times I do not thank her for.

My sister has always offered support, but has also worked to ensure that I remained humbled in life. That has been part of also the role of her five-year-old daughter, Madison, my niece, who has also taken up that responsibility to ensure humility comes into the Goertzen household. Each of these supports have been complemented by my wife's side of the family, and I thank them as well.

It is traditional, as well, for new MLAs to thank the previous member of the Legislature for their riding, and I feel honoured to do so here today. The Steinbach constituency was created in 1990 with the election of its first member, Albert Driedger, who, at that point, had been the member for the Emerson constituency.

I had the pleasure of working with Albert. Those of you who are still here from 1999, and I am surprised how few really there are, will know that the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) certainly is well aware, and the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) will know of Mr. Driedger's passion for the province and what a well-respected individual he is both in this Chamber and in the province.

More of you will know and fondly remember the member for Steinbach, Mr. Jim Penner, a businessman of some reputation, a generous giver to charities, a dedicated family and community individual and a true statesman. The most difficult part of my job for the MLA of Steinbach is following in Mr. Penner's shoes.

Many of you may know as well, or may not know, that my relationship with the Penner family goes back many years. As a teenager, I worked at Penner Foods, Jim's company, as my

first job, stocking stands in the produce department. This job carried me through my university years. I remember well that most every young person in Steinbach at the time wanted a job at Penner Foods because they paid considerably more than any other business in town and well above minimum wage.

As a university student, I often worked night shift at the store because it paid even more. I needed to save every bit possible for the coming school year. I remember well working one night and instead of my shift ending at 8 a.m. as it usually would, having started at midnight, I worked a couple of extra hours to finish off an important project.

That particular year I was unable to take holidays because money was seemingly scarce, and taking time off simply was not an option. Yet, a couple of days after my extended shift, I was told by a manager that the boss, Jim Penner, had noticed I had not taken any time off during the summer and ordered that I take a week of paid holidays, which I was not entitled to. Remember now that at this point, I was just a young university student who really did not know Jim all that well, other than to see him. Yet, he cared enough about his employees to notice these things and to go beyond what he ever was expected to do as the owner of a business.

Some people sometimes have wondered, and I noticed that my colleague for Springfield was asking just moments ago, how a company as large as Penner Foods never became unionized. The reality is that with the type of treatment Jim provided employees, no one ever saw the need. I also note that while Jim was the exception, there are many, many employers throughout the province who have adopted Jim's personal philosophy to business and many more who certainly should.

\*(17:00)

Later in life, of course, I was pleased to help Jim as he embarked on his political career. While the member for Broadway spoke yesterday of the difficulty of attracting good people into politics, I can tell you it was certainly not the case with Jim. A self-made

individual, he entered politics for all the right reasons and made a positive impact on the Legislature in Manitoba overall.

I would like, as well, to let members know a little bit about the Steinbach constituency. This may be particularly important for the new minister of highways and transportation, who seems to have difficulty remembering the difference between Steinbach and Winkler. Perhaps he would take me up on my offer to tour him around the Steinbach constituency to consider the various roadwork projects that need completing.

We can have a look at Highway 12 through Steinbach, look at some of the areas in Pansy, near Grunthal, Kleefeld, Niverville, many throughout the constituency. You know, there is a common myth, and the minister for highways and transportation just referred to it, there is a common myth perpetuated throughout this Chamber that the aforementioned Albert Driedger paved every road in the Steinbach constituency. I can tell you that this is not true. Yes, there were several projects that Mr. Driedger undertook that recognized the growth of the region and its infrastructure needs, but there remains much work to do, especially since the most endangered species in the constituency over the past years has been provincial highway machinery.

While the Premier (Mr. Doer) likes to shout at the top of his lungs in this Chamber that he is a premier for all Manitobans, his actions do not back up this talk and rhetoric. The members across the way who are applauding might have wanted to listen to my local radio station this morning where a local city councillor was saying that he had a difficult time getting a meeting over the last couple of years with the former minister of highways and transportation to discuss a very important issue. Yet, he held out hope, as I do, that the new minister of highways and transportation will set a new path and be more accommodating. I am optimistic and hopeful and hope not to be disappointed, that he will set that course. In fact, Mr. Speaker, perhaps years from now, there will be a story that floats around this Chamber that it was the current highways' minister who completed paving every

road in the Steinbach constituency. If it were true, I would be happy to hear it.

