

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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

Wednesday, December 3, 2003

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

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 a 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 offloading 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 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 re-prioritize the four-laning of Highway 32 for the 2004 construction season.

These are submitted by Greg Ens, S. Roth, Al Willoughby, Brad Wolfe, Susan Wiebe 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 Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) 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.

Mr. Speaker, 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 P. Lim, Maria Bailey, Lindsey Lorteau 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.

* (13:35)

Sales Tax Proposal

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. 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.

An Honourable Member: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Energy would like to laugh about this, but Manitobans are still signing the petition—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When members are reading a petition, it has to be read word for word. There is no ad libbing or adding context to the petition.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Mayor of the city 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.

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 Donna Ross, Elaine Ranville, Norma Johnson 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.

Red River Floodway Expansion

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I wish to present the following petition. These are the reasons for the petition:

The provincial and federal governments have indicated they will proceed with a multi-million expansion of the Red River Floodway.

The provincial government says it is "committed to ensuring that any remaining issues from 1997 are addressed and that residents are compensated for any artificial flooding." (Province of Manitoba press release, December 9, 2002).

The provincial government announced it would introduce "flood compensation legislation to give citizens the right to financial compensation if they experience artificial flooding due to floodway operation, including residents living south of the floodway." (Province of Manitoba press release, December 9, 2002)

Manitobans living both south and north of the Red River Floodway have raised concerns about the potential negative socio-economic impacts of an expanded floodway, such as the prospect of artificial flooding and associated losses.

Manitobans are concerned about the adequacy of compensation programs for past and future floods.

Manitobans have also asked whether sufficient consideration has been given to all the proposed flood mitigation initiatives to ensure the most viable option will be used.

Groups such as the Ritchot Concerned Citizens have expressed concern about their inability to get information about the past and future operation of the floodway, among other issues related to governments' handling of the flooding in the Red River Valley.

There are a number of unresolved claims related to the 1997 flood of the century.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

Mr. Speaker, to request that the provincial and federal governments consider settling outstanding claims from the 1997 flood of the century before proceeding with a major expansion of the Red River Floodway.

To request that the provincial government, Mr. Speaker, consider ensuring that flood compensation mechanisms are evaluated, updated and enacted before a major expansion of the Red River Floodway proceeds.

To request that the provincial government consider clarifying outstanding flood-related issues, such as the threat of artificial flooding and the public's desire for clarification with respect to the floodway operating rules.

Signed by Nicholas Zubrack, Rob Crowley, Fabrice Barbanchon and others.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development First Report

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you see if there is leave for the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development to be presented today?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development to be presented today?
[Agreed]

* (13:40)

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson): I wish to present the First Report of the Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic

Development presents the following as its First Report:

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings:

Your committee met on Tuesday, December 2, 2003, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters Under Consideration:

Bill 2—The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act; Loi sur les biocarburants et modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur l'essence

Bill 3—The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation commémorative Helen Betty Osborne

Bill 4—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi

Bill 202—The Nellie McClung Foundation Act; Loi sur la Fondation Nellie McClung

Membership Resignations / Elections:

Your committee elected Ms. Brick as the Chairperson.

Your committee elected Mr. Schellenberg as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting:

Ms. Brick for Mr. Caldwell

Hon. Mr. Mackintosh for Ms. Irvin-Ross

Hon. Mr. Sale for Hon. Ms. McGifford

Hon. Ms. Allan for Hon. Ms. Melnick

Ms. Irvin-Ross for Mr. Martindale

Mr. Murray for Mr. Cummings

Mr. Schuler for Mr. Maguire

Mrs. Rowat for Mr. Tweed

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard 14 presentations on Bill 2—The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act; Loi sur les biocarburants et modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur l'essence, from the following individuals and/or organizations:

Kenneth Sigurdson, National Farmers Union

Bob McNabb, Town of Minnedosa

Spencer Reavie, Pelly Trail Economic Development

Ted Stoner, The Canadian Petroleum Institute

Randy Bialek, Agassiz Agri-ventures

Roger Wilson, Fox Warren Ethanol Agency

Fred Tait, Private Citizen

Bill Wilkerson, Canadian Renewable Fuels Association

David Rolfe, Keystone Agricultural Producers

Rick Verspeek on behalf of Bob McCallum,

Turtle Mountain Sustainable Ventures

Edward Hiebert, Private Citizen

John Pittman, Manitoba Chamber of Commerce

Chris Lorenc, Manitoba Heavy Construction Association

Glen Koroluk, Private Citizen

Your committee heard four presentations on Bill 202—The Nellie McClung Foundation Act; Loi sur la Fondation Nellie McClung, from the following organizations:

Gail Andrews, Manitoba Womens Liberal Association

Mary Pankiw, Local Council of Women of Winnipeg

Elizabeth Fleming, Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba

Beverley Parks, The Liberal Party of Manitoba

Written Submissions:

Your committee received one written submission for Bill 2—The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act; Loi sur les biocarburants et modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur l'essence, from the following organization:

Gilbert Swan, Town of The Pas

Your committee received one written submission for Bill 4—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code des

normes d'emploi, from the following organization:

Rob Hilliard, Manitoba Federation of Labour

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 2—The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act; Loi sur les biocarburants et modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur l'essence

Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 3—The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation commémorative Helen Betty Osborne

Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 4—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi

Your committee agreed to report this bill with the following amendment:

THAT the proposed subsection 96.1(1), as set out in Clause 6 of the Bill, be amended by striking out everything after “to pay compensation” and substituting “to the director for any loss the employee incurred as a result of the contraction, or reinstate the employee, or do both.”

Bill 202—The Nellie McClung Foundation Act; Loi sur la Fondation Nellie McClung

Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Ms. Brick: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the statement as to fidelity bonds in accordance with section 20 of

The Public Offices Act, as well as The Trade Practices Inquiry Act report.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 6—The Cross-Border Policing Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 6, The Cross-Border Policing Act; Loi sur les services de police interterritoriaux, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill will help facilitate police intelligence-gathering and investigations across provincial borders, particularly to counter the threat of organized crime in Canada. It is the first such bill which we hope will soon be introduced in each Canadian province.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw attention of all honourable members to the loge to my right where we have with us Ms. Becky Barrett who is the former Member for Inkster and Wellington.

Also I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Lorna Minor, the president of the St. Vital Historical Society and Dorothy Mazurik, a volunteer with the St. Vital Historical Society. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing (Ms. Melnick).

Also in the public gallery we have from the Archwood School, 14 Grade five students under the direction of Mrs. Connie Stanley. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

Also in the public gallery we have from Immanuel Christian School 12 Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Jeff Dykstra.

This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

James Driskell Case Independent Inquiry

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, while the Premier has finally found his voice and is speaking out about the Driskell case, we found it particularly troubling that he would not guarantee that an independent public inquiry would be held. Will the Premier recognize today that, regardless of the outcome of the federal review, there is a need for an inquiry in Manitoba to get to the bottom of what went so terribly wrong from the beginning to the present day?

* (13:45)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have said we would use the same standard of integrity and independence to review the matter of Driskell when the conviction issues are dealt with as we did with Sophonow.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, we agree that if it is the best advice of all involved that the inquiry not proceed until the issue of Mr. Driskell's guilt or innocence is settled, then we support that. However, what we want and I believe what Manitobans want from this Premier is a guarantee that there will be an independent public inquiry called. Will he give us that guarantee today?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the process that was utilized for Sophonow with a public inquiry, independent inquiry, a credible person with former Justice Cory as the individual chosen to deal with the matters that arose out of the justice system with the Sophonow issue in justice; I said yesterday in the House and I have said yesterday publicly, and I will say it again, we will use the same standard of integrity,

independent public review, that we used for Sophonow.

The issue that is different here is there was the issue of conviction or non-conviction that was different in Sophonow than it is today on Driskell, and we must deal with that issue first.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, it is important this Premier take this process very seriously and that he give a guarantee today that he will ensure there is a public independent inquiry into this issue, that he also give Manitobans the assurance that he will not only guarantee today, that by the end of next week he will have a commissioner in place to head up this issue. It is a very serious issue and Manitobans want a decision today.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we will deal with the issue of the conviction first and the issues that arise out of that matter and any other matter that deals with the issue. The systemic issues in the Justice Department in its broadest terms will be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, I do recall there was a review ordered by the Minister of Justice in the early nineties. The review was completed by Mr. Dangerfield, hardly our test of meeting an independent public review of the matters raised.

Dwayne McClurg Case Sentence Length

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the Justice Minister promised in 1999 and again in 2003 to make our communities safer. Our communities will not be safer unless appropriate sentences are imposed for serious crimes.

Last month after spending 15 months in custody, Dwayne McClurg received only six months of additional jail time for killing 20-month-old Brandon Anderson. This sentence was recommended to the judge by the Crown prosecutor in the case. Does this Justice Minister believe that a six-month sentence for killing a young child is appropriate, and does he agree with the recommendation of his Crown prosecutor?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Just to correct the

record which is important to be done here, there was not a six-month period of incarceration. In fact, the court took into account a pre-trial custody and, Mr. Speaker, as a result of all the considerations, there was essentially what is recognized as a three-year prison term, plus two years probation.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, we have seen those convicted of other minor crimes receive six months, such as John Michell, who accused somebody of theft incorrectly. An extra six months' jail time for someone convicted of murdering a baby is clearly unacceptable.

When will this Justice Minister give clear policy direction to his employees, his Crown prosecutors, to vigorously prosecute and to demand real jail time for serious crimes?

* (13:50)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I will correct the record again, Mr. Speaker. This was essentially a 36-month sentence, along with two years' probation.

The prosecutors looked at the background of the offender. They look at the nature of the offence. They look at precedent. Indeed, from February 1995, there was an example here of a shaken child and a sentence of one year, three years' probation. This was a sentence, Mr. Speaker, that the judges recognized may have been at the low end in terms of the whole range, but he said it is one which is entirely within the appropriate range.

Mr. Hawranik: This minister likes to point fingers. He points fingers everywhere. He has run out of points on the compass. He points fingers at the judges, he points fingers at the Criminal Code, the federal government, at previous governments, everywhere except where they should be pointed, and that is at himself.

The responsibility for this lenient sentence lies solely with the minister. Since 1999, he has not given directions to his employees, his Crown prosecutors. He has not given directions to them to demand harsher penalties for serious crimes, not one memo, not one policy directive.

Will this minister commit today to provide direction to his Crown attorneys so that sen-

tencing recommendations are properly given to reflect the seriousness of the crime, or will he try to deny his shortcomings as minister as he has been trying to do in the James Driskell case?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, there certainly are policies regarding child victim cases for the prosecutors to take those matters very seriously. The prosecutors operate within the realm of the available evidence and the law and, indeed, at sentencing the Justice said, and I quote: I can find no reason to do anything but endorse the recommendation, and that is based on an analysis of those issues that the prosecutors have to deal with.

In terms of Mr. Driskell, Mr. Speaker, I remind members opposite that when the DNA evidence came back to Manitoba that was immediately provided to the counsel for Mr. Driskell and the Driskell team. I remind members opposite that the application for a federal review must be taken by the Driskell team. We pleaded with them to the point of writing them nine months ago asking them to proceed.

Dorothy Madden Inquest

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, Doctor Balachandra, the Chief Medical Officer, has said that it was unacceptable for Dorothy Madden to have waited in a hospital ER for six hours without ever being seen by a doctor. He is concerned enough about her death that he is considering calling a public inquest.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) get in front of this issue today, do the right thing today, and call for a public inquest into the death of Dorothy Madden?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): As was indicated yesterday in this House, Mr. Speaker, we find it unacceptable, and measures have been put in place to deal with this issue.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, there are absolutely no excuses for a patient to present to an ER with chest pain, be triaged as urgent, and then not be seen by a doctor for six hours.

Will the Minister of Justice do the right thing today, Mr. Speaker, and call for a public

inquest? Patients that are going to our hospital ERs need to know that they are safe when they go there.

* (13:55)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, an inquest already took place, the longest inquest in the history of Canada took place under Sinclair. Under Sinclair a number of methods of critical incident reporting were asked to be put in place which included advising the family, doing a review of all the care providers and making recommendations for follow-up.

Since Sinclair, Mr. Speaker, we have put all of those measures in place. That is what happened in this case. Before the data was raised, a critical incident was taken, recommendations were put in place, recommendations were followed up. That is what we have done and continue to do since Sinclair. That is what we have learned from Sinclair. There are problems. You try to solve them, and you improve them. That was the Sinclair lesson. That is what we are following.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health neglects to mention the number of patients that are dying under his watch right now and Dorothy Madden was one of them. Dorothy Madden deserved to be cared for. She deserved dignity. She deserved the opportunity to say goodbye to her family. Her family deserves answers and her family deserves closure.

Will the Minister of Justice do the right thing today and call a public inquest into her death? Dorothy Madden deserved at least that as well.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, when I was the Opposition Health critic, I knew of dozens of situations like this, but there was no process in place until Sinclair that said when there is a problem, you review it, you advise the family, you interview all the staff involved, you make recommendations and you improve it. That is what we do in health now. When there is a problem, you look at the difficulties and you try to improve it. That is what happens.

Mr. Speaker, the member was already embarrassed on CJOB this morning. She does not

have to be embarrassed by her comments in the House.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, not only did this happen but the system was put in place to do follow-up and recommendations before this even became a political issue by the member opposite.

Livestock Industry Slaughter Assistance Program

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): The cattle producers across this nation have been asking for governments, both federal and provincial, to deal with the cull-animal situation. A week ago the federal government announced a cull-cattle slaughter program.

Will the minister indicate to this House whether this province will participate in that program?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, as with any other program that has been put in place to deal with BSE, we have worked in very close consultation with the cattle industry. The cattle industry has indicated to us that they are not happy with the way the federal government has developed a program, and we will continue to work with Manitoba cattle producers and other people in the industry to see whether the program works for them or not before we make a decision on how Manitoba will participate.

Agricultural Policy Framework Interim Payments

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, clearly this same answer we have heard dozens of times.

On September 19, the provincial government signed on to the Agricultural Policy Framework under the auspices that cattle producers in this province would have money in their pocket by the end of October. It is now December 3.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell us when the cattle producers will start benefiting from the Agricultural Policy Framework that she signed on to and told farmers that they would receive a

lot of money in helping them deal with the cattle situation?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, when we signed on to the Agricultural Policy Framework, we knew there were not enough provinces signed on for the normal process for payment to be made. We also knew that we asked the federal government to put some interim payments in so that cash could start to flow. The federal government is administering that program. Producers have to apply. I can tell you that not very many people have applied for the program up to this point. In fact, only 115 farmers have made application for the interim payment. Those applications are being processed but that is the number we have here in Manitoba. I would encourage more producers to make those applications in order that their money could flow under the interim process.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, clearly it is an indication that time after time after time this minister has said the producers would receive benefits from programs that they have announced, and time and time and time again she has broken her promise. This is clearly an indication that the producers are skeptical enough this time around that they are hesitating to even apply for the programs. It is a waste of their time.

When will this minister be honest with the farmers of this province and indicate clearly to them when the money from the APF will flow to them? When will it be?

* (14:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: I am not sure if the member opposite has a hearing problem or not, but I indicated to him there is an interim program payment and that there is information out there.

