

Fourth Session - Thirty-Seventh 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
First Session—Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	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.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
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.
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.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	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	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 6, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Day of Remembrance Violence Against Women

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

On December 6, 1989, 13 years ago, a man with a gun murdered 14 women students and injured 13 more women at l'École polytechnique in Montréal. The event was so horrific, so alarming that this date has become a national day of mourning, not only for the victims of the Montréal massacre but for all women murdered or injured by violent men.

After 13 years it would be easy to relegate this date to the back of our consciousness claiming that it is over, in the past, time to let it go. I believe however that this would be wrong. We must not let December 6 pass without our notice. As Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I am committed to commemorating this event. I know it could have been my daughters, your sisters, our friends who were slain for no other reason than that they were women. I know that in a misogynous, violent society all females are vulnerable, that the most dangerous place for a woman is her home, that the streets are not safe and that the workplace is not necessarily a great place to be. We are all at risk from "friendly fire," as the military put it.

This year in Manitoba six women have been murdered by violent men. They are Martha Florence Thompson, Jennifer Creighton, Jill Sinclair, Valerie Ouskun, Eileen Florence Bradburn and Tiruye Yizengaw.

Two other women, Yvonne Marie Dumas and Salfo Asmahan, were violently murdered but

at this time no one has been arrested. These deaths are a painful reminder that violence against women remains prevalent in our society. December 6 allows us to mourn these deaths and indeed those of all women who have been murdered.

Consequently, early this morning many of us met in the Legislature to honour these dead women and express our hopes for a peaceful world. Today we join with women and men across the country who on this day renew their determination to end violence against women.

* (10:05)

We remember December 6, not to be ensnared by the past but rather to promote our vision, to secure a world where women are not murdered, abused, raped, maimed, harassed or stoned to death. We dream of a world where women participate equally and fully without fear of violence or reprisal.

Today I acknowledge the men who respect and support women. Some of you wear white ribbons as a symbol of your commitment. You know that violence affects and demeans us all, that no one is an island and that when a woman is murdered the bell tolls for all of us. To paraphrase the great feminist poet, Audrey Lord, and I often refer to her: When we do not speak our silence is heard as assent and used against us.

Mr. Speaker, today we speak for the silenced women, the dead, the terrified, the alienated, those awaiting death by stoning. Let us respond to their silence with visionary voices and determination. Let us create Tommy Douglas' city on the hill where violence has no purchase, mean-spirited no quarters, and hate, no room.

Earlier this morning, I read a statement proclaiming December 6 a day of remembrance. Our flags in federal and provincial buildings today will fly at half mast.

Mr. Speaker, I know members opposite will want to reply to my statement. After that I request that the House rise for a minute of silence in remembrance of women victims of violence.

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): I would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Status of Women for her statement.

I know all members of the House take the issue of violence very seriously and have worked toward creating a safer environment in each of their constituencies and throughout Manitoba. Having attended this morning's sunrise breakfast with members of our caucus and memorial service with members from both sides of the House, I welcome the opportunity to put a few words on the record about the Montréal massacre and also Canada's day of remembrance and action on violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, 13 years have passed since a senseless act of violence took the lives of 14 women at l'École polytechnique in Montréal. On December 6, 1989, 14 families lost a daughter, a sister or mother and countless others lost friends. A horrendous act such as this reminds us that violence against women is a very real occurrence in our society. We have to reinforce that message that any type of abuse, whether it is physical, sexual or emotional is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. We must be prepared to take the steps needed to stop abuse in whatever form it may take and prevent violent acts such as this from ever taking place again.

When reflecting on the events of December 6, what should remain in the forefront of all our minds is the memory of the 14 women whose lives were lost. They were slain solely because they were women. Such senselessness is in the nature of abuse itself. There is no reason and, more importantly, no excuse for the actions of those who perpetrate such atrocious acts. It is important to remember that although the terrible events of December 6, 1989, were an attack on women, abuse and violence affect everyone. Regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion, the problem of violence has an important impact upon us all, and we

must all contribute to the solution and stop abuse and violence in our society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, including chairperson Kim Clare for organizing and participating in this event. I would also like to thank Murray Pulver, whose music accompanied the event and touched all of those who were in attendance.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all honourable members to take the time today and in the days to come to reflect upon the issue of violence in our society and also remember the 14 women who lost their lives on this tragic day 13 years ago. Their memory can serve as a reminder that this abhorrent problem persists and we must work together to find solutions to address this issue and work toward a society that is safer for everyone.