Mr. Speaker, I digress. I wanted to speak about my constituency as a whole. I would at first point out to members of the Chamber that while the name of the riding is the Steinbach constituency, the city, in fact, represents only half of the population. The R.M. of Hanover and the town of Niverville make up another half of the riding. Indeed, there are many positive things happening within my constituency. It is one of the few areas of the province that is, in fact, growing in population and industry.

I have had the occasion, actually twice, to see the current Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Mihychuk) in my constituency to help cut ribbons on infrastructure projects in the last two weeks. I suppose that she is grateful for the region since there are apparently so few other success stories in the province, more generally, and places where she can come and cut ribbons on such a regular basis.

Again I digress, though, however, Mr. Speaker, because I do want to say that the Steinbach constituency which is populated by individuals of faith, entrepreneurship and family is truly unique in the province. They are among the most generous givers in the province when it comes to charity. It is home to individuals who are believers in fiscal responsibility. It is home to people who are tempered with a compassionate hand for others. It is home to both international companies and small corner stores.

It is a constituency that can boast both contemporary amenities while still being able to lay claim to small town values. It is truly a remarkable region and I am blessed to call it home and more blessed to be its representative.

With these comments in mind and with all that the region has given to our province, I must admit that I was disappointed by the little attention that southern Manitoba was given in the Throne Speech just a few short days ago. I noticed that there were specific mentions to initiatives in the North. There were specific mentions to initiatives in the city of Winnipeg. There were specific mentions to initiatives in the

city of Brandon. Yet I do not recall mention of southern Manitoba.

I do not remember mention of the initiatives that were happening in a region as prosperous and as well functioning as that of the constituency of Steinbach. It is as though a map has been redrawn in Manitoba, a map where everything south of the Trans-Canada Highway does not appear. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it seems that the only specific mention that was made to issues of immediate importance in southern Manitoba was that of the cattle industry. Yet, even there, where the Government had an opportunity to make a difference and make some new announcements, they simply re-spoke, reiterated initiatives that have already proven to have failed over the last several months.

In essence, the Government sent rural Manitoba, which has been suffering from a terrible crisis over the last few months, a get well card. Perhaps it is only a prelude to the sympathy card which will be sent if the industry does not survive this crisis, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), who also sits near me in the Legislature and whom I have enjoyed getting to know over the last little while, suggested earlier this week that the speed limits should be increased along the Trans-Canada Highway to 110 kilometres an hour.

This might be well and good, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps it could be an amendment to his suggestion so that any minister of government who is driving along the Trans-Canada Highway could only go 50 kilometres an hour so the few times that they get beyond the Perimeter they could really see what is happening in southern Manitoba.

Perhaps this is what the minister of water services was talking about when he talked in his reply to the Throne about the politics of division, about dividing and conquering. Perhaps the minister of water services advocates the exclusion of an entire successful section of the province because they simply do not vote the way he wishes they would vote.

Perhaps the minister of water services and his Premier (Mr. Doer) believe that you can

ignore important and successful areas of the province and get away with a slogan that says you represent all Manitobans. The politics of exclusion may be a brand of politics for today's NDP, but I think it is a brand of politics that should be no more and which ultimately will fail, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I want to reiterate my pride in representing the Steinbach constituency and also of being part of a caucus which I believe is not only progressive in name, but is progressive in its actions which, I believe, is putting forward ideas every day in this Legislature, putting forward ideas every day in Manitoba to bring forward our province. We are not satisfied with a province that simply stands still and that is mired in being average and mired in being no more than a have-not province in Manitoba.