Producers have to make application. Mr. Speaker, 115 Manitobans have made application for the program. I would encourage him to talk to producers, as I do, and tell them about the program and encourage them to participate and make their application, just as the member opposite should be encouraging producers to take part in the many other programs we have put in place to help through this BSE crisis

rather than be critical. I know the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) took out ads in his newspaper telling them to contact him. I would ask him that he should be telling them to contact those people who administer the program.

Sunrise School Division Funding

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled a letter in this House from the Sunrise School Division addressed to the Premier (Mr. Doer). In that letter it indicated, and I quote: It was made clear from the start by the division that this money was to be supplied through a base budget allocation. Both the government representative and the mediator acknowledged the need for this base budget approach.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear the division expected that this money was going to be built into the base budget of the school division. My question for the Minister of Education: Will he agree today to stand by his Government's commitment to build the \$428,000 into the base budget of Sunrise School Division so the taxpayers in that area are not forced to pick up the tab?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): We made a commitment that the division's financial needs in this area will be met, and we intend to honour that commitment.

Mrs. Stefanson: That commitment this minister is talking about was to build the \$428,000 into the base budget. Is that the commitment that his Government intends to keep so that the taxpayers in the local community are not forced to pick up the tab?

Mr. Bjornson: The \$428,000 to which the member opposite is referring is over three years: \$112,000 this year, \$158,000 next year and \$158,000 the year after that. We made a commitment. We intend to honour that commitment. We did what we had to do to get those kids back to school.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, in that letter that I referred to earlier there is a request for a meeting between the Premier and the school division, and

my question today is: Has the Premier met or one of his representatives met with the Sunrise School Division to ensure that these issues that are in dispute will be clarified so that the taxpayers in that local community will not be forced to pick up the ongoing tab as a result of this Government's decision?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker—*[interjection]* No. I or a representative was the question.

Balanced Budget Legislation Amendments

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, the answers get weaker and weaker.

Mr. Speaker, in his spring Budget consultation, the Finance Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would just like to remind all honourable members that the clock is ticking and we only have so much time for questions and answers, and I am sure you want to get as many questions and answers in. So I just want to remind all honourable members.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, in his pre-Budget consultations, the Finance Minister is softening Manitobans to the idea that he is going to amend the balanced budget legislation to weaken it. Despite increases in revenue on an annual basis of over \$1.5 billion since 1999, this Finance Minister has had to resort to draining Hydro and to raiding the rainy day fund in order to give the illusion of balancing his Budget. Clearly, he has a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

I would ask the minister to explain to Manitobans how they can believe that he and his Government are committed to balanced budget legislation when four of the six solutions that he gives them to restore revenue growth—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think action speaks louder than words. We balanced the Budget four times. The credit rating in the province of Manitoba has increased

twice. Action speaks louder than words. We said that we will find a way to balance the Budget. We intend to balance the Budget while respecting the priorities that Manitobans have identified for us.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, the solutions this minister gives for slowing revenue rates are: increases in fees and taxes, managing a small deficit, transferring more money from the rainy day fund, suspending debt payments and two others. Clearly four of the six solutions he has floated go contrary to the spirit and to the intent of balanced budget legislation.

I would ask this minister if he would stand up today and commit to keeping balanced budget legislation intact.

Mr. Selinger: As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, action speaks louder than words. Four years ago, members opposite were concerned about whether we balanced the Budget. We did every year for the last four years while making critical investments in health care, while making critical investments in education, while making critical investments in infrastructure, while making critical investments in the North, the rural areas and Winnipeg. All of those things we did while balancing the Budget.

Mr. Loewen: I would remind the minister that no less an authority than the Auditor General advises him that he has run a deficit virtually every year. In fact, what he has managed to do is force Manitoba Hydro to go out and borrow more money so he can claim he has balanced his Budget. He has also raided the rainy day fund so it is now less than the required level according to The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act.

I would ask him to give a simple answer to the people of Manitoba, to stand up, admit that he has not balanced his Budgets and commit to the people of Manitoba that he will leave balanced budget legislation intact as his Premier (Mr. Doer) has promised, or is it just another empty promise from the Premier?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it has been verified every year that we have met all the terms of the balanced budget legislation while investing in key Manitoba priorities. We have a Healthy

Child program that has put \$28 million a year into young children and families inside this province. We have expanded home care. We have put in place a palliative drug care program to allow people the dignity of going through that final period of their life with proper support and care while they are in their community. We have ramped up the number of nurses being trained in this province from 210 graduating to 680 graduating. We have increased the enrolment in medical school from 70 to 85 and we will take it to 100. We have done all that while balancing the Budget.

The members opposite left this province in a shambles during the period they were in office.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members that decorum is very important. We have the viewing public, and we also have our guests in the galleries who are trying to hear the questions. Even our guest in the loge probably wants to hear the question, so I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

* (14:10)

Bois des esprits Forest Protection

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, members of the environmental community are questioning the NDP government's responsiveness to their issues with situations like Granville Lake, Lake Winnipegosis and the Bois des esprits forest being handled poorly. My question is for the Minister of Family Services.

There has been intense interest in the Bois des esprits forest along the Seine River in Winnipeg. This 80-acre forest is a wonderful example of natural river-edge forest which needs to be preserved as a heritage park for the benefit of all Manitobans. The future of this forest rests squarely with the minister. I ask the minister whether she will act to ensure that all 80 acres of the forest are preserved as a heritage park for Manitobans.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I would like to thank the member opposite for the question, and I can assure you that my department is working with our partners, as we have in the past, for the best solution for the area around the Bois des esprits area.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I understand there is a critical date for a decision by the Government which is December 31. Many are wondering why the NDP is seemingly in bed with the developer to rape the entire heritage habitat along the Bois des esprits forest, a forest which Mayor Glen Murray calls a bold visionary park, but for which the NDP government seemingly has to be dragged haltingly to the table.

I would ask the Minister responsible for Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton), that is river and lake stewardship, whether his Government will be the wielder of the axe, or is the minister going to today commit to acting by December 31—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —to save all 80 acres.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We are dealing with the City of Winnipeg and the people adjacent to the area. The Minister of Housing has been working diligently on this issue, and we expect that we will have favourable partnerships on the area that the member has identified.

I want to thank him for his comment that we are in bed with the developer. It has not, I do not think, happened in the last while that we were accused of that, Mr. Speaker.

Lake Winnipegosis Fish Management

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr.—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to ask the co-operation of all honourable members. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers in case there is a breach of the rules.

Mr. Gerrard: I continue my question about the water stewardship efforts, and the river and the lake stewardship efforts. I table a copy of recommendations from a report provided to the Government in 1999 dealing with the Lake Winnipegosis fishery. The report provided five recommendations for action by the Government, and now, four years later, not one of those recommendations has been acted upon. Zero, zero, zero. All the Government has done is set up another committee.

My question to the Minister for Water Stewardship: Belonging to a government which promised in '99 to act immediately to protect Manitoba's lakes and rivers, why has the minister and the Government so badly let down the people of Lake Winnipegosis and region?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that the member opposite would categorize setting up the Lake Winnipegosis board as being just another committee, because this is exactly what the people in the area have been calling for.

There was a collapse in the pickerel fishery in the 1980s. It is a very difficult situation for people in the area. I want to put on the record that a simple closure without dealing with a long-term management plan, as I understand the member opposite is proposing, is not something that people in that area support, nor is it something that we support. We need a comprehensive plan, Mr. Speaker, to bring Lake Winnipegosis back, not empty rhetoric from the member opposite.

Disabilities Issues Office Opening

Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Fort Garry): Since 1999, the Manitoba government has introduced a number of initiatives designed to improve and enhance the quality of life for all Manitobans. Today marks the opening of the province's first ever Disabilities Issues Office in recognition of December 3 as the International Day of Disabled Persons.

Can the Minister responsible for Persons With Disabilities please inform the House about the initiatives her department has introduced?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister responsible for Persons With Disabilities): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Fort Garry for her question, because it gives me the opportunity to inform the House of a very great event that took place this morning at 630-240 Graham Avenue. It is the central review body for all provincial departments to assess programs for persons with disabilities. This is part of our commitment to the disabled community which was reported in the strategy paper Full Citizenship, a Manitoba provincial strategy on disability in which we worked in partnership with community groups. The Province will provide a one-time start-up grant for handi-van service under the Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program. Sixty-four rural communities will benefit from the program, receiving \$374,000 in total in interim grants.

Manitoba Housing Facilities Security Measures

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, twice in the last 15 days an elderly Manitoban has found themselves attacked by someone who has entered their apartment. Thankfully, neither 90-year-old Ann Prokipchuk, who was robbed on November 18, nor 89-year-old Lily Muth was physically harmed in the home invasions. Emotionally, however, they and their neighbours fear for their lives and for further attacks.

Both ladies, Mr. Speaker, live in complexes owned by Manitoba Housing, one at 555 Ellice Avenue and the other at 165 Donwood Drive. Can the Minister of Housing tell the House what security precautions are in place at these and other Manitoba Housing complexes?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Thank you for the question. I would like to inform the House that we are very concerned about these incidents. We have worked in the department to ensure that security measures are being looked into. Also, recent upgradings have occurred in these areas. If you would like I could read them individually, but I can tell you that the department is very concerned. We are working with the communities as well as the Winnipeg Police Service to help these people and their safety in their homes.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, what are the security upgrades that are being considered? What is the department doing to ensure that neither lady nor anybody else that lives in those facilities are robbed or taken advantage of again?

Ms. Melnick: Thank you for the question, again. It gives me the opportunity to inform the House that at 555 Ellice, the Manitoba Housing Authority has recently upgraded the security system to the cost of over \$11,000 by moving two existing cameras, removing two false cameras which had previously been installed by the Lions Club and adding three new cameras and a sophisticated digital recorder.

We have relocated the exterior card reader for the security card access system to allow more convenient access for tenants. We have installed an interior door push button to better facilitate across the building for individuals with disabilities. We have installed a cable modulator that allows tenants who have cable service the ability to monitor the front vestibule camera and see who they are buzzing into the building, and we have provided education for the tenants on how—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for the response, but I would also like to know if this initiative and these safety features will be put across the borders, or is this a one-time-only situation that will occur?

Ms. Melnick: Again, the department recognizes concern for people in their homes in Manitoba Housing units, and we are continually looking for ways of helping people be safer in their homes.

Flooding (1997) Disaster Assistance Claims

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his Government have promised they are committed to ensuring remaining issues from the flood of 1997 are addressed and residents are fully compensated.

Will the Premier commit today, Mr. Speaker, to settling all outstanding claims before expansion of the floodway begins?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We are diligently working on the claims that arose from the 1997 flood, and we are dealing with a number of outstanding claims. I think we have very few left.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the International Joint Commission report identifies about a \$70-million to \$80-million risk for the general citizens of Manitoba. If we are not able to get a settlement with, say, one or two individuals, surely to goodness it is not the Conservative Party's view that we will not build the floodway, Mr. Speaker, to give one or two individuals a veto power.

Yes, we should settle the claims from the '97 flood, Mr. Speaker, but I am shocked that the members opposite have changed their view.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, we certainly recognize the importance of the floodway for Winnipeg, but there are families who have been waiting for six years for their claims to be settled.

Will the Premier give them a special Christmas present and refund their deductibles before the end of this year?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I do think it is important for members opposite when they table petitions or raise questions in the House to be very clear in terms of their numbers, because in terms of disaster financial assistance claims, Mr. Speaker, there is one open claim out of a total of 5528 claims.

What the member is referring to, Mr. Speaker, are some residents who do not feel they should be responsible for the 10% deductible which was standard policy, was standard policy under that government, was standard policy under this Government, both in the Red River, inside the city of Winnipeg, anywhere in the province of Manitoba.

So they should not put on the record inaccurate information, Mr. Speaker. DFA claims

there is only one remaining claim and that is before appeal with Disaster Financial Assistance.

Kenaston Underpass Funding

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, we know that there is more than \$8 million left in the Canada-Manitoba infrastructure fund. The Premier admitted this before the election, and before the election he promised that he would raise the underpass to a very high priority, this despite that he has sat on this project for over three years and done nothing. Once again, we find after the election this Premier is renegeing on his promise.

I would ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Mihychuk) if she would commit today to ensuring that the remaining \$8 million goes toward the construction of the Kenaston underpass and that it happens right away according to the Premier's promise.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We said that the priorities on the infrastructure agreement were downtown development; the new arena, which was opposed by the members opposite of both parties; the Millennium Library; the Waterfront Drive project, Mr. Speaker, we all supported.

From that there was a fund that was left over and we said the next set of priorities on the City list, which included transit and the Kenaston underpass, we as a provincial government supported. The City of Winnipeg supports the remaining money going to those projects. We have not yet had sign-off from the federal government.

Mr. Loewen: I understand from the City of Winnipeg that, in fact, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier is demanding is that \$5 million go towards rapid transit, leaving a little more than \$3 million for the underpass. I would ask the minister to follow through on his pre-election promise and—

An Honourable Member: That is not true.

Mr. Loewen: Well, then get up and stand and tell the people of Manitoba today that you are

prepared to spend the \$8-million fund to help construct the underpass which is sorely needed.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the member's facts are wrong—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Fort Whyte asked a question, and I think he deserves to hear the answer. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We remain committed to the outstanding amounts going to both projects as I have indicated, not in the proportion that the member opposite has indicated. Secondly, the City and the mayor, in my view, also agree with that. We have not yet had sign-off from the federal minister.

I just want to say to the member opposite, after 11 years of not getting the project done, we are accountable for the four years we have been in office. I am going to say to the member opposite we have the will to get it done, not like members opposite who failed to get it done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Following the prayer on November 25, 2003, the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) rose on an alleged matter of privilege. He contended that the holding of an event to commemorate the proclamation of Child and Family Services Authorities legislation for the Aboriginal community on the same afternoon when the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) spoke in the Throne Speech debate was a breach of privilege. At the conclusion of his remarks, he moved "THAT this matter of privilege that I have raised be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs." The honourable Government House leader (Mr. Mackintosh), the honourable Official Opposition House leader (Mr. Derkach), the honourable Premier (Mr. Doer) and the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) also offered advice to the Chair. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities.

I thank all members for their advice to the Chair on this matter.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached, in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

Regarding the first condition, the actions complained of occurred on the afternoon of November 24; however, the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) did not raise the matter until November 25. I would respectfully suggest that the matter could have been raised in the House on November 24.

Regarding the second condition, whether there is sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House had been breached, it is important to determine whether parliamentary privilege has been breached in the incident complained of.

Joseph Maingot advises on page 224 of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition, that "parliamentary privilege is concerned with the special rights of Members, not in their capacity as ministers or as party leaders, whips or parliamentary secretaries, but strictly in their capacity as Members in their parliamentary work." Therefore, claims that privilege has been violated due to activities performed as the leader of a party are not the basis for a prima facie case of privilege.

Maingot also advises on page 99 of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* that in order for the privileges of the House to have been breached, the activity must involve a proceeding of Parliament. This concept is supported from two rulings from Speaker Rocan in 1988 and one ruling from Speaker Rocan in 1991. Although debate which occurs in the legislative Chamber does constitute a proceeding of Parliament, outside events, such as a ceremony, do not fall within the purview of a proceeding of Parliament.