*(10:10)

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Today we remember the sad events of December 6, 1989, when women were tragically killed at l'École polytechnique. This tragedy is all the greater because it happened to women who were trying to improve their own condition through learning, through attending a post-secondary education institution and trying to advance themselves and more broadly the cause of women generally in society.

It was a terrible shock for all Canadians and it is something that yearly we remember. It is a time not only to remember what happened December 6, 1989, but it is also a time to dedicate ourselves to improving conditions for women in society, to decreasing the risk of violence against women, to improving the conditions of women in life, in learning, at work and indeed in politics, because I think we all should work hard to try and ensure that women can play a larger role.

We look around us in this Chamber today and women are still not adequately represented in the Legislature. Certainly one of the things all of us I think need to dedicate ourselves to is increasing the representation of women here so that we can more broadly improve the condition and the lives of women in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Would all members please rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Private/Public Agreements

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in a poll conducted in late October by Western Opinion Research, 80 percent of Manitobans supported being provided the option to go to government-regulated, private clinics that are fully covered by medicare, 80 percent.

Will the Premier commit today to abiding by the will of the people who elected him and will he increase the number of contracts that Government has with private care facilities? Will he make a commitment to provide timely access to Manitoba patients?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The last discussion I had with the company referenced I believe we were having a disagreement about who would win the Dauphin constituency based on polling. Perhaps regrettably for the members opposite and thankfully for members of this side, the poll information that was portrayed to me about Dauphin moving to the Conservatives did not happen and the NDP retained the seat again with the incumbent MLA.

Mr. Speaker, there is another poll out today, a national poll. There are polls that have different questions about waiting lists, et cetera. I would challenge the member opposite for his evidence.

* (10:15)

In 1998, the research was conducted under the Conservatives comparing the waiting times

under the model described by the member opposite and under the model that exists here in Manitoba. They came to evidential conclusions with evidence and facts and figures that to have a system as described by members opposite would in fact take doctors, nurses and diagnostic staff away from the public system. It would take individuals away from the public system. It may in fact shorten a list for people who have their American conservative express card, but it would not shorten the waiting lists for all Manitobans. In fact, it would go longer.

When we came into office we did not have enough diagnostic equipment. We are increasing that number. The issue is when you decrease the number of doctors in medical schools, as you did in 1992, you will have less doctors in Manitoba. When you fire a thousand nurses, you will have less nurses.

We will lower the waiting lists in Manitoba by more CAT scans, more MRIs, more nurses, more doctors and more diagnostic staff. That will lower the waiting lists, not polls.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, it is always an interesting day in the Chamber when we understand that the Premier, who has obviously badmouthed the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, the Taxpayers Federation, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, now today he is badmouthing another Manitoba company. Shame on you for that.

Mr. Speaker, faced with evidence that an overwhelming majority of Manitobans support increased collaboration with the private sector in health care to reduce waiting lists and to improve access to care, I am very disappointed and I think Manitobans are disappointed that this Premier continues to keep his ideological blinders on.

The question was, we released it yesterday, the exact question was: I would ask the Premier to help shorten waiting lists. Manitobans should have the option of visiting government regulated private clinics that are fully covered by medicare. The card you need to get in is your medicard. That is what it is.

I ask the Premier the question: Does he support that or does he not?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the point I was making is one should be very careful. For example, a couple of weeks ago there was a poll question on Kyoto: Do you support a made-in-Canada solution? You can torque polls by the questions you ask. That was the point I am trying to make, and members opposite, if you ask somebody if they want this result with that kind of program, that is a skewed poll. We know that on this side. If members opposite do not know that, let them live in cloud cuckoo land about these things. It is fine with us.

We have had evidence here in Manitoba between a private clinic. We took the Pan Am Clinic and took it from a profit clinic to a non-profit clinic. We have doubled the number of procedures. We have lowered the fine from the federal government under the Canada Health Act, rededicating the fine the members opposite were paying to Ottawa back to patients here in Manitoba. We think that is a good use of taxpayers' dollars. We have lowered—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We also found an interesting phenomenon in the private clinics which, by the way, exist today in Manitoba. The same clinic, the Western clinic I believe the name is, in the private clinic, the Western Surgical Clinic—[*interjection*] We have a new Health critic again. I think we have a new Health critic again. I cannot keep track of them.

* (10:20)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cataract procedure that was a thousand dollars in the private, profit clinic, when it was introduced into a non-profit clinic, the price of that procedure went down a thousand dollars to \$700, both to the taxpayers and to people accessing the private system that members are championing. We do not believe people should have access to medical services by having an American Express card at the front of a hospital.