We want to excel. We want to excel in Canada and be an example for provinces throughout Canada and regions around the world. I do not think that really Manitobans want anything less than that. I do not think that they should be told that they cannot achieve any more than that. Unfortunately, I believe that this government of the day is telling Manitobans that they are not as good as other regions, that they cannot achieve as much and they cannot do as well as other areas.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be sitting with a caucus that really believes about the future of Manitoba and a leader that believes that we can aspire to greater heights and aspire to more. I look forward to the next several years working with my colleagues to ensure that ideas that will advance Manitoba, all Manitoba, in the south, in the east, in the west, in the cities in the North will be put forward for the betterment of our children and our children's children. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with no small amount of pride and want to begin by thanking all honourable members for your attendance today to hear me make my speech. I am sure that is the only reason you are here.

I have only got 20 minutes. You can tell all your colleagues that if they missed today, they

will be able to see the second act tomorrow, when I get my last 10 minutes.

I certainly am very proud to be representing the very diverse and wonderful riding of Wolseley. I want to begin by thanking the citizens of Wolseley for putting their confidence in me, a first-time MLA, just elected for the first time in June. Indeed, this is my first full-length speech to this House.

\* (17:10)

As the youngest member on the government side of this House—yes, it is true, you did not know that? I think there are a few people that want that title, but bring out the birth certificates, because I think I have got it.

I certainly want to speak to the vision of our party. I may also, along the way, contrast it with the very narrow ideology and very narrow vision that we have seen consistently from members opposite and which we have just heard from two specific members in particular. The member from Steinbach just spoke of excluding people in different regions of the province. I think if he looks at a map, he will see that there is only one party in this province which has elected representatives from all sections of the province, the only one to do that.

I am also very proud of the diversity represented within our caucus, people from a wide range of diversity, a wide range of homes and a wide range of perspectives. I think that is much more in keeping with the makeup of our country, much more in the makeup of our country's values than what we also see from members opposite.

In particular, I would also like to take exception to the comments made by the previous speaker from a chair opposite about the issue of same-sex marriage. I have yet to understand how a person's decisions, a person's lifestyle, has an impact on anyone else. If someone is opposed to same-sex marriage, they should not marry someone of the same sex. It is really quite simple. To stand up in this House and blatantly ignore all of the scientific evidence, all of the cultural evidence that is available and head on a rant that is absolutely rooted in bigotry, ignorance and

stupidity is really very, very disappointing. As the youngest member on this side of the House, I would like to suggest to that member who is not present at the moment—but Hansard will record this—grow up already.

Now, then, who am I? Why am I here? I come from a family of progressive thinkers and progressive activists. I owe no small amount of thanks to my parents, not just for raising me, but for instilling in me values of understanding, compassion and a concern for causes larger than just myself.

My mother has been a tireless advocate from the days that she was herself a high school student and a university student working in the projects of Pittsburgh, working on literacy programs for disadvantaged people from visible minorities in her native country.

My father has been a long-time activist in the academic world, studying a personality trait which members opposite should read up on called right-wing authoritarianism. There is an extensive literature available for anyone who may want to know the perils of this particular perspective in the world, what it has done historically and what it is attempting to do today. Both of my parents have done an amazing job of bringing me to where I am today, and a day does not go by where I do not thank them for their many sacrifices on my behalf.

Most recently, I have had the incredible good fortune to be married myself. My sincere thanks to my life-long partner, Phoebe Burns, who herself comes from a very progressive family, again, of activists who have spent most of their lives working for causes greater than they are, Judy and Ray Burns, and quite often personally suffering the consequences of that at the hands of people who wield power for all the wrong reasons. To all three of them, I want to extend a very heartfelt thank you for welcoming me into their family and pledge to continue to work with them and all other members of the progressive community so that anyone who wants to get married to anybody can do so without unfounded recriminations from people who do not know better.

My activism did not start at an early age. My first major in university was actually baseball. I

spent two years playing baseball in the United States. It was while there that I came into my activism. Upon returning home, I plunged into the local activist community, at first focussing on environmental issues, and have since then broadened out considerably. I am very thankful to the community of activists I belong to for allowing me to make that transition. It is so easy these days to pick just one issue and just one topic and focus on that as one's lifework, but I think we actually leave a legacy that is worthwhile when we recognize the interconnections between all of the different causes that need attention and we strive to do our very best to make as many winners as possible and as best a future as possible.