I believe it is important to quote for the House comments that Speaker Parent made in 1997 in ruling on a case of privilege that came

up in the Canadian House of Commons. He stated "the Chair is mindful of the multiple responsibilities, duties and constituency related activities of all Members and of the importance they play in the work of every Member of Parliament. However, my role as your Speaker is to consider only those matters that affect the parliamentary work of Members."

I would therefore rule that there is no prima facie case of privilege. I would, however, note for the House that the honourable Premier (Mr. Doer) had offered that the Government would send a letter to all persons who attended the event to advise that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) was required to be in the Chamber for part of the afternoon to participate in the Throne Speech debate. Hopefully, this remedy will conclude the matter.

Order. Rulings are very, very important. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I challenge the Speaker's ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to ask the House, as you know, when challenging a ruling of the Speaker, you need the support of four members in the House. I ask the members that support the challenge of the Speaker's ruling to please rise so I can identify if there are four members that will support the challenge.

Seeing none, the ruling stands.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Morden Area Foundation

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, on October 24 I had the privilege of attending the Morden Area Foundation's Third Annual Fundraising Banquet and Auction.

This event was very successful, with many community members attending and supporting the foundation. Mr. Speaker, among the evening's highlights was the presentation of two awards to local volunteers.

Gwen Nedohin received the foundation's Youth Volunteer Award. She has volunteered for

many years with local organizations, including 4-H, the Corn and Apple Festival, the Morden Gymnastics Club, the Friendship Centre and the Morden Collegiate. Nedohin is extremely dedicated to the service of others, apparent not only in her many involvements, but also in her humble acceptance of this award.

Mr. Speaker, Jim Hunt was awarded the adult Outstanding Community Volunteer award. Hunt has also spent many years serving the local community through his time and efforts with the Corn and Apple Festival, Morden's handi-van service, coaching ringette and softball teams and assisting with the Manitoba Society of Seniors Games. We are grateful to Mr. Hunt's ongoing service to so many area projects.

Another highlight of the evening was Morden Town Council's first move in the creation of a Town of Morden fund to which they contributed \$5,000. As well, Lenore Laverty, chair of the foundation, made a presentation to the Morden Fire Department to support the purchase of a thermal imaging camera. This is but one example of the Morden Area Foundation's commitment to improve the local community.

Other donors at the evening event included Golden West Broadcasting and the Royal Bank of Canada. The Morden Area Foundation distributes funds to organizations and projects in the areas of health, recreation, culture and education. Registered charities in Morden and the surrounding area are welcome to apply for grants from the foundation.

Volunteers spend countless hours working with others and serving the community. I would like to thank the Morden Area Foundation and the region's legion of volunteers for their ongoing contributions to making Manitoba an even better place to live. Thank you.

St. Vital Historical Society

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the 10th anniversary of the St. Vital Historical Society. I would also like to congratulate the society on the honorary certificate which they recently received at the Manitoba Council on Aging 2003 recognition awards.

The society has greatly contributed to the constituency of St. Vital. Over the past few years it has provided a variety of resources which has helped constituents learn about St. Vital history. Mr. Speaker, the society has printed materials regarding the history of St. Vital and surrounding areas. Society members provide educational displays, guided tours and archives for research.

In addition, they also provide a variety of educational programming. The many members are always willing to give a helping hand and are instrumental in the life of the educational centre. Much of their time is focussed on the society's newsletter, *St. Vital Historian*. In addition, the society organizes theme shows during the year, including a wonderful display of athletics and athletes which I visited this summer.

The society's AGM, which I was pleased to attend in November, was also organized by these dedicated volunteers. Their recent award recognizes their work for the Seniors Resource Network. This network helps senior citizens gain access to activities, services, resources and history in an effort to help seniors remain as independent members of the community and also to help promote their quality of life.

I would like to congratulate the members of the St. Vital Historical Society, including two who are with us today in the Chamber, President Lorna Miner and volunteer Dorothy Mazurik, on their recent award and to thank them and recognize their exceptional efforts, skills and wisdom, which have improved the lives of Manitoba seniors and the St. Vital community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

International Day of Disabled Persons

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House of the significance of today, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Initially proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations, today acts as a forum for the promotion of greater societal understanding of disability issues as well as the creation of greater support for the rights and dignity of persons living with mental, physical or sensory impairments.

More than a half-million individuals worldwide are living with some form of disability. As

a province, today is a day for us to evaluate how far we have come in terms of providing for the full participation, inclusion and integration of those living with disabilities. It is a day for us to recognize that no matter where we live, there are people struggling with the limitations of physical and social barriers and that we must continue to find ways to provide for greater equality of opportunities for all citizens.

As a society, Canadians have made much progress in pushing for greater inclusions for persons with disabilities. For this we have much to be proud of. Considerable achievements have been made through various initiatives in research, prevention and rehabilitation. In Manitoba citizens have displayed tremendous progress through the processes of integration occurring in our schools, workplaces and communities.

Today I was able to attend an event organized by the Council of Canadians with Disabilities which highlighted some of the gains and challenges the disability community has encountered as a result of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The event also reminded us of the role of Allan Simpson, an amazing Manitoban and disability rights activist who became National Chairman of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities and who advocates for ensuring Charter protection for Canadians with disabilities.

There are still many barriers to overcome in order to promote greater inclusion. Full societal participation of individuals living with disabilities requires strong moral commitment on behalf of everyone. This day reminds us of the importance of this responsibility, and the philosophy of self-determination today also stresses the importance of ensuring that persons with disabilities are given the opportunity to speak for themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

King Buck Dance

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to tell the members of a very important event which occurred in my home community of Poplarfield this past weekend. I am referring to

the 15th annual King Buck Dance which celebrates the end of the white-tailed deer hunting season. This event is put on by the Poplarfield Development Corporation in order to raise funds to maintain the King Buck Park and statue, and plans are underway to facilitate further development within the community.

Past projects successfully completed by the PDC include, of course, the construction of the King Buck statue, a monument second to none in our province, and the construction of the Poplar Villa Seniors Lodge, a vital facility within our community.

* (14:40)

The evening was a rousing success with well over 200 people in attendance and over \$3,000 raised for the community. I regret that time does not allow me to name all the winners, but I can tell you that in true Poplarfield style a number of fine animals were harvested during the hunt. The heaviest deer weighed in at over 252 pounds dressed and the highest scoring racks were a typical head measuring over 175 inches and a non-typical head over 191 inches. There were seven entries into the provincial record books recorded, four of which were in the youth category, indicating that this important component of local tradition is being avidly picked up by the next generation. Hunting is an important aspect in our society from many perspectives, ranging from economic development, social interaction and the promotion of healthy living.

I want to commend all of those who participated in the event, both the social evening and the hunt itself. I especially want to credit those who contributed their time or money toward this endeavour. On behalf of the community of Poplarfield, I thank all concerned for their generosity and commitment.

Domestic Violence Prevention Month

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, today is the launch of Domestic Violence Prevention Month, a campaign which deals with peace beginning at home. I think it is important that we recognize the importance of reducing and eliminating domestic violence and making sure that we have peace at home.

Today is also the International Day for Disabled Persons. There are gains to be made from the integration of disabled persons in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. Manitoba Liberals believe very strongly that we need the goal of full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in the social life and development of Manitoba.

I will also comment briefly on the ruling today. I think it is—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When a Speaker makes a ruling, it is not to be debated. The only option that the member has is to challenge the ruling. *[interjection]* Not on a ruling of a Speaker, because you would be reflecting on the Chair if you did.

You still have time on your member's statement.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is agreement to waive private members' business this Thursday morning, it is tomorrow morning from 10 till noon, and, instead, have government business called. In fact, there was a private member's opposition bill as well there.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to waive private members' business this Thursday morning from 10 to 12 noon and instead have government business called? *[Agreed]*

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Eighth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), and the debate remains open.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Monsieur le président, c'est un grand plaisir pour moi de me lever

et de prononcer quelques mots pour le compte rendu en réponse au récent Discours du Trône.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to rise today and put a few words on the record in response to the recent Throne Speech.

English

I would like to start out by welcoming you back, Sir, as Speaker of this Assembly. We assembled here know of your untiring efforts to try and bring some sort of a stability to the proceedings in this Chamber. As you already know, my friend, I will do my best in trying to support you as you from time to time have to guide us through some unsettling circumstances.

Also, I would be remiss if I did not thank the staff of the Clerk's office, which also includes our Sergeant-at-Arms and his Chamber branch staff but, more specifically, Mr. Joe Verscheure, who delivers our Hansards and our Order Papers first thing as he starts out his day, and to our pages, the interns and our caucus staff for all the work that they do in supporting our day-to-day activities inside and outside of this Chamber, and also to the individual who hides behind the glass, one John Statham, our interpreter, who does a wonderful job in assisting those of us who willingly want to speak the other official language.

I would also like to extend my personal welcome to the new MLAs and to the new ministers who have now had a few weeks to get their feet wet and get a taste of legislative life. I hope that it is all that you had hoped it would be as you entered into public service.

J'aimerais aussi remercier ma famille et tous mes amis pour leur soutien continu. Je ne pourrais pas faire ce travail sans vous. Et aux gens extraordinaires de la circonscription de Carman, merci encore une fois pour votre appui.

Translation

I would also like to thank my family and all my friends for their ongoing support. I could not do this work without you. To the great constituents of the Carman constituency, thank you once again for your support.

English

The Throne Speech was a fine example of recycling in action, as the Government revisited many promises in health care, Justice, Agriculture and other departments that have yet to come to fruition.

As a representative for the Carman constituency, which is home to many agricultural producers, I never cease to be amazed by how out of touch this Government is with the needs of our agricultural sector. This is particularly disturbing given that Manitoba's livestock producers are facing the costliest and longest lasting disaster in recent decades, the BSE crisis.

Last week's Throne Speech coincided with the six-month anniversary of the discovery of BSE in Canada. Since the discovery of BSE in May, communities have rallied around farm families to try and help see them through this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a moment to thank the countless communities and organizations around Manitoba that took the time this summer to follow through with beef barbecues or to serve beef at a fall supper in support of the beef industry. Your support of the beef industry has been outstanding, and we cannot thank you enough for your commitment to seeing the livestock sector through this crisis.

Unfortunately, we have not seen the same level of support for this multi million-dollar industry from the Doer government. The Government admitted in their Throne Speech that the crisis has already cost Manitoba an estimated \$117 million in livestock receipts, but not until page 11 of the Throne Speech did they admit that their most immediate challenge is to, and I quote: "maintain stability in the rural economy." Frankly, Mr. Speaker, that is insulting to my constituents.

Where has this Government been as 12 000 Manitoban farm families struggled? Has the Premier (Mr. Doer) been listening? Has the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) been listening? Has the minister responsible for disaster services been listening? Do they actually recognize the hurt in our communities as farmers

struggle? Let us face it, it is not only farm families who are hurting, it is also the businesses that supply and service this vital sector of our economy. When the agricultural sector suffers, the provincial economy as a whole suffers, and that is to no one's benefit.

Sure, there have been a series of half-baked programs from the Doer government, a slaughter program, a feeder program and promises to increase slaughter capacity. Unfortunately, they have left many producers virtually empty-handed, uncertain as to how they will be able to feed their families and their cattle this winter. If the Government's highly advertised BSE programs were actually working, then the flow of calls, e-mails and letters from concerned producers would have stopped by now.

Sadly, we continue to be contacted by farm families struggling to keep their heads above water during this crisis. Until this Government steps forward and concedes that its programs are not working and offers meaningful assistance to producers, loans are not what farmers need. Farmers need a cash advance.

It is not only the cattle producers who are feeling the effects from the BSE crisis. All livestock farmers have been affected. The Province of Manitoba could do more to help our farmers. The hurt in our rural communities is unlikely to subside anytime soon.

* (14:50)

Manitobans looking to the Throne Speech for a sense of leadership on other key issues were equally disappointed; rural infrastructure, for example. Highways and roads in southern rural Manitoba deserve attention. I hope that the upcoming session requires that all provincial revenues raised through gas and diesel taxes are spent on highways, roads and infrastructure in rural Manitoba as well as the rest of this province.

We need to ensure that rural Manitobans have proper sewer and water treatment facilities. I hope that the new Department of Water Stewardship will be able to adequately address the concerns of rural Manitobans with respect to water quality.

Manitobans wanted an overhaul of the way education is funded. We have called for the complete removal of education taxes from residential property and farmland and full funding of the education system by the Province. This is essential to creating a tax system that is fair, simple and equitable for all Manitobans, but the Doer government is not listening.

Moreover, the Throne Speech contained no vision for creating jobs and opportunities. Sure, the NDP brought up the tried-and-true solutions: new hydro projects and the expansion of the Floodway.

Un tel projet, pour lequel je dois féliciter le ministre de l'Énergie (M. Sale) et le gouvernement, est celui de l'énergie éolienne à Saint-Léon.

Parmi les statistiques sur l'énergie éolienne, je peux partager avec vous les suivantes: L'utilisation de l'énergie éolienne connaît la croissance la plus rapide de toutes les sources d'énergie. Au début de l'an 2003 la capacité générée par l'énergie éolienne à l'échelle mondiale dépassait les 31 000 mégawatts. Un parc d'éoliennes peut générer une puissance de 50 à 200 mégawatts. Le parc éolienne de Gaspé, qui produit 100 mégawatts, est suffisamment important pour fournir de l'électricité à 10 000 foyers, selon le *Winnipeg Free Press* du 5 décembre 2002.

Hydro-Manitoba et certaines sociétés privées ont créé des sites de contrôle à travers le sud du Manitoba afin de vérifier la vitesse du vent.

Translation

One such project for which I must congratulate the Minister of Energy (Mr. Sale) and the Government is the wind-power project at St. Léon.

*Some of the statistics about wind energy that I can share with you are the following: Wind power is the world's fastest growing energy source. At the beginning of 2003 worldwide wind-generated capacity exceeded 31 000 megawatts. A wind farm can generate between 50 and 200 megawatts of power. The Gaspé wind farm, which produces 100 megawatts, is big enough to power 10 000 homes, according to the *Winnipeg Free Press* of December 5, 2002.*

Manitoba Hydro and some private corporations have placed testing sites across southern Manitoba in order to monitor wind velocity.

English

I also believe that on November 14, 2003, the Province gave the okay to a B.C. company to build Canada's largest wind power plant in southern Manitoba in the constituency of Carman at St. Léon. Seventy-five wind turbines generating approximately 99 megawatts of energy will be erected in the St. Léon area. The plant will have the potential to generate enough electricity to power 40 000 homes. This is wonderful news, especially in this time of drought, which is placing strains on Manitoba.

I am proud to know that the Government of Manitoba is playing an active role in the quest to use renewable energy. But the sad fact of the matter is that those jobs are government driven. Once those projects are completed, however worthy, the vast majority of the jobs associated with them will disappear.

Le Discours du Trône n'a donné aucune indication que le gouvernement était prêt à renoncer à son habitude de dépenser continuellement, plutôt que de dépenser efficacement.

Translation

The Throne Speech gave no indication that the Government is prepared to curb its habit of continual spending as opposed to effective spending.

English

Ineffective spending by this Government has not eased the funding crisis facing universities. It has not slashed health care waiting lists, and it has not prevented the nursing shortages from doubling. The spending spree has not prevented shortages of medical professionals in rural and northern Manitoba and hospital closures.