We believe the people that need the medical care on the basis of medical merit should get that care in a system here in Manitoba. That is what we believe. We are not going to let the Conservatives put American Express in the front of our hospitals.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River East, on a point of order.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I should point out that the only place Manitobans are using their American Express card today is down in the States buying from private clinics as a result of not being able to get their surgery here.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members, points of order should be used to point out to the Speaker a departure from the rules or a deviation from Manitoba practices, not to use points of order as a means of debate. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Murray: This is classic NDP rhetoric. Whenever there is a debate to be had on issues, whenever an issue comes forward that would provide timely access to care in the form of having a discussion and debate, we went out and we asked Manitobans. Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of them said that under a publicly funded system, the private sector, if they can help get involved to reduce waiting lists, they should do that.

All we hear from this Premier is rhetoric about something about Americanization, something about user fees. That is not what we are talking about on this side of the House. We are talking about a publicly funded system. Mrs. Silva, for example, she should be able to get the kind of knee surgery she needs today by going to, for example, the Maples Surgical Centre, by producing her Manitoba medical health card. She should be able to do that and we support, on this side of the House, an opportunity to allow the private sector to get involved in a publicly

funded system. We will debate that any day with that side. Why does the Premier not agree to timely access to Manitoba health patients?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the last time I looked, notwithstanding the surrogate representation from the member opposite on The Maples, this singular B.C.-owned clinic in Winnipeg, it is a clinic that is operating in Manitoba. The Western Surgical Clinic and other clinics exist already. So you are ranting and raving over nothing in the sense of the health care situation in Manitoba. The real problem, the real challenge is that the—
[interjection] Mr. Speaker, there is no question that firing a thousand nurses in Manitoba and—

* (10:25)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Pembina, on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 417 states that they should not be provoking debate. I have a letter here dated October 13, sent out to R.N.s in the Boundary Trails Health Centre where this Government fired 500 nurses—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to once again remind all honourable members the purpose of points of orders is to point out to the Speaker departure from the rules or practices of the House, not to use points of order as a means of debate.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We have lots of time left for Question Period for any questions that want to be asked and given an answer. We have lots of time left. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the other factor is reducing the number of students in the medical

college, reducing that by some 20 percent. We have reversed that now. There are more young students in Manitoba going into medicine that will graduate and be dealing with those operating waiting room lines.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge members opposite. What vision do Manitobans want for the future, firing a thousand nurses or training three times more, 450? Why do you not poll that?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable Member for Fort Garry, the last point of order was not a point of order and I gave an explanation of the purposes of points of order. There was no point of order.

Sewage Treatment Plants Upgrades

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, by many accounts the spill from the City of Winnipeg's North End treatment plant dumped up to 57 Olympic-size swimming pools full of raw sewage into the Red River. While this Government is running around touting the merits of ratifying Kyoto, we have problems here in Winnipeg with sewage spills and several Manitoba communities remain under boil water orders. Will this Premier outline his immediate plans to fix Winnipeg's sewage treatment problems, and give us the estimated cost for this project?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, when I was the former urban affairs minister, the exemption that the City of Winnipeg enjoyed from The Environment Act, in fact the double standard under The Environment Act where all the municipalities of Manitoba were under The Environment Act except the city of Winnipeg, the old city of Winnipeg, that exemption was taken away and Tories, the Conservatives voted against it because they did not want the city of Winnipeg under the provincial Environment Act.

In fact I remember being literally attacked daily on that basis. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, when former Premier Ed Schreyer came to office, the practice—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (10:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Former Premier Ed Schreyer, with the zoning requirements for the new developments in the city of Winnipeg, made it mandatory that no longer could the sewage go directly into the rivers. In other words, in the early seventies, the NDP made a decision—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: The administration at the time, with the establishment of Unicity, required that all new developments have retention ponds and other treatments so that water and sewage would not go directly into the rivers. We asked when the new Environment Act was proclaimed, in March I believe of 1988, we asked that subsequent to that, with the change in government, we asked that the City of Winnipeg go before the Environment Commission for a long-term plan because we recognized that this had developed over a hundred years. We asked for a long-term plan to be presented to the Clean Environment Commission and a long-term transition to be developed that would be licensed. Before then there was no licensing of what was going on.