The environment is where I started. It is also where I remain, to a large extent. My paid employment as little as a year ago was in coordinating the recycling and waste prevention activities at the University of Manitoba, and I owe a great deal of debt to all of my colleagues at UMREG, the U of M Recycling and Environmental Group, and the broader University of Manitoba community for accomplishing so much in such a short period of time in so many important areas.

I am also very happy to remain a part of the Global Change Game. This is an award-winning organization which I had the privilege to help found over 10 years ago, which has now travelled across Canada and internationally and run its very educational workshop with over 25 000 people in all directions.

So, too, I should note in my early activist days the excellent work of Choices, a social justice coalition which my mom was co-chair of for many years, and no small number of members on this side of the House were also actively involved in those many worthy causes. Those were the dark days of the 1990s when everything that should have been happening was not, and everything that was happening should not have been happening. There were some very long nights and very frustrating days, and I am very, very excited to now be part of the solution through government rather than seeing government as part of the problem.

Most recently, I had the privilege to serve as special assistant to Energy Minister Tim Sale.

That was a phenomenal opportunity to which I owe him no small amount of thanks for the opportunity—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would just like to kindly remind the member that when making reference to ministers or constituencies to do so by their titles or constituencies by their name, not the individual's name.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. I was sitting in your Chair just yesterday, and I did not really get all the way through the rules book. So I thank you for that reminder.

The honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology gave me a beautiful opportunity, and there was never a day coming to work in his office when I was sorry to be there. More often, it was difficult to leave with all of the many exciting initiatives that our Government has been bringing forward, many more of which are sure to come.

I should also give a very strong thank you to the three remarkable women that I had the privilege of participating with in a very exciting nomination race in Wolseley. I would suggest that the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) might want to look at the process of actually having a nomination race some day. It was a very exciting exercise in democracy. The most common sentiment throughout our amazing riding was: Why could all four of you not be members of the Legislative Assembly? Each of you has so much to offer and there is not a day that goes by when I do not think back to that phenomenal race and process, how respectful it was, how open it was, how democratic it was. At the end of the day, I was very fortunate to be the one selected to represent our party in the election and feel very indebted to the residents of Wolseley for the phenomenal confidence that they have shown in me during that process. But the nomination race also stands out for me as a very pivotal moment and a marvellous moment for the community of Wolseley.

\* (17:20)

So, too, should proper thanks be given to Jean Friesen. All members of this House will, of



course, know Jean for her previous role before her retirement as our Deputy Premier and as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. What is less understood and less well known and which I would like to pick up on now is Jean's incredible dedication to the community of Wolseley. Jean's name was synonymous with the progress that we are now seeing in my riding, for many, many years a very depressed area, an area that was long abandoned by the previous government. Jean's initiatives and Jean's hard work at the grassroots level is something I very, very much hope to emulate for many years to come. If I manage to achieve anything close to what she did, I will know that I have served my constituents and my community very, very well.

I would like to now shift gears slightly, Mr. Speaker, and move away from talking about my personal experiences by way of an introduction of myself to this House and talk in more detail about the constituency of Wolseley. With the time remaining, I would be happy to do that.

When the name of the community of Wolseley comes up, there are some very beautiful images that come to my mind, images of tolerance, images of diversity, images of a very strong environmental ethic, and a community which has a spirit that is almost unprecedented anywhere else in the province. I would venture to say it is unprecedented, but I would not mind if other members chose to differ with me on that point.

Wolseley, however, is made up of three very distinct communities. All of them have very special qualities which I would like to bring to the attention of this Chamber because the Throne Speech, which our Government just brought in, has so much in it that relates directly to the community of Wolseley and the three very different neighbourhoods that exist there. Those three neighbourhoods are Spence and West End, the West Broadway neighbourhood, and, then, Wolseley itself.

To begin with housing, our Government's track record on housing compared to our predecessor's is night and day. Our track record on housing compared to most other jurisdictions in this country is night and day, and, in large part, that is because our Government, by working cooperatively, working on behalf of all the citizens

of this province, has managed to work with both the federal and the civic levels of our Government as well. That has been a key component in bringing so many benefits to so many people who were suffering so much under the ignorance and the lack of attention from previous administrations.