We saw evidence of the uncertainty in our rural communities this past September when many rural residents rallied at the Legislature in support of their rural health care facilities. You could see the fear in their faces because they are not certain that their hospitals or their doctors will be there when they really need them.

Ineffective spending by this Government has not put a stop to the rise in gang-related murders and attempted murders, and it has not run the Hells Angels out of Manitoba. It has not curbed vandalism, theft and other crimes that are all too common in communities all around Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, ineffective spending has not resulted in major improvements in infrastructure around the province, such as sewer and water treatment plants, drainage and roads. Drive down just about any rural road and you would probably ask if there is an adequate investment in maintaining these roads, particularly given rapid changes in the size of the trucks transporting grain, vegetables and other commodities over our roads.

Moreover, the Throne Speech did not address infrastructure concerns such as ensuring there are adequate water supplies in our communities, particularly in the wake of the recent drought. Manitobans looking to the Throne Speech for evidence of a plan to grow our economy and to create jobs and opportunities for young people were also sorely disappointed.

In the health field, we find that waiting lists in Manitoba are still too long. While we may be training more nurses, they are leaving the province once they have graduated. Expanding the medical class at the University of Manitoba from 85 to 100 spaces is a step in the right direction. However, there needs to be assurance that the new medical graduates will stay and practise in Manitoba, and not just in the city of Winnipeg.

Redesigning health care facilities is one way of allowing more day surgeries and to relieve pressure on acute care beds. Another way is the use of private, not-for-profit clinics. Promotion of healthy living is key to reducing long-term medical care costs.

Je suis très fier du travail accompli par le groupe de travail tripartite, créé par le premier ministre de la Province du Manitoba (M. Doer) et présidé par le nouveau ministre de la Conservation (M. Struthers), et de notre appui unanime à l'interdiction de l'usage du tabac à l'échelle provinciale.

Translation

I am very proud of the work that was done by the all-party committee, put together by the Premier of the Province of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) and chaired by the new Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), and of our unanimous support for the implementation of a province-wide smoking ban.

English

The Throne Speech failed to outline a strategy to tackle our anemic job growth and the lack of confidence the business community has in the economic climate of this province. What people wanted from the Throne Speech was evidence of a new deal for all Manitobans. This new deal involves meaningful tax relief. It includes a vision for growing our economy so that businesses and industries would say, not only are we going to stay in Manitoba, we are going to grow here.

It involves a government with the courage to crack down on crime, to run the Hells Angels and other gangs out of town, to stop the revolving door of justice and to ensure that Manitobans feel safe in their communities. It involves a government that is less dogmatic in its administration of the health care system so that alternatives are examined to ensure all Manitobans receive access to high quality health care in a timely manner.

It involves maintaining and improving this province's infrastructure, given its importance in underpinning economic growth. Instead, the Throne Speech provided Manitobans with the same old deal from a tired administration with a credibility gap and content to watch economic growth sputter, health care waiting lists and crime stats grow and to watch our young people leave for greener pastures.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to put on the record here and now that, as a private member, private members have an opportunity to bring forward particular legislation known to most of us as a private member's bill. There is presently a bill before the House, Bill 203, called The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act. Sir, I would like to advise members of this

Assembly that if this bill is ever fortunate enough to see the light of day in this Chamber I, on behalf of my constituents, Sir, will be voting against such a particular bill.

In finishing up, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say:

Au cours des mois à venir, le caucus progressiste-conservateur va continuer à obliger le gouvernement Doer à répondre de son manque de leadership face au défis et aux occasions qui se présentent à notre province.

Translation

In the months ahead the Progressive Conservative caucus will continue to hold the Doer government accountable for its lack of leadership in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing this province.

English

Finally, Mr. Speaker, to each and every one of you that had the opportunity to listen to these remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very, very merry Christmas, because as Christmas grows increasingly close, it is a time for each and every one of us to spend time with our most beautiful families that each and every one of us has the opportunity to be with. Thank you very much and have a merry Christmas.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I am pleased to put on the record a few remarks during the Throne Speech debate, and I might point out that I was a visitor in the beautiful constituency of Carman. I attended the official opening of the Centre d'enfants St. Claude Children's Centre. The Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) was unable to be there that day and was attending another event in his constituency; otherwise he would have been there, but I was happy to be there representing the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Ms. Melnick) and the Government of Manitoba.

The opening of this centre was important to this community because it provided a child-care centre for children, and, really, it is an important resource for parents which means, in

turn, healthier children and families, and ultimately a stronger community. The board and staff of the centre deserve our thanks for their commitment to the care and education of young children.

The centre was built with assistance of numerous community volunteers and donors who are to be commended for their support. It was a wonderful official opening with a friendly crowd of children, parents and community members.

* (15:00)

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I also want to congratulate the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre's Clean Team Project which was awarded the Manitoba Hydro Spirit of the Earth Award on June 21 at The Forks Scotiabank Stage. The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre has been a proven culturally relevant support and preventative service to Aboriginal families and children in the city of Winnipeg.

Their efforts and hard work have yielded tremendous results in communities such as Burrows, and, in their endeavours, they have undertaken such ventures as the Clean Team Project. The centre was awarded the Manitoba Hydro's Spirit of the Earth Award because of their co-ordination of the Clean Team Project for the North American Indigenous Games in 2002.

This is an annual award which recognizes the environmental achievements of Aboriginal people, in particular, those projects which promote environmental awareness and recognizes the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people. At the 2002 Indigenous Games, the Clean Team worked as ambassadors by providing litter control and recycling services at sporting and recreation venues during the games.

Twenty-five thousand dollars of funding was provided to Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre by the Winnipeg Foundation. With this generous grant, the centre was able to recruit 200 youth and 20 youth leaders from local inner-city programs and drop-in centres and provide them with honorariums for their work.

The Clean Team Project received the award because of the positive impact of their work on the environment and because of its specific purpose of educating the youth, particularly inner-city youth, who must overcome significant challenges in their daily lives. I would, therefore, like to thank the centre for their contribution to the community and to congratulate them and the young Clean Team members for their receipt of the Spirit of the Earth Award.

I want to congratulate the Czech-Slovak Benevolent Association, which celebrated its 90th anniversary on September 27, 2003. My wife and I had the honour of attending a dinner to mark this occasion. The Czech-Slovak Benevolent Association is one of the oldest organizations in Winnipeg that has the promotion of a particular culture and heritage as its primary focus.

Founded in 1913, the initial purpose of the organization was to assist Czech and Slovak immigrants in making the transition to their new lives in Winnipeg. Over time, immigration from that region has waned and the focus of the organization has shifted. Today, the organization focusses on passing on cultural traditions to children of Czech or Slovak heritage and to expose the general public to some of the wonderful elements of the culture.

The Czech-Slovak Benevolent Association has developed several programs geared towards youth, including two folk dance groups in which youth actively participate. The organization has also participated in community events. In 2001, the association rejoined Folklorama, a long-time Winnipeg tradition which provides a great forum for cultural education of all kinds. The association's participation in Folklorama is key to its ability to raise its profile in the community.

Other initiatives include publication of a quarterly magazine and the development of a Web site. Preserving cultural heritage is important, not only for those Winnipeggers of Czech or Slovak heritage, but for all of us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of my wife, Carol, and me, I want to thank our friends at the Czech-Slovak Benevolent Association for their wonderful hospitality and the splendid dinner,

speeches and entertainment which we thoroughly enjoyed.

In Canadian history, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been many people who have come to Canada with the hope of finding a place where they can worship in peace without fear of persecution. My wife and I were honoured to attend the 100th anniversary service of the Ukrainian Baptist Church of Winnipeg, which is a congregation whose founding members experienced such persecution in the Ukraine.

They came to Winnipeg to find a place to live and to worship in peace. I stand here today to commemorate the history of their survival and to speak about this anniversary. In 1902, in Ukraine, the wrath of persecution began to fall upon its citizens, especially those with faith, including Baptists.

In 1903, about 15 young families relocated from Ukraine. One of these first few families was that of Ivan Shakotko and his wife. In that same year, they began the organization of the first Ukrainian Baptist Church in Winnipeg and in western Canada. Their intention was to minister to the growing number of immigrants from Ukraine. In 1904, the first church building was erected on the north side of the city on Burrows Avenue. In the early thirties, the congregation grew and a new church building was erected on the corner of Parr Street and Redwood Avenue, which is where their church is still located.

Since the inception of this Ukrainian Baptist Church by Shakotko, it has been filled with many dedicated leaders and followers. They have worked hard in the community by caring for children, youth and many families. For this, I would like to thank them and to congratulate them on this historic achievement of their 100th anniversary.

My wife and I would like to thank the members of the Ukrainian Baptist Church for inviting us to attend their dinner and anniversary service on Sunday, October 19, 2003, both of which we thoroughly enjoyed.

Now, getting down to more specific content of the Throne Speech itself, there are so many good things in the Throne Speech that I will not

try to reiterate or address all of them, but I will hit on some things that are important to me and to my constituents.

For example, I think all of us in this caucus are proud of the fact that university enrolment in Manitoba is up by 29 percent. I believe that one of the reasons for this is that we reduced tuition by 10 percent and froze it for at least two subsequent years. We think that this made university education more affordable.

We have been ending the clawback of the National Child Benefit and, as a result, have returned nearly \$14 million annually to low income families. You will recall that we began by removing the clawback for children from birth to age six, then from seven to twelve and starting January 1, ages 13 to 18. I do not know how many provinces have done this.

I know that when the federal government increased the National Child Benefit, unfortunately, they made an agreement with the provinces saying the provinces could do anything they wanted with the money. So Newfoundland and New Brunswick let all families keep all the money, but Manitoba under the Filmon Tories and all the other provinces in Canada clawed the money back from the poorest of the poor and put some of it into programs for children. What we are doing is letting all families keep all of the money, because that is what was intended for and that is where it belongs.

The results have been quite startling. Not only has the income, especially of single parent families, gone up considerably, but I am sure the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) remembers reading an article in the *Free Press* saying that the Winnipeg Harvest food bank was the only food bank in Canada that saw its use go down in the past year, the only one in Canada, and there are hundreds in Canada.

Why is that happening? That is happening because we are ending the clawback. It is because we have increased the minimum wage in Manitoba every year by 25 cents. It is because we have increased the work incentive for families on employment income assistance, and we have increased the school supplies allowance for families on employment income assistance. We are also helping low-income families.

I would also like to point out that because the economy is so buoyant in Manitoba, we have the lowest level of people enrolled in employment income assistance, I believe, since 1982. It has been steadily declining under our Government, and we plan to continue seeing it decline so that more people are in the paid workforce and earning income and do not have to go to food banks like Winnipeg Harvest.

The Member for Southdale is not going to talk about that because his government has nothing to brag about in this regard. They were the government that cut welfare rates. They were the ones that clawed back the National Child Benefit. They are the ones that did not increase the minimum wage except once in the year before an election, which was what they did with school divisions. They cut grants to school divisions every year except in the year before an election, and then they increased it. That was a pattern of their government. I am sure that the Member for Southdale will not talk about that because their record does not stand up to ours at all when it comes to education funding. In fact, when it comes to education funding, we promised to increase it by the rate of inflation every year and we have done it. We have kept that promise.

An Honourable Member: They sold MTS.

Mr. Martindale: And they sold MTS, as my colleague points out. If it was not for the sale of MTS, they could not have balanced the budget. They robbed the people of Manitoba in order to balance the budget.

An Honourable Member: They fired a thousand nurses.

Mr. Martindale: And they fired a thousand nurses. Thank you for reminding me of that.

And they ended the program for nurses aides and the LPN program, and they cut out the diploma nursing program and then there was a shortage of nurses. Surprise, surprise. Then they had to close beds and then there are longer waiting lists. So what did we do? We brought back the LPN program. We brought back the diploma nursing program. We are getting more nurses to the bedside, and it is making a difference. We have a better health care system as a result.

The Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) is shaking his head. I do not know why. It is all true. If he wants, he can get up and rebut me, I guess, if he gets a chance to speak.

Under opportunities for youth, I would like to talk about a couple of things here because this certainly affects youth in my constituency. For example, we have a new Aboriginal education action plan to focus on increasing high school completion and building new partnerships with business. This is something that the Aboriginal community is certainly aware of. It is important as completing high school and then getting into post-secondary education and training in order to have the skills necessary to get a job.

There are many, many things that we have done under health care. It is such a long list, I do not know. I might even run out of time here before the next speaker gets up, but I will start this list anyway.

* (15:10)

We have a wait-list reduction plan. We are improving information services, including expanding health links and posting wait lists on the Web to allow patients to make choices about their wait times. We have expanded day surgery and out-patient diagnostics to free up hospital beds. We are investing in more new diagnostic equipment in all regions. We are expanding the use of rural diagnostic equipment and operating theatres. We are stabilizing and renewing the nursing workforce. Stability in health care is coming with increases in the number of nurses and doctors, more diagnostic equipment and major capital improvements in every region. We are training more doctors. The University of Manitoba medical class has been expanded to 100 spaces. We are training more nurses. The total enrolment is to grow to 3000 over the next four years with added programs for rural and northern communities. We have more technologists for diagnostic equipment.

We have made changes to cardiac surgery as recommended in the Koshal report. We have introduced a leading-edge gamma-knife procedure at the Health Sciences Centre. It is not really a knife at all. It is radiation targeted to make the use of surgery unnecessary because it

is non-invasive, and it means that people are spending less time in hospital and at less expense. They will be discharged the next day. It will be saving the health care system money and more patients will get treatment for brain cancer, brain tumours and various things. [interjection]

I am sorry. I am not watching the opposition whip, I am watching my whip. I do not take my orders from you. Sorry.

With regard to community safety, we have been doing many good things. For example, we just announced this week the doubling of the number, well, I think it was actually during the election campaign, but we are starting to announce the new Lighthouses as they open up. The Premier was actually in Burrows constituency during the election, at King Edward School, where an existing Lighthouse program is, to announce that we are doubling the number of sites. We are fulfilling that election commitment. If you will notice there is a pattern here, that we promise something during the election, we keep the promise after the election.

We have new resources to fight gang crime, including Crown attorney positions and a Manitoba integrated organized crime task force. We have introduced new legislation to allow civil forfeiture of profits from crime. There is an external review of Legal Aid. There is a reform of the Provincial Court to tackle backlogs and the remand culture, and, as I mentioned, Lighthouses.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin). He invited me to go on a tour of northern Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, actually it was, I guess, the northern part of southern Manitoba, plus Thompson. It was very enjoyable to go with the minister. I accompanied him to Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas and Thompson. In all of those places we stopped in at friendship centres.

I remember being there with the Member for Dauphin when the Conservatives were in government. It was after they had cut the funding to every friendship centre in Manitoba. Fourteen friendship centres lost all their funding and they had to reduce their staff. Most of them were on the brink of closing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember being there with the now-Premier and the Member for Dauphin and other members. I am sure the Member for Swan River was on that tour, and the Member for Thompson. We promised that if we formed government, we would restore the funding to friendship centres. Now, we have done that for every friendship centre in Manitoba.

It was really amazing to tour those friendship centres and to hear about the programs and to see their programs. They have Aboriginal Headstart. They have education classes. They have drop-in centres. They have numerous programs. In fact, the one that I was the most impressed with was in Swan River, where they actually manage a housing authority and they rent out their own units. They would really like to see that expanded. I think they seem to be doing a good job. It was wonderful to see the things that they are doing. One of the friendship centres has a staff of 42 people, I believe. It is amazing the variety of programs that they are providing, both to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, I should point out.

Also, when I was in Thompson, I filled in for the Minister of Family Services and Housing to do a Neighbourhoods Alive! announcement. We toured an apartment block that is being renovated. Then we went back to Wabowden and announced funding for a new child care centre in Wabowden School, and we had a tour of Wabowden. It was very, very interesting to see and hear about things that are happening in that community.

We have proclaimed legislation establishing Aboriginal and Métis child welfare services. This is very important to the Aboriginal and Métis communities. It is the first time in a long, long time that they have complete control, or will have complete control over their children. This is something that they have been wanting for decades. There have been many, many sad things that have happened to their children in the past, such as residential schools and the sixties scoop, as they call it, where a lot of Aboriginal children were adopted, both in Manitoba and out of province and in the United States. There are many, many painful stories behind those adoptions.

So this is something that is long overdue and something that was recommended in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report of 1991, which the Conservative government sat on, acted on almost none of those recommendations. It took until the Government changed in 1999 for us as a government to follow up those recommendations and to implement them. We are very pleased that that process is going ahead.

Finally, I would like to speak briefly about what is happening in major cities, especially in older neighbourhoods where Neighbourhoods Alive! and housing renewal programs are making a difference. We have renovated or built over 2000 houses in Winnipeg and Brandon. In fact, I think it is more like 2300 now. In places like the William Whyte neighbourhood in the North End of Winnipeg, it certainly is making a difference, because property values have gone up 60 percent. During the decade of neglect, during the dark, lean years of the Filmon government, housing prices went down. I was one of the victims of that. I lost \$11,000 in assessed value of my house when I moved. In this area just south of where I used to live, now property values have gone up 60 percent. So our investment in housing, which was the first investment since 1993—the former Minister of Urban Affairs, the Minister responsible for Housing, will remember that in 1993, when the federal government cut out all funding for social housing—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I cannot hear the member who is speaking, please.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you for your timely intervention, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer), because he was a minister, will remember that as soon as the federal government cut out all funding for social housing, the provincial Conservative government did the same thing. As a result, from 1993 to 1999, there was no new housing renovated or built in Winnipeg or in Manitoba. It took a change in government and the City to put money on the table. I believe it is \$18 million or \$19 million, and the federal government, cost-shared by the provincial government, \$50

million for a total of almost \$70 million to be spent over five years in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson to renovate or build new housing. It is making a difference.

I really regret that I have run out of time because I could talk about housing for a long time and about the difference that we are making in urban renewal, but I know that somebody else is very anxious to speak, so I will conclude.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all the times that I have ever got up to talk on the Throne Speech, I have always had the distinct pleasure of speaking after either the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) or the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). What it does is it just sort of pumps me up. I hear their time-worn rhetoric of social dogma and all the things that they get pumped up with from their spinners, and they bring it in here and spout it off as if this is gospel—both members.

I find it is ironic that I have always had to get up after them and correct the record. I am here to correct the record, but, firstly, I do want to congratulate all the members that have come back to the Chamber, the new members and the pages. I would like to congratulate Mr. Speaker for coming back as the referee of the House, if you want to say. Like I say, all the members that have come back to join the Second Session of the Thirty-eighth Legislature. I would like to thank Hansard for their diligence in their work in recording all the efforts that come forth through all these wise words that we put on record as we stand up and either debate the Throne Speech or debate bills, which we will be getting into also later on.

I would like to pay tribute and congratulations again to the new members that have come in here. Some of them have come from election right into Cabinet. I congratulate them. They will have an interesting and exciting career in Cabinet. I have had the fortune to be in the Executive Council. It is something that I hold as a very dear pleasure. There are fond memories. They will have a lot to garner as the years progress. Unfortunately, it is only going to be the one term, but that is just the way the ball bounces.

* (15:20)

I would like to say a few thank-yous to the people of my constituency of Southdale. I was very fortunate to be re-elected there. I had a wonderful group of people who helped me and worked with me, my volunteers, my fundraisers, the people who put out the time, the effort and the commitment to work with me and to work on behalf of not only myself but the party to get me re-elected. I feel very humbled and very grateful to a lot of people who spent the time and the effort to bring me back to this Chamber. Without that, I think every one of us would realize that we are not here alone. We are brought forth by a lot of people that believe in not only our philosophy but the individual, and they feel that they want to get involved.

It is very humbling at times when you see a lot of these people coming to help you. You say thank you, but you cannot say thank you enough to a lot of the people that help you along the way, whether it is people in your constituency and, particularly, people in your family that get you involved with politics. I am very thankful for having that opportunity to work with a lot of people in regard to getting re-elected in my constituency.

The constituency of Southdale is now, I believe, almost the second largest constituency in Manitoba. We have a tremendous amount of new growth, new housing and new development in my constituency. I represent the area of Southdale, Island Lakes, Royalwood, Southland Park, Niakwa Park and a bit of Windsor Park that I share with the Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha). We do share one facility in that area, the Member for Radisson and I, and that is the Winakwa Community Centre. He and I were just there at a function on the weekend. It was quite gratifying to see the amount of volunteers and enthusiasm at that particular community club.

Winakwa Community Centre is really truly unique. They have always had a very strong base of volunteers that come out to help, not only in the community, but to help the young people in all the various sporting activities that are run through that club. I have always had a great admiration for the people that do get involved as

a volunteer in that particular club of Winakwa Community Centre.

The other community centre that I represent in my area is called the Southdale Community Centre. It is one of the largest clubs in Winnipeg. It is very, very active, very progressive in its approach to helping the community. It covers a lot of other areas in that area, a lot of people that go to that community centre. It is always a pleasure to go to that area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do have one other area that I would just like to mention. That is the area called the Prendergast Centre. That centre, there, is the place where a lot of the seniors congregate for activities and events. There are quite a few day cares that work out of there. In fact, I believe one of the day care operators, Miss Grace Howard, met with the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) in the pre-Budget consultations. She was telling him about the Prendergast Centre. He was very supportive of the day care centres in that area and recognizing their growth.

Those are mainly the areas that I feel that I would like to mention as places where there is a fair amount of participation in my community for not only the volunteers, but the people that get involved with the very aspects of public service and volunteerism in my constituency of Southdale.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do feel that I should put some words on the record in regard to the Throne Speech that was brought in the other day. There was a fair amount of rhetoric that was brought forth. There was a fair amount of rehashing of positions that were mentioned before by the Government, not only before their election, but in their previous term in government. It is something that they seem to revel in, reinventing a lot of the wheels that they have already put in motion and just putting a new word on, a new spin on it, if you would like.

I would like to mention that we are very concerned that the balanced-budget legislation may be interpreted in a different way by this Government, the Government of the Premier (Mr. Doer). They may be looking for ways to get around the balanced-budget legislation, or to circumvent some aspects of it.

We are very concerned about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we feel that the Government and the balanced budget legislation that was passed and that they have abided by in their previous term of office was something, I think, that all Manitobans recognize. You work within your budget, you work within the means that are presented to you, and you get by with what you have. It is like anything, if you go to the grocery store, the amount of money that you budgeted for your supplies and that is what you use up.

We are very concerned that there is a possibility that this balanced-budget legislation may be circumvented in some way and that we may see a change in the foreseeable future. The Budget that the Minister of Finance is working on right now, in all likelihood, will be coming down early next year, and then we will get a better sense of what the spending is and where the priorities are at that time.

The Throne Speech goes on to mention health care and how they have changed it and made it better and how the waiting lists are down and everything. Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen some tragedies in the last while in regard to the unfortunate happenings at the St. Boniface ER centre where, unfortunately, the lady passed away waiting in the ER room for care.

We have seen patients die waiting on the waiting list for cardiac surgery. We have seen people die, actually, in the waiting room waiting for service, and we have to go back to when the Premier (Mr. Doer) ran on the campaign that he was going to correct health care with \$15 million and in 60 days. A lot of people thought that this was something that he was going to stick to in that commitment and have it done.

As it happens, the waiting lists are longer. The people are unfortunate. There are tragedies involved with some of the areas, and these are some of the things that, I think, we have to hold this Government accountable for. There is a fair amount of rhetoric, but there is very little in the results that are generated out of some of the efforts and the directions that they feel they should be taking.

The member across the way was talking about the clawback of the family services

allotment and how they brought it back in and everything, but he failed to mention, too, that Manitoba now has the distinction of being the child poverty capital of Canada. I think that that is something that they have to wear. That is their initiative.

That is part of the statistics and some of the legacy that they are creating, and I can look to the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), and I know that he used to rail and flail at the Conservative government of the time to do something about it. Now, unfortunately, it has even gotten worse, and that distinction now is seen right throughout Canada, that this is the Government that is responsible for the child poverty.

There are other things that I would like to just bring up, but, you know, mainly I wanted to talk about some of the issues in my constituency of Southdale. I will have ample opportunity, I am sure, within this session to put on the record some of the other areas in dispute that the Member for Burrows has brought up and also challenge the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) on some of the issues that he brought up.

But I believe that there are other members who would like to say a few words, so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those short remarks, I will move to let other speakers have their time. Thank you.

* (15:30)

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): I really feel badly now for standing up and cutting off that fine speech that was just occurring by the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer). I kind of feel like I forced him to cut short his remarks just before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he was getting to all those good things that we have in the Throne Speech, those positive, uplifting things that our Government is doing on behalf of the people of Manitoba. So, on behalf of the Member for Southdale, who could not finish off that part of his speech, on behalf of the Member for Southdale, I will do it for him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased, very proud to be able to sit on this side of the Legislature and put forward a positive speech like

the Speech from the Throne was, here, a number of days ago.

I look forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, knowing that the Member for Southdale was going to shift gears into that positive, upbeat part of his speech, if he had had the chance to do so, and, accordingly, vote in a positive way. Accordingly, the Member for Southdale could support our Speech from the Throne, and I look forward to seeing that when it comes time to vote. Members across may not bet on it, but I have faith in the Member for Southdale. I have confidence in that particular member's positive, bright, sunny approach to politics. I have faith that the common good of the people of Manitoba will prevail and the Member for Southdale will expose that part of his speech that was so bright and positive and affirm that with a positive vote on this speech.

The Speech from the Throne, I think, serves not just the province of Manitoba well, but, in particular, it is good for the part of the province in which I live, the part of the province which I represent here in this Legislature. I think the constituents of Dauphin-Roblin were well served by the measures that we have put forward in this Speech from the Throne, as they have been well served for the past four years. The past four years we have consulted with the constituents that live in my area, and we have acted upon the advice that we got from the constituents in my area.

For example, I think that it is very timely. I think of it as very forward thinking. I think it is very useful and practical to take the issue of water and dedicate a department particularly, specifically for that so valuable and important resource as water. No resource in our province is as important as water and nothing needs a government department more than water, in my view. The Department of Water Stewardship with its own minister will be able to take many of those issues that Manitobans think are so important in terms of water. We as a government will be in a much better position to make decisions that affect in a positive way the lives of the people that live in my area.

Over a hundred years ago, people who settled in the Dauphin-Roblin area, people who

settled in the Parklands and throughout this province over a hundred years ago understood how important water was to life, how important it was to find a clean, safe drinking source of water. That is reflected in the decisions that we have made as a government. It is shown in the Speech from the Throne.

I was very pleased to be part of a group of ministers who assembled yesterday at Beaverlodge School in the southwest area of the city of Winnipeg. Beaverlodge elementary school itself, part of the new school division itself a model for conservation, energy conservation, water conservation, a great example of the positive things that are happening in our province, a great example of how the children at that school are participating and learning about conservation ideas, conservation methods. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was very pleased to be there with my colleagues the Minister for Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Sale); the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk); and the Minister for Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) to join in the announcement of an agency for now being called Manitoba Efficiency whose goal is to co-ordinate and promote successful, positive approaches to alternative energy, including things such as heat pumps for houses, for heating and cooling, solar ideas, wind. The Member for Southdale understands wind, I know that.

I think there are a lot of very successful projects in the province of Manitoba that this agency, brand-new agency, we believe will take on and be able to really run with in the province of Manitoba. I was very pleased to help out that day at Beaverlodge School.

I think the other thing we have to consider when it comes to this Throne Speech and this Throne Speech's commitment to clean, inexpensive and forward thinking energy, renewable alternative energy, is our commitment to Hydro, our commitment to the advantages of having our Crown corporation called Manitoba Hydro be so effective in conserving energy in our province, conserving money for the people who live in our province.

The Member for Southdale wants to talk to me about conservation. Well, this is it. This is an

excellent idea. This is an excellent approach that this Government has undertaken to conserve energy and to conserve the amount of money that Manitobans spent on hydro, on energy.

The Conservatives before us had a perfect opportunity to show through Manitoba Hydro that they had some kind of commitment to people living in rural and northern areas of our province, but for 11 long years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they left in place a discriminatory approach to hydro rates, an approach that left northern Manitobans and rural Manitobans paying higher rates than people who live in the city of Winnipeg.

This Government, through its public corporation, through Manitoba Hydro, was able to provide some equity. We did this. We did not just talk about it. We did this. We leveled out the rates so that all our rural and northern constituents, all our citizens that live outside of the city of Winnipeg can benefit from fair hydro and fair power rates.

We are going further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think we are making some very wise decisions today. They are reflected in this Throne Speech in terms of the generation of power so that we can not only maintain the lowest rates in all of North America, probably the world, but also take the power that we are generating and export it outside of our province, whether that be to sales south of us to the United States of America or whether that is east or west in our country.

* (15:40)

I just returned from the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment in which I had very good conversations with the minister representing Ontario, for example, who was very pleased with the work we have been doing in terms of supplying inexpensive, reliable, clean, safe power to Ontario, who has had their problems in the area of power. We can substitute ourselves in and get rid of all those dirty, dirty old forms of energy, coal burning.

We, as Manitobans, can help out our neighbours, and we can, in this province, benefit economically by that. It was all started with us having the vision, the absolute vision of signing the

Kyoto accord, which members opposite were not too keen about. We set the vision and now we are showing Manitobans, and we are showing the Opposition, we are showing everyone that there are environmental benefits along with economic benefits.

Too often, we get into a situation where we see the environment and the economy as being separate, as being one versus the other as being incompatible together—[interjection] It was about that long.

So too often we see the two, the environment and the economy, as being separate. What we are showing Manitobans is that as we move forward on our environmental, on our energy policies, we are showing that we can indeed have both, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We can, indeed, protect the environment and gain economically at the same time.

Along those lines, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want people to think about ethanol. I want people to think about the good work that our ministers have been doing for a period of time in terms of ethanol and in terms of mandating the use of ethanol so that not only do we help protect the environment, not only do we work to meet our Kyoto targets but, by gosh, that is good for my constituents who grow grain. That is good for my constituents who are looking for jobs. That is good for my constituents, my municipal officials who can benefit in their areas by what this Government is doing in terms of ethanol. That is just one part of this Throne Speech that I think is very positive.

The other part of this Throne Speech that I think is particularly forward thinking and I think an intelligent way of approaching is the new Ministry of Healthy Living. The MLA for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) who assumed that Cabinet post, I think, has a unique opportunity in our province along with everybody in this Chamber.