I can assure you that when 1600 new housing units are built in the city of Winnipeg alone, accessible for people on low to moderate incomes, as someone who has attended no small number of these events opening these facilities for a wide range of people, this is a government that is governing for all people. This is a government which is concerned about the accessibility of basic human rights and dignity for all of our citizens, and housing is having an enormous impact, an enormous positive impact, on both West Broadway and the Spence and West End neighbourhoods, in particular.

In the Spence neighbourhood as well, we have some phenomenal efforts under way concerning safety. In the Throne Speech of just last week, the Province has reiterated its very strong commitment to safety, and I have some very important, and, I think, positive and powerful facts to share with my honourable members in the House.

Because of this Government's initiative in bringing forward The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, there have been over 40 illegal criminal operations that have been shut down, most of those in inner-city communities such as Wolseley, and not just Wolseley itself, but also West Broadway and the Spence neighbourhood.

These operations previously were left to operate and led to the deterioration of inner-city neighbourhoods under the previous government's reign. By enabling citizens to have the power to launch their own complaints, and giving the policing powers the proper authority to legally stop those activities and ensure that they do not return to the locations and addresses that have been identified, there has been a phenomenal turnaround in the safety of those communities and the perception of safety for residents in Wolseley. Our Government is to be commended on that and its many other very strong safety initiatives. Of course, we are now heading into an era of looking at increased

attention to preventative measures, measures that will prevent crimes from happening in the first place.

The Lighthouses project is certainly a model example of that. The Lighthouses, of course, are a very efficient, very effective vehicle for providing recreational opportunities and learning opportunities for young people, in particular in inner-city and low-income areas. I am very excited to hear that our Government is committed to expanding the number of Lighthouses in our province. Once again, that is in our province, not just in southern Manitoba, where a lot of attention was directed previously under a different government, but rather all over the province.

That is where Lighthouses have been and will be. In a similar way, we have greatly expanded our support for child care spaces. I had the honor of hosting the Minister of Family Services and Housing at the time. He very kindly chose to use Wolseley as the location for this year's announcement of increased day care spaces. Many of these new spaces are located in southern Manitoba. They are located in areas that members opposite would have us believe government is not paying attention to at all, and nothing could be further from the truth. We are governing for all people. The increased support badly needed for many, many years, members opposite knew this and chose to do nothing, but that support is now available and it is flowing to people based on need, not based on politics. That is called good governance.

I would also like to inform the House of a very exciting initiative which has occurred recently in the neighbourhood community of Wolseley. The Building Communities initiative was launched by this Government. I feel it not only represents good content, it also brings a new and very positive process to work that reflects citizens engagement and the importance of governments and citizens working together to solve common problems and interests. Rather than making all decisions centrally about the well-identified need for improved infrastructure repairs in shoulder communities such as Wolseley, the Building Communities initiative stepped back and the provincial government allowed the communities themselves to develop

action plans and decide what the funding priorities should be.

I participated in these early discussions well before my nomination race and, certainly, well before the spring election just completed. The turnout at these events was very high even for a very active community such as Wolseley. People are very, very excited about the opportunity to make their views heard, especially when they know there is an opportunity for those views to translate into action. I would like to applaud the Government, not just for establishing that as a recognized need, but also for providing that opportunity for people locally to decide at the grassroots level how that need is going to be met.

The end result has been made public quite recently. The money which has been allocated to Wolseley will be going into a wide range of projects ranging from anywhere to new water slide facilities in a public park, improved drainage, new play equipment in areas where current playground equipment for young children is in need of repair and a very exciting initiative which will increase access to the river for local residents in Wolseley. There are several locations which have been identified for a possible canoe launch or where the Splash Dash taxi service, which I had the pleasure of enjoying just this past summer for the first time, gives you a very different perspective and a very beautiful perspective on our wonderful city and our wonderful downtown.

All of these are projects that have been chosen by the local citizens of Wolseley with the help of our city partners, who have very kindly provided staff to help facilitate the process and a number of consultants who were also brought in to help ensure that a very good set of discussions and a very positive voting took place, because, of course, citizens voted on what they wanted to see happen.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This matter is again before the House. The honourable member will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

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