The move, the transition from simply treating people who are sick to preventing those people from getting sick in the first place is a transition that we absolutely have to make in this society. We have to work in that direction in this House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot always be responding, responding, responding to things

that have happened. We have to get out in front of a lot of these. There were times when I gave the previous government credit when they seemed to take this approach, but I think the new Department of Healthy Living has a unique opportunity to take that challenge on. I think we have taken that first step together, all of us in this House, with our participation on the All-Party Task Force on Environmental Tobacco Smoke. We learned in that task force that if we wanted to make a real effect, if we wanted to make a real impact on the health of people, the one thing we could do was deal with environmental tobacco smoke.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say and I will say this publicly; I will say it over and over and over again, how much I appreciated the work done by all seven members of that all-party task force, four from this side of the House: the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the Liberal Leader, a member of that task force, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) and the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan), who, originally brought forward his private member's bill to kick this off.

From our side of the House, I was very pleased to work with the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith). It was one of those times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when everybody worked together, everybody was committed to hear from Manitobans. You know, it was great to see that all parties agreed unanimously with the recommendations that came forward as a result of the consultations that we did.

I was very pleased that all members, all parties had said that this is an important issue. It is good advice that we can send on to the Government to be dealt with in the legislative process. I was very pleased that this Speech from the Throne made that commitment. A lot of hard work was put into that task force. A lot of Manitobans, 260 or more, either face to face with our task force or through e-mail, or through letters, through submissions approached us and gave us advice on that issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to say that my colleague the Minister for Agriculture, Food

and Rural Initiatives has been dealing with an issue that has affected to the core many of my constituents. That is the one lonely case of BSE that was discovered in an Alberta cow that has had an absolutely fundamental impact on many of my constituents.

Agriculture in the Dauphin-Roblin area is for the most part a mixed farming operation, but there are some parts of my constituency on the east side in the Rorketon area, in and around the community of Ste. Rose, my neighbouring ridings in the northern part, Eddystone, Cayer, areas that do not have the advantage of turning elsewhere other than their cattle. It is the backbone of the economy in areas like these. Those are farm families who really have truly suffered because of the closure of the border between us and the United States of America.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make sure that our minister knows that the cattle producers in my area support the good projects that she has been putting forward. I want them all to understand that we remain committed to the programs we put forward and committed to making sure that they know there is a government here in Manitoba that supports their plight and that will be there and has been there when they have needed us to support them.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say, in conclusion, that I am very proud to stand and I will be very proud to vote in favour of the Speech from the Throne that was presented a number of days ago.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, would just like to put a few comments on the record and speak to the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne is to be a road map for the province, for the people of Manitoba. I will speak about that a little later on, but I just want to make a few comments regarding some of the things that have happened in the past and, of course, to represent the people in the Pembina constituency.

At the outset, I want to congratulate the Speaker of the House for again being re-elected

as the Speaker. Again, he is the referee for us here, so I just want to congratulate him on that and, of course, to the pages who are here in such a wonderful way taking care of their responsibilities in looking after the needs of the MLAs.

As members here, especially to the newly elected MLAs, we are a privileged lot. We are one of 57 in the province of Manitoba who have been elected to represent the people of Manitoba. I have always taken this as being something that we are privileged to do. Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the million-plus people in the province of Manitoba, we are the 57 who have this opportunity.

* (15:50)

I want to take a few moments just again to thank my campaign team, to Henry Penner who was the chair, who, again, did an excellent job of organizing our group, and Frank Wiebe, who was the CFO who, again, took care of the responsibilities of the books. Consequently, I wanted to thank him for the work that he did.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would trust that the objective of all MLAs within this Chamber is to make Manitoba a better place to live. When I was elected in '95, that was my objective. That is why I ran for election and that is why I have run for the following elections, to try and make Manitoba a better place, and, of course, representing the constituency of Pembina, that is my objective.

I do need to talk for a few minutes about the constituency of Pembina and the people that I represent. I want to talk about several different areas.

First of all, the issue of education, I know that that has been a big issue, because, again, we are the fastest growing area in rural Manitoba. Consequently, we have over 500 students at the present time in huts or what they would call the relocatable classrooms. I realize that it is not possible to build the schools as quickly as we need them, but I do want to say, though, that the minister and this Government has not been responsive quickly enough in order to be able to get the accommodations out there that we need for our students. I realize also that it was in the fall of last year that the Minister of Education of

the day did recognize the need and has, in fact, given us the opportunity to build a school, but, again, historically, as we know, from the day that it is formalized that our school would be built, it does take on the average five years until you move in.

So I would challenge today's minister to look at this and try to compress that area of time, because the students do need it. Certainly, just to talk about education and the students that we have, this is an increasing number. It is not now that at the moment we have 500-plus students in huts, but it is a growing need. So, by the time they have the accommodation that they need, we will be having other students. Again, it speaks well for the area. It is a growing community, a growing area, and so we need to look ahead and build to accommodate them.

The other area I wanted to talk about is highways. I am assuming that the minister of highways and the Government have recognized that there is a need. I have at least been trying to express that on a daily basis through my petition, but, again, it is Highway 32. It is a growing area. The numbers, in 1999, we did a survey and traffic counts. At that point in time, already, we had 13 000-plus vehicles every day on Highway 32. It is growing. I mean, since then, of course, the numbers have increased. So being a growing area, we need to address that.

I would encourage the minister to look at that and to look at it very seriously. Again, I do not think we want to cut off the hand that feeds the mouth. In this case, it is an area that is growing, that is feeding the economy of the province of Manitoba. I have heard that the analogy is a good one, and I like that. So we do not want to try to stifle growth, but, in fact, I would encourage the Government to look at the Pembina constituency, the whole area as one of trying to encourage growth and the continued growth that we see out there.

Now, the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) made a comment about the firing of nurses. I find this interesting every time they bring this up, because in the year 2000—and, in fact, I have a letter in my file here—the government of the day, which is the Doer government, fired 500 nurses in the Pembina constituency. They did that, just in Pembina, 500.

Now, I am not going to explain how this works, because that is the example that they are using on a continuous basis. It is dated here October 13, 2000. It is a letter that was sent to one of the 500 nurses who, in fact, was asked to resign from her job. So I would caution the members across the way of using those kinds of examples in picking and choosing, because I will indicate to them that the exact same principle was used that they are referring to. So be very careful about that.

The other comment I want to make is about the comment that was made just by the previous speaker about Manitoba Hydro and being able to fix the rates and that they will not increase the rates within the next two years. Now, that is all very nice. That is great.

However, I want to give the examples here of a company, a corporation where the board of directors instructs the CEO and will indicate to the CEO that they will be, in fact, taking millions of dollars out of the company, but he will not be given the opportunity to, in any way, pass those costs on to anyone else. So, when you look at it from a strictly business point of view, where is he going to get the money from? He needs to go and borrow it because the revenues are not there.

That is precisely what the Doer government has done. They are forcing Manitoba Hydro to go and borrow more money in order to be able to meet their needs. Now, as was indicated by our critic in Finance, he indicated very clearly that the Doer government does not have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem.

So it does not matter where you are at, whether it is in your own home or wherever, you need to be able to monitor the expenses. You need to be able to monitor where you spend your money, and it does not matter if it is in your own home, whether it is in a business, whether it is in government, these are the responsibilities that are given to you.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to make one more comment, and that was I wanted to thank the community in the Pembina constituency, the foundations. In my member's statement today, I was referring to them, the Morden

Foundation, the Winkler Foundation, for the work that they are doing within our communities.

They have established foundations and from the revenues that they get from the dollars that they have invested, they are re-investing these back in the communities, and they are doing a wonderful job. So I just want to thank them for the work that they are doing, because, certainly, this is helping organizations that need to raise money in order to be able to respond to the needs within the community. They are able to receive money through the foundation. I want to thank them for the work that they are doing because, again, this is done by the many, many volunteers who are out there.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, as I indicated right at the outset, the Throne Speech was to be a roadmap for Manitobans in the direction that the government of the day was heading. I am sorry, but I did not see a clear directive. In fact, I saw it being very, very inconcise in the direction that they were taking the province.

So, instead of giving the leadership that Manitobans would like to see, I fail to see that, and on that, thank you very much for the opportunity to address the Speech from the Throne.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): It is always a pleasure to put my comments on the record, and, once again, I just wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate the Speaker on his election and all the new members to the Legislature after running in this past election and having been shown a vote of confidence by their residents, hoping that they will do a good job representing them in this Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with regard to the Speech from the Throne, I just want to make a few brief comments. I know there are a lot of people waiting to speak and get their comments on the record, so I will try to be brief. What I would like to do is focus on what the speech actually had said and what we are intending to do as a government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are certainly honoured to have received a renewed mandate

from the citizens of Manitoba, and I know that we are certainly mindful of the commitments we made to Manitobans. I would just like to touch on those a little bit: to continue improving our health care system; to lay the foundations for future growth in Manitoba by building on our economic partnerships and also by continuing to expand education and training opportunities and preserve the Manitoba advantage of a healthy environment, clean energy, safe communities and affordable living.

* (16:00)

Under those headings, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of different initiatives, one being water stewardship, renewable energy, new opportunities for youth, and a number of others that I would like to touch on just briefly.

Once again, I want to say that I am certainly grateful and honoured to represent the constituents of La Verendrye once again in the Legislature. I know that many of these issues that were touched upon in the Speech from the Throne are issues that are certainly relevant and basic to the ongoing day-to-day activities with regard to the constituents in La Verendrye.

I just want to say that, first of all, in Manitoba, we are faced with a triple whammo. We had BSE hit the residents and affect all residents of the province of Manitoba. We had really dry weather, as well, and also unprecedented forest fires in the province. With this triple whammo, the economic effects in our province were really hard felt everywhere. As a government, I believe we did a great job of tackling all three. That will be shown to be true in days and months ahead.

A couple of new initiatives, one with regard to water stewardship. A new ministry, a new minister was appointed, the Minister responsible for Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton). We cannot think of a better person than the Member for Thompson to be that new minister, the former Minister of Conservation. This is an individual who is not only dedicated to ensuring that the water quality and the water we have is preserved for many, many generations following, but also has the background of conservation which he was in, in his previous portfolio and has a strong commitment to clean water for citizens.

Manitoba's lakes and rivers are our greatest natural asset. Stewarding those assets is an obligation we owe to ourselves, to the future citizens of our province, householders, industry, farmers, municipalities. Every one of us has a role to play in protecting our water quality. Just because we have a particular department responsible for that, that does not remove the responsibility on the rest of us to ensure that we maintain this so important natural resource that we have for generations following us.

There are many efforts related to water stewardship that are important to touch on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. More effective regulation of livestock operations, septic fields, urban water treatment, incentive programs such as the riparian tax credit, to restore subsidies for water testing, and also substantial investments in improving flood protection, drainage and clean drinking water services for Manitoba and Manitoba communities.

This spring, your Government appointed a Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board. Our greatest lake, our largest lake in Manitoba needs our attention in a most important way. This Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board, with representation from many of the Lake Winnipeg communities, is a very, very important part and a very, very important start with regard to water stewardship.

A water protection act will be introduced. This act will set standards for sustainable practice in establishing new targets for water quality. Water for most of us, regrettably, we take for granted. It is regrettable because we are blessed with some of the largest and cleanest fresh water bodies in the world. Not only is it great for our renewable hydro resource, but also with regard to just the day-to-day activities we often take part in that we do not give much thought to.

For example, tourism. Tourism is a billion-dollar industry in Manitoba and continues to grow. We are dependent on clean water to ensure that our tourism industry, whether it is dealing with hunting, fishing, and everything associated with water is truly important to us.

I touched on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, renewable energy. Manitoba's early commitment was to meet Kyoto standards on emission reductions

and that positioned our province as a leader in clean energy technology. We have a Minister responsible for Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Sale) who continues to talk to other governments, trying to make linkages and build partnerships in Canada with regard to renewable energy.

I know our major initiatives include the expansion of low impact hydro-electric generation based on full partnerships with First Nations in northern communities. Again, if you continually hear through the Speech from the Throne: Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships, this is something that our Government and our caucus firmly believes in, partnerships with communities, whether they be First Nations, municipalities. No matter where you live in Manitoba, you have a government that is open and consultative and wanting to build partnerships throughout this province.

We have other developments with regard to clean energy alternatives such as wind generation. I know the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) spoke on this earlier when he made some comments about a new wind farm going up in his own constituency. This is something we are looking at, not only hydro-electric power through water, but also through wind. Taking advantage of clean energy, as it stands now we are going to be certainly, hopefully a leader in that area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the minister responsible for that area is very, very supportive. I know Manitoba Hydro, knowing there has to be alternatives to electricity through water or through hydro, that this is another alternative that should be looked at and pursued.

With regard to new opportunities for youth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we touched on this briefly. Many, many speakers on this side touched on the issue of young people. It is important to note that expanding opportunities are convincing young Manitobans to build their futures here at home. I had the pleasure of being Minister responsible for Education and Youth, with emphasis on youth. The MB4Youth Division that has been put in place is looking at new initiatives that we will be looking at with regard to young people to encourage young people to stay at home.

For the year ending June '03, net migration for young people between the ages of 15 to 24 was a positive once again; 1055 more young people came to Manitoba in the past year than left. This is our best result for youth migration since 1984. It is a start. It is not something that we are not going to rest on our laurels and say that that is the end of it. We want to continue making sure there are new initiatives in place to ensure that young people will grow up here, will have their education here, will get an education here and will raise their families here and will be proud to be Manitobans with all of the advantages we have here in Manitoba.

I hear a couple of comments coming from a member opposite saying when are you going to pave my road in my corner of the province.

Well, it is interesting. When he got up to make some comments with regard to the Speech from the Throne, he stated, well, maybe the new minister will pave one of the last roads that need to be paved around Steinbach.

But did they say even one word, not a boo, when Churchill was having difficulty with regard to when there was a drought, when Churchill looked like they were in a bad financial situation? No. They are worried about paving the last road that Mr. Dreidger did not pave in the community of Steinbach.

I can tell you that we as a government, whether it was the member from Brandon West, whether it was the member from Thompson, are looking at all of the province and the needs throughout Manitoba, in northern Manitoba, in eastern Manitoba, including Steinbach, that last road that he talks about that needs to be paved that has not been paved, and also in western Manitoba and southern Manitoba.

Now, the member from Steinbach mentioned in his comments, I will not quote because I do not have the exact comment, but stated something like Minister Dreidger made a lot of inroads with regard to paving the highways around Steinbach. It would be nice if I, as a new minister, would look at paving and completing some of these roads.

We are looking at the total province and the needs of the total province. I am sure the mem-

ber, when he made those comments was saying it in jest, because he knows that the province has been well served by this Government. The member from Thompson, the member from Brandon West as well as the current minister will also look at where the needs are. Why? Highways are important. The highways are important in transportation infrastructure and important because it relates to safety, economic development and a lot of opportunities that we want to tie in with many, many of the other initiatives that we have.

* (16:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is so much and so many positive things. Often in a Speech from the Throne, people make comments about, well, what is really in it, it is so broad. No, if the Opposition would take a close look at the speech and take the time to read it; they will see that a lot of the initiatives that are within this document, not only address the commitments that were made last June and during the election campaign which we are committed to and will stand by, but also there is a vision in here, a vision that was lacking through the 1990s, where you had all kinds of high increases in taxation due to property tax on education. I know that the members in the Opposition protest a lot about taxation, yet they are the ones, of course, they fail to mention this, who drove up the taxation with regard to property tax, with regard to education, and so on.

I know that there are other people that wish to speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know that we have a new Ministry of Healthy Living, which is an important initiative, because you want to do things at the front end in a proactive way to ensure that people, whether it be dealing with type 2 diabetes or diabetes in general or unhealthy living, you want to make sure that that is turned around, because the positive side of it is very, very important to health care costs overall. Partnerships I have mentioned because partnerships is what we believe in. We also know when we are on the doorstep knocking on doors, we hear this continually from members of the public and people in the public that we are responsible for as a government.

People are sick and tired of people just attacking each other, whether it be at the

municipal level, whether it be at the provincial level, or the federal level. Manitobans want to ensure that governments are working together in a partnership, and we are prepared to work with other levels of government no matter who they be or what political stripe they are because we are working for the benefit of all Manitobans, and that will be a way that we will be judged and, I am sure, judged positively.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me a couple of minutes to speak. I am very, very pleased. Once again, I thank the constituents of LaVerendrye for allowing me and giving me truly an honour to represent them in the Legislature. Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It is my pleasure to arise in the House today in reply to the Throne Speech that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be very clear on, I cannot support. There was very little vision in this Throne Speech and not much optimism for the people of Manitoba who were expecting great things from the return of the second election of this Government, but they are now starting to see the true colours of this Government come forward, and I will go over some of those in the few minutes that I have to show my concerns as to why this Throne Speech is not as acceptable in Manitoba as the Government obviously feels that it is.

But, first, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that it is my privilege to be back as the returning Member for Arthur-Virden and representing the fine people of the southwest part of the province from No. 1 highway crossing the Saskatchewan border to the Peace Gardens in that whole area, and there are many issues pertaining to our constituency. It has been an extremely difficult year with some of the issues particularly pertaining to the BSE issue and the drought of our region, but I will refer to those more later as well.

I want to first thank and congratulate all of the members who have retired from this House and my condolences to those who have not returned, who ran and were defeated, but my congratulations to those who retired from both parties, both sides of the House, all parties in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also want to congratulate the pages for the fine work that they do in this House, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, and the Clerk and staff that continue to keep us on the straight and narrow in operations of the Legislature and for the fine work and the many, many hours that they put in on our behalf for the province of Manitoba. It is very clear that there are other groups as well that I want to congratulate, and one of those is our interns, a fine group of interns that we have working with us in the House this year, as well as caucus staff, and not just on our side of the House, but that of the other parties in the House as well.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how do I do justice in the short time that I have to the many issues of the day that are before us? Well, why would I worry about doing justice to it? This Government does not care about justice. This Government has allowed crime to run rampant in the province of Manitoba. As has been said before, Manitoba is now known as first in homicides, first in robberies, first in motor vehicle thefts and first in mischief issues fines.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are second in offensive weapons, second in sexual assaults, second in violent crimes, and this is just unacceptable. The City of Winnipeg alone, too, as the Government fails to put enough enforcement to help the City put enough enforcement on the streets to look after the issues of crime here in the city of Winnipeg.

It is also in the cities of Canada first in homicide, first in sexual assault, first in assault, first in robbery, first in violent crimes, first in motor vehicle thefts, and the list goes on. It is deplorable, the situation that they have let this province get into at a time when they have a billion-and-a-half-dollar increase annually in the Budget of this province. I think that the citizens of Manitoba are very clearly going to look at this Government when the next election rolls around and say that they have mismanaged the affairs of this province, not only the fiscal responsibility of this province that most people realize that they are not the managers of that side, but also the side that they sometimes get more credit for than they deserve, on the social side of this province as well.

I would say that letting crime run as rampant as they have and being so soft on it, being viewed as a marshmallow in relation to crime in this

province is certainly not going to augur well for our youths staying in the province or people returning to this province or companies coming into this province to try to add to the economy of Manitoba.

We have seen this Government do little in its time here in its efforts in regard to helping any of the groups outside of the city of Winnipeg, particularly in remarks that I will make in regard to the BSE issue and the drought program that they have tried to come out with during this particular crisis that has taken place in Manitoba in the past year and all across Canada with the closed border from the BSE issue. They have tried to bring in a bombardment of announcements in regard to what they have put on the table for the farmers of Manitoba.

I would, as I have in Question Period in this House, say that these are just self-congratulatory ads that the NDP have put out there playing with the farmers' own money in relation to the loans program that they have put out. They have admitted in the Throne Speech that they have, well, they say they have put \$180 million in the hands of farmers in rural Manitoba. Let us not forget that this is not just farmers; it is all of the businesses and civil servants that work and live and depend on our rural economy for their livelihoods. This Government has admitted themselves that they have only put \$49 million into these disaster programs in Manitoba.

I find that completely unacceptable to continue to go out and say we have got \$180 million out there when they know full well that \$100 million of that is the farmers' own money in the loans program that they have through MACC, and that they are actually charging these farmers interest on those funds at the worse time, in one of the biggest disasters the livestock industry has ever seen in this province.

They may say that the Conservatives had a loan program previous to this and that they charged interest as well, but let us remember that the interest rates in those days were such that we were charging 7 percent less than what the interest rate was at that time, effectively cutting the interest rate in half. This Government is not even doing that. In fact, they are charging .25 percent more than what the actual Bank of

Canada loan rate is at this time. I find that completely incomprehensible in relation to how you will treat farmers in a disaster-stricken situation as second-class citizens in relation to the efforts of dealing with the concern that they have over something completely uncontrollable by their own efforts.

* (16:20)

These are hardworking people that keep our communities going try to continue to volunteer in many cases to keep those communities going while they are working hard with their families on the farm to keep them going. We have seen and heard many of them come to this Legislature. We have talked with many of them personally, and the situation, while we have been able to sell some calves this fall, is still very, very harsh on all of the feedlot owners of this province as well as the cattle owners, who have not been able to sell any of their cull herds this year as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are the slaughter programs. The feed program that was completely axed announced that it would be here until October and it was cut off in the middle of July. The cull program that the Government has said that they will get into, that the federal government has made available, they announced on September 19, as our critic for Agriculture from Emerson has indicated that I was there with them when they signed that agreement. They said that they would have the money flowing by the end of October. Nobody had money by the end of October.

So they have broken that promise again as well. I think it was just because they did not look at the program; they did not have a deal with the federal government, and they were desperate to do something again. That is the way they have reacted to each program that they have announced. It has been a reaction to a desperate situation that occurred on their doorstep without a lot of planning put in place.

That is why farmers are so skeptical today. The Association of Manitoba Municipalities last week passed a unanimous resolution reiterating on a call for this Government to put its transition monies as we move from CFIP to the CAIS

program. There were two \$600-million programs for 2002 and 2003 to be matched with 40 percent by the provinces. The federal government put their money in the NISA statements each of the last two years.

The rural people of Manitoba as well as the city should know that this Government has not put a red cent into either of those programs. That is why the Association of Manitoba Municipalities acknowledged in their resolution that, one, whereas you did not put in any money in 2002, you did not put any of your 40% share in 2003, therefore, we are calling upon you unanimously, as a delegate body to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, representing all of the rural municipalities and communities in Manitoba, to put your money on the table and try to help our farmers by putting that 40 percent forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this Government just completely walks away from that responsibility, that is why farmers are saying, we have given up. We do not think that there will be any money coming from this cull program that this Government is saying that they are going to make available as well either, another 60-40 program that the Province did not want anything to do with.

There are a number of other issues. I am going to leave the agricultural one for now. We have got a whole host of other issues to deal with in the province. We have highway structures, as I have said, that we need to deal with. We have had three fatal accidents in the last three years on the northeast Perimeter of the city of Winnipeg, very slow efforts to finish the twinning of Highway No. 1 when it is a major artery that we have for trade in this province.

It would be effortless for this Government to have planned ahead to deal with a part of the \$1.5-billion increase that they have had every year and fixed some of the major arteries that we have had, not just from an economic point of view, because they might have actually incurred more economic activity to help pay for those roads in that four and a half years that they have had, but also from a safety perspective. It has to be done as quickly as you possibly can from a safety perspective. Even the Province of

Saskatchewan is moving much faster than we are in regard to finishing the twinning of their province and their neighbours to the west.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I congratulate Saskatchewan on their efforts and look forward to dealing with Minister Goodale if the federal Liberals become the governing party that everybody says they are going to. I still have some doubts about that, but with Mr. Goodale being the chief politician in western Canada, has been for some time and will continue probably under the new Prime Minister's directorship, I would continue to say that I, at one time as the president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, had the opportunity to work with Mr. Goodale, saying I would back him right to the wall if he could find a billion dollars for roads in the province of Saskatchewan. Of course, he is coming about six years late, but he is finally getting that portion of the road developed in Saskatchewan as well.

I hope that we can have that kind of a relationship with the federal members here in Manitoba as they move forward to do that. But let us not get into the debate about the federal issues, because we have enough problems right here in Manitoba with the Throne Speech that has come down. This Government is backing themselves into a corner in relation to the Budget that they are going to have to come up with next spring.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, they have drained a lot of money out of Manitoba Hydro. They have, I would say, crashed in some of the money from the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. They have taken funds or expected Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba to put funds into private-sector resources in order to try to help out the health care system. We are the party that brought forward the idea of private-public partnerships in relation to the election platform and promises, and we would continue with that.

I want to just close by saying, because I know that the Premier (Mr. Doer) is waiting to make a few comments in regard to his own Throne Speech, but I have to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, one of the key areas that could

have helped—and the City of Winnipeg has failed to realize it in their new deal, and the Province has failed to realize it in relation to helping rural citizens and homeowners in this province when we talk about housing needs—that is, the fact of removing the education tax from farmland and residences in this province was an election promise that I was proud to work on as the Finance critic for this Province before the Budget came down, before the election. Working with my colleagues, we unanimously decided that this would be a plan that would help all Manitobans.

There were things we could not do in that package, Mr. Speaker, like taking all of the tax off of business in day one, as well. People said, where would you get the money.

Well, one of the things, there was a plan there to get the money out of the growth the NDP had put forward in their own budget of the day, and we announced this a few days after their Budget when they called the election. Surely, they felt their numbers were credible when they called the election two days after the Budget was passed, but then, of course, they have been known to mislead Manitobans before. So they may have known that the growth would not continue at the rate they said it would.

We were only going to work on using those funds to try to stimulate the economy as well as simplify the tax system in Manitoba. We could very clearly have simplified the tax system, particularly for rural municipalities. The division of responsibilities with our school boards would have continued to stay in place.

We will continue to work and put forth that platform of eliminating the education tax off of farmland and residences in the province. I believe it will come to fruition that people understand that truly is half of their tax bill, not this makeshift idea that we are going to do half of the half, as the mayor tried to do in the city of Winnipeg, and he was not able to sell that platform simply because people could see through it too easily.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to close by saying I have a couple of promises the NDP made in our riding, like they made in some of the other ridings they felt they were looking at and going

after. One of them is that the school in Deloraine needs to be replaced. The now-highways minister, who was Education Minister at the time, had promised a school for the community of Deloraine amongst the other four that he put forward. I look toward him, his Cabinet and others to continue to make sure that school is built in that community. I will work hard with the Government to make sure that comes to fruition.

There are a number of other areas, but I am only going to talk of a few. Water, in spite of the fact that southwest Manitoba is known for being dry, is one of the key issues we have to deal with. We still have communities that have been on boil-water orders for over three and a half years, like the community of Medora.

We need, now that we have the water czar in place, and I hope he is listening, even though you cannot find out which of the five ministers are really going to look after water, and I will look at the flow chart when they put it out, but I think one of the key issues in western Manitoba is the use of water and our management of water on a long-term basis for the future.

* (16:30)

We know there is the Oak Lake aquifer and the rivers I have pointed out in previous speeches in this House that are there. We also need to be able to work together in land-use management to be able to have the esthetics that people want to continue with in our region, as well as work as a family to harmonize the issues of land development in order to continue to add population and keep our young people in our southwest region. That will take a lot of give and take amongst the citizens in the region, because I have received, just before this session started, the latest statistics in regard to our area, and we have lost over 1500 people again since the early nineties; that is unacceptable. That direction of change of moving everyone closer to the bigger centres is certainly something I will have worked a lifetime in southwest Manitoba trying to change, and I look forward to working with other opportunities, perhaps ethanol would be one of them, to have an opportunity to expand some of those energies and some of those businesses in our region.

I will close today by saying that, as I have said before, this Government has done little in many areas. It has done nothing in others, and it will be known as a no-doer government, if you want to come up with a slogan that will carry forward for this Government in Manitoba. For a government that has had billions of dollars flowing into its coffers for the last four years, it is unacceptable that they have not been able to address a number of the needs of Manitobans more clearly than they have been able to. I think it shows poor management, and they will have to bear the brunt of that as they move through the next few years with the tougher legislation on labour and issues that they hope to bring forward.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close, again, by thanking the citizens of Arthur-Virden for their support and by thanking the election team that I had, the vast number of people who helped us, particularly on election day, getting the turnout out and also throughout the campaign, and to the people who bring their concerns to me from all parties. It has been an opportunity that I will never forget.

I have recently moved to the community of Virden, Mr. Speaker, and my wife, Beryl, and I look forward to many years of living in that community and working with the citizens in that region and watching the progress, if you will, on No. 1 Highway and making sure that the Government is held to its promises to try to get it twinned as quickly as we possibly can.

Thank you for the few minutes that I have had, and I look forward to the Premier's comments.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): It is a privilege to follow the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). We have a little more work to do on the Arthur portion of that riding, but I am really pleased that we won a few polls in Virden. In fact, I think that we won all three polls in Virden.

We are working on a couple of other announcements there. We want to keep you busy. We do not want you to be complacent in your community. You are moving to a great community. They certainly have seen the light. We would like the rest of the riding to see the light

with us as we move along into the wonderful future.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly think a great metaphor for the optimism that people feel in this province was the announcement yesterday that the 2005 Juno Awards will take place in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. I want to congratulate our minister who, along with Fred Penner and the mayor and Doc Walker and a number of other individual Manitobans, were part of the bid committee.

An Honourable Member: Where is Shania?

Mr. Doer: Well, she will be around. Just stay tuned, but do not get too excited too early. It is 18 months away. Just relax. We will make sure you get an invitation. It might not be in the front row. It might not be in the middle row. You might have to have very good binoculars, but we will make sure you are there. That would be an act of charity on our part.

Why would that be an act of charity? Because the Tories and the Liberals voted against the new True North Centre when they had an opportunity to vote in this Chamber. We would not have the Juno Awards. You would not even be having your fantasy without the fact that we were able to go forward with the Juno Awards here in Manitoba.

That is a symbol of our future, a can-do government, a can-do Speech from the Throne, a can-do team of men and women going forward in a positive way with the future of this province in mind.

What a great, great announcement, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a reaffirmation that those who work hard to build the future in an optimistic way, as opposed to those who just peck away in little negative thoughts, will build the future that is positive, positive for the future of Manitoba.

That is why members opposite should vote for this Speech from the Throne. It is a positive document. They should not vote on the negative thoughts of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) and the negative thoughts of the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Remember, they were wrong on the True North Centre. They were wrong to oppose a new downtown. They were wrong to not have a new home to have the Juno Awards here in Manitoba. Therefore, they should see the light on the road to this vote and vote yes to the Speech from the Throne in a few moments.

An Honourable Member: I missed the Junos and the Throne Speech. I am sorry I missed the Junos. I apologize.

Mr. Doer: You have missed a lot of things, actually. In fact, the members opposite have had virtual Question Period for the last two weeks. They have asked questions on a virtual tax increase that we never promised to raise. I mean, if they feel better about raising a question about a sales tax that we said no in January 2003 to raising that tax, let them feel better. They can oppose all the virtual proposals they want, because we are a real government with real solutions for the real people of Manitoba, and that is why they missed the boat in this session.

Mr. Speaker, I recall just a few months ago the member from Arthur-Virden said, oh, you people have a Perimeter vision. You will let the railway line to Gimli fold. Well, do we have the railway line going to Diageo and Gimli? Do we have new investment in the railway line going to the Gimli community? Wrong again with your virtual questions and your virtual thoughts.

I remember the former member from Lakeside saying that under the New Democratic government there would never be a new Simplot plant in Portage la Prairie. We were competing with Alberta. We were competing with Saskatchewan. We were competing with Idaho. We were competing with North Dakota. We were able to succeed because we have a can-do government to have that Simplot plant, the largest one located here.

I remember members opposite now asking virtual questions about community colleges that they decimated in Brandon. People in Brandon remember. Seven times they were told by the Tories that they would get a new development of a general hospital in Brandon if they only voted Tory, and seven times they broke their promise. Go to Brandon today; go to Brandon tomorrow;

go to Brandon the next day; the hospital is built and will be open in January of 2004.

I remember members opposite saying, oh, we would never get wind generation here in Manitoba. Oh, we would not get wind generation. We may have windy opposition members, but we are going to harness that wind and there will be new cash crops. There will be new cash for farmers that have the windmills and new renewable energy hooked up to the Manitoba Hydro grid under our Government, under this Speech from the Throne.

I know that members opposite spend very little time in northern Manitoba. In fact, in the last election campaign, both of the so-called leaders of the other parties did not go north of the 53rd parallel. That said to people in the North more than anything else where they stood, of being a party that only worked for a few instead of all of the province of Manitoba. I suggest to members opposite when they go out tonight, after they have voted for this wonderful Speech from the Throne, they should look at that wonderful Golden Boy facing north. Why is it facing north? Because that is where a positive future is, northern Manitoba. I am sure the Speaker would even agree with that, even though he is non-partisan in this debate.

*(16:40)

Mr. Speaker, and because we looked north I am proud of the fact that when we have a challenge as a can-do government, we could not get diagnostic equipment into one of our northern Aboriginal communities, we want to demonstrate to the federal government that it makes more sense to have dialysis machines in the Island Lake area for people to live in dignity in their own community rather than spending a fortune on medivacs and airplanes at this location. Again, a can-do approach to our health care system across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we are also taking the mothballs and the cobwebs off of hydro-electric development that we inherited from members opposite, the mothball approach of the Limestone project that was mothballed by the Lyon government and built by the Pawley government. The mothball approach after we negotiated

Conawapa to put into mothballs that wonderful economic opportunity the Filmon government mothballed. We are taking the mothballs away. We are going to build hydro-electric projects in partnership with Aboriginal people and we are going to build a strong, renewable energy future for Manitoba, selling power east of us, south of us, west of us, for the future of our kids and our grandchildren here in Manitoba. Again, a can-do approach to the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the only issue they had in the campaign was: Oh, the mayor is asking for a tax increase. You are going to increase our taxes.

I wish their opposition research would go back to January, 2003, where we said no. We said no in the election. So they peck away, peck, peck, peck at these little virtual issues, instead of dealing with the big pictures that affect Manitobans and Manitoba's future. We will stick to the big future, the big picture, the big picture of building a strong and positive economy for Manitoba.

Look at the results, Mr. Speaker. We now have a thousand more young people in Manitoba in June of 2003 than we did in June of 2002. Never did that happen under the Tory 11 years in office. In fact, the last time that happened was in 1984. Oh, who was in office then? 1984? Members talk a good game about keeping young people here, but they send them west; they send them east; they send them south because they will not keep the universities, colleges and jobs open for our young people and for our future.

We are building a smarter economy because we are investing in the brain power and the skill power of Manitoba youth. A 29% increase in the enrolment in universities and colleges in only four years. When we came into office, the enrolment levels were going down, down, down.

Mr. Speaker, it is kind of ironic that it took an NDP government to implement the expansion of the college program that was recommended by Duff Roblin. The Tories could not even implement their own report because they saw universities and colleges only as expense rather than investment. That is a fundamentally different defining value between our side and your side. You do not understand that if you invest in

young people, if you invest in their colleges, if you invest in their universities, you invest in the capital expansion, you invest in accessibility, you get more companies locating here, you get more companies expanding here, you get more opportunities for people to work here, you get a growing economy by investing in education and training. You got it wrong; we got it right. We are going into the future getting it right for education and training.

Mr. Speaker, we have a capital program now at the University of Manitoba. I remember Art Mauro came to us and said: Listen, the university is falling apart. The roof is leaking on the engineering building and we cannot get anything from the former government. He said you know where I stand politically, but if you were to pledge \$40 million to \$50 million, I will guarantee the business community will respond to government leadership; it needs government leadership first and we could not get that leadership from the former government. Will you pledge \$50 million? We will match you with \$50 million.

We had to work on budgets, timing and phasing to get that \$50-million pledge. Did the private sector match our \$50 million? Did they double the amount of money? Did they triple the amount of money? They quadrupled the amount of investment in the university because we have confidence in the future.

You go out to the University of Manitoba now and you will see close to \$200 million in capital projects. You will see a new engineering building, a new computer science building, a new nutraceutical centre, a new biotechnological centre. You will see new SMARTpark investments. You will see a government that believes in a smart economy instead of a dumb education policy that we inherited when we came into office.

Mr. Speaker, go north of this building, go north of Portage Avenue, you will see out of the ashes of the wonderful Exchange District a restoration of a wonderful, magnificent building, the Red River College project; 2000 students that will be taking the courses of the future. It will include inclusion courses that will allow more of our Aboriginal youth and students to get

e-commerce courses, again, to deal with the future economy. Positive investments for the future. Members opposite, the negative nabob over there, he does not get it. We get it on this side. We get it.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on projects for the Assiniboine Community College expansion, but the first priority is student enrolment. Student enrolment in the agricultural courses is booming, and the LPN programs and some of the other programs that are being taught across the western part of our province. We will continue to expand those opportunities that we have committed.

Go past Brandon, you will see a brand-new building at Brandon University teaching psychiatric and public bachelor of nursing courses and Aboriginal counselling courses in that new building. Again, building capital investments in the future, we have pledged \$14 million to the University of Winnipeg that, again, will be matched with the private sector to build that downtown campus, and be very, very positive.

I say to members opposite they should re-read the Roblin report because the minister of post-secondary education and training is coming forward with a vision of a northern university using not just bricks and mortar, but courses in distance education and bridging young people into these courses across northern Manitoba.

Why can we not use the new technology to provide equal inclusion on college credit courses in the University College of the North? We are going to do that. The member opposite and the Tories opposite opposing the University College of the North have doomed themselves to political failure in the future, because they do not believe in a positive future for northern Manitoba. We do, and we are going to deliver on it.

Mr. Speaker, companies get it. They know you cannot have an economic strategy without an education strategy.

They also understand the great advantage of our health care system to our economy and to the social fibre. We have reduced the waiting lists in cancer by 50 percent. We have a strategy now on cardiac care that will take the competitive filing

system of doctors and have a singular system, like we do with cancer care and like we have achieved with cancer care.

We now have the neurosurgical centre of Canada. We are the only province in Canada now that has a gamma knife. We have returned many neurosurgeons back to Manitoba, one from Cincinnati, one from Pittsburgh, one from Calgary, coming back to Manitoba to build our capacity in this very, very important area.

* (16:50)

We are continuing to train more nurses and we are continuing to develop more doctors in our schools. We are continuing to innovate with home care, with programs that make good sense for innovation and for the future. I would like to say, too, and the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is making a lot of noise in the Chamber, but there was no CAT scan in that hospital when we came into office. There is a CAT scan in that hospital now.

There is a CAT scan in Selkirk. There is a CAT scan in The Pas. There is a CAT scan in Thompson. There is a CAT scan in the Children's Hospital. There is a CAT scan in Selkirk and there are more MRIs going into other hospitals in Manitoba, including one outside of the Perimeter Highway. You called yourself a rural caucus. You did not deliver anything in diagnostic equipment to rural Manitoba. Shame on you. Shame on you.

Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we have achieved all of these investments in education and health care, and we have done so in an affordable way. We have lowered taxes without increasing the operating debt of government. We have paid down \$384 million in operating debt. We have lowered the corporate tax to ensure that the mobility of capital is maintained in Manitoba.

For the first time since the Second World War, members opposite go to the Chamber of

Commerce dinners and they try to pretend that they are really, really in touch, but, Mr. Speaker, they had their chance. How many corporate tax reductions were there under the Conservatives? Zero.

We have lowered the small-business tax by 40 percent since we were in office. Again, we did not make big promises to do all these things. We just quietly deliver it every year in our Budget to make Manitoba more affordable.

Mr. Speaker, we are also proud of the fact that Hydro has the lowest hydro-electric rates in the world. Why does it have the lowest hydro-electric rates? *[interjection]* The Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) has a lot of nerve speaking out, because we know the sale of the telephone system was not in the best interests of Manitobans. It may have been good for the brokers, but it was not good for Manitobans.

I want to say to the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), Mr. Speaker, that when he was worried about the Springhill plant, we had the can-do attitude to get that plant open again in Neepawa.

Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding with our tax reduction promises in the last Budget, a 6% decrease in the middle-income tax reduction. We are over 15 percent since we were elected in middle-income tax relief. They talked a good game. They did nothing. We are delivering every year.

Mr. Speaker, when they peck away at these hypothetical issues, just remember one thing. The credit rating—let me repeat this for members opposite. The credit rating in Manitoba is better today than when you left office in 1999, better today than when you left office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have gone through a very tough year. The BSE crisis and the agricultural crisis have been very serious. We have put in loan programs, cash programs, support programs, bridge programs. We have called on the federal government to support us. Three years ago, we put \$50 million to the agricultural producers on top of the \$120 million in the Budget. Two years ago, we did the same thing and, again, this year.

In spite of the tremendous pressure in forest fires, drought, the high dollar, we found money again for the BSE and the producers. We are now working on a slaughter capacity. When we came into office, 19 000 cattle a year were slaughtered. When we left office in '88, there was over 292 000 cattle slaughtered here. We can do a better job here in Manitoba. Under this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), we are not just going to bridge the problem, we are also going to have more capacity, more levers here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing new challenges. We are going to make our gas tax more accountable. We are going to call on Ottawa, the GST, to return that gas tax for the users in Manitoba. You people talk about a new deal. You voted against the new arena. You voted against the True North Centre. You voted against the Junos coming here, and you voted to take the gas tax all to Ottawa. We are going to be transparent and accountable, something the Liberals never did.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) for taking on the issue of being always told that if you did not pay more fees for lawyers, charges would drop. This happened during the trial in 1999, 1998. This was threatened again with the Strongquill situation last year. I am pleased that this Minister of Justice has gone to court on the principle that the public have rights on Legal Aid coverage. We will change Legal Aid with the court decision that was obtained by the Minister of Justice. We will also continue to have nine Crown attorneys dedicated to gang activity, nine more than members opposite. We are going to double the number of Lighthouses open for kids, so that they will have positive places to go in terms of their future.

Mr. Speaker, we have a new Department of Healthy Living. Join in. Let us be more healthy here in Manitoba. I want to congratulate the Speech from the Throne. How can you vote against healthy living? How can you vote against this Speech from the Throne?

Water Stewardship, again, the first government in Canada to put a Ministry of Water Stewardship forward for a positive future.

We also have in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, some co-operative agreements with all parties, the biofuel discussions. I want to thank the members opposite for their co-operation to build new economies in rural Manitoba. But we had the all-party smoking resolution in the Speech from the Throne. If you vote against the Speech from the Throne, you are voting against the Member for Carman's (Mr. Rocan) hard work to have an all-party resolution on the smoking by-law.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) for the youth advisory committee. I think it is important that our Government continue to govern for all Manitobans.

Banning union and corporate donations is good for democracy. Quit whining; join in.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: I seem to have touched a nerve so I want to repeat it again. You know, you can always tell when the other side—the louder they howl, the more they are opposed to something.

Is it not a good idea we have banned union and corporate donations? Does that not make democracy a good thing? Is this not healthy? Come on, join in, join in for democracy.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Speech from the Throne that celebrates that this Province and this Government governs for all Manitobans. I am pleased that we are raising the minimum wage again so people can live with a decent living when they work. We believe in work, not welfare in terms of people having choices. That is why we have reduced the number of people on welfare through work activity, and that is why we are going to raise the minimum wage.

I am proud of the Healthy Baby program that is nutritional, and I am pleased that this Speech from the Throne, this Speech from the Throne ends the clawback, ends the clawback of the Healthy Child benefit.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being 5 p.m., pursuant to the Rule 45(5), I am interrupting the

proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that is the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the motion read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Second Session of the Thirty-eighth Legislature of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, please.

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

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Do members wish to have the motion read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

Division

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

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Mihychuk, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Gerrard, Goertzen, Hawranik, Lamoureux,

Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner, Reimer, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu, Tweed.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 34, Nays 20.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 3, 2003

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Agricultural Policy Framework Penner; Wowchuk	340
Highway 32 Dyck	333	Sunrise School Division Stefanson; Bjornson	341
Co-op Program for Nursing Students Driedger	333	Stefanson; Doer	341
Sales Tax Proposal Mitchelson	334	Balanced Budget Legislation Loewen; Selinger	342
Red River Floodway Expansion Taillieu	335	Bois des esprits Forest Gerrard; Melnick	343
		Gerrard; Doer	343
Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees		Lake Winnipegosis Gerrard; Ashton	343
Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development First Report Brick	335	Disabilities Issues Office Irvin-Ross; Melnick	344
Tabling of Reports		Manitoba Housing Facilities Rowat; Melnick	344
Return under section 20 of The Public Officers Act dated December 3, 2003 Selinger	337	Flooding (1997) Taillieu; Doer	345
		Taillieu; Ashton	345
Annual Report of The Trade Practices Inquiry Act for the period ending December 3, 2003 Selinger	337	Kenaston Underpass Loewen; Doer	346
Introduction of Bills		Speaker's Ruling Hickes	346
Bill 6—The Cross-Border Policing Act Mackintosh	337	Members' Statements	
Oral Questions		Morden Area Foundation Dyck	347
James Driskell Case Murray; Doer	338	St. Vital Historical Society Melnick	348
Dwayne McClurg Case Hawranik; Mackintosh	338	International Day of Disabled Persons Rowat	348
Dorothy Madden Driedger; Chomiak	339	King Buck Dance Nevakshonoff	349
Livestock Industry Penner; Wowchuk	340	Domestic Violence Prevention Month Gerrard	349

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Reimer	359
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS		Struthers	361
Throne Speech Debate		Dyck	364
(Eighth Day of Debate)		Lemieux	366
Rocan	350	Maguire	369
Martindale	354	Doer	373

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