We had put money into the capital requirements of the water treatment plants as part of our capital proposals. The Clean Environment Commission eventually did deal with it. I think, '94-95. Since then, to the credit of the former administration, the number of direct access to the rivers with sewage has been reduced from over 30 to about an average I think of 17 a year. Now the Clean Environment Commission recommended that the City of Winnipeg come back with a progress report. *[interjection]* I will answer it later when the members pipe down a bit.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I will put it quite simply. Today members on this side of the House are asking this Premier, this Government: Is this Premier going to target money towards a comprehensive sewage treatment plan for the

city of Winnipeg or is he going to continue to fund costly footbridges and million dollar toilets?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we have put money into the sewage treatment system and the sewer system of Winnipeg as part of our capital investments. The sewage issue is before the Clean Environment Commission, but members opposite did not even mention one dollar going into flood protection for the city of Winnipeg. They have their nerve to stand up here in this House today.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, members opposite today are asking the Premier very, very simply: What is your plan? When are you going to do it? What is the cost?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, our decision, opposed by the Conservatives, was to bring the city of Winnipeg under The Clean Environment Act of Manitoba. The member opposite from River East opposed that and voted against it. For her to feign indignation in this House is absolutely phony. The matter is before the Clean Environment Commission. The Clean Environment Commission is a quasi-judicial body. I know members opposite do not know anything about interfering in quasi-judicial bodies, but we will let the quasi-judicial body do its work.

North End Sewage Treatment Plant Sewage Spill—Fines

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, this Premier can talk all he wants about quasi-judicial bodies. This is the chief lawmaker in this province who went on record as saying that there should be no fines imposed as a result of this spill. He said that within 24 hours of it happening. Has he now changed his position?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was the Minister of Environment when the licence was issued. I would hope that money would be spent in improving the system that broke down, rather than have money go to Ottawa.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I am offended by that answer. The chief lawmaker of this province

is unwilling to let The Environment Act and the federal environment authorities deal with the issue as they should, and he has no plan.

Will he now stand up and acknowledge that he should not have made that comment and that there should be a long-term plan for the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Doer: We scoped the city of Winnipeg into The Environment Act with our amendments and the member opposite voted against it.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be no end to the arrogance of this administration. They want to stand up before the extent of the damage is known and indicate that there should be no charges.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would you kindly remind the member that supplementary questions require no preamble?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Ste. Rose, on the same point of order.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, when the chief lawmaker of this province flaunts the law I believe I have a right to a preamble.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, *Beauchesne* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble. So I would like to advise all honourable members of that rule.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Ste. Rose, please put your question.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Premier if he will now step back from his position that no review and charges should be laid by any of the authorities regarding this spill.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I thought it was passing strange that a national government that has funded some clean-up of sewage in Victoria, in St. John's harbour, in Halifax harbour would not be coming forward with a solution.

This is about an 80-year problem that is, first of all, stopped with the Schreyer government, scoped in with the Pawley government in 1988, opposed by the member opposite who should be accountable for his decisions in this Legislature.

The good thing about Hansard is you cannot vote against a bill one day and then trumpet it as a triumph the next day. It is clearly in the record.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we need a long-term plan. As I say, the—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Ste. Rose, on a new question.

Hydro Projects Environmental Review

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, because this Premier is prepared to flaunt environmental law, I think he should also answer my new question. We have had this Government talking about Wuskwatim, Gull Rapids, Conawapa. I would like to know: Has there been any progress made on environmental hearings on any of those projects?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

* (10:40)

Construction Priorities

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, within the last dozen days we saw the Minister of Energy (Mr. Sale) stand up and say he was expecting an agreement within 60 days that would lead to the construction of Conawapa. Will the Premier now reply as to whether or not this means that Wuskwatim and Gull Rapids will be held in abeyance if this comes to fruition?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Wuskwatim project is before the Clean

Environment Commission and has been filed before the Clean Environment Commission. There is a partnership agreement with the First Nation adjacent to it. That power that could be generated from that dam is obviously a power that is still within the existing transmission system of Manitoba.

Secondly, the member will recall again that in the early nineties, after we had negotiated the memorandum that led to the two sales to Ontario, one, the Conawapa deal, we had argued, when Ontario asked to delay the production and members opposite in government cancelled it, we had recommended strongly that the environmental impact study that was half completed be completed. We had already had some capital construction with the coffer dam and the roads in the area. We had suggested, rather than a half-completed environmental process, that that environmental process should be concluded. Members opposite did not take our constructive advice at the time.

We will have to obviously start over again on the environmental conditions, but any dam that would be constructed would be subject to the rigours of the Clean Environment Commission and environmental impact studies. That would obviously be a condition not only for Manitoba but for Ontario, that if they were looking at transmission capacity, they would also want a Clean Environment Commission in Ontario.

I do not want to speculate on the speculation that is speculated in the eastern press. It is still some distance away and let nobody have any misconceptions about that.

Conawapa Dam Environmental Review

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, this Premier is a master of wordsmanship. Let me be very specific: Will these projects be subject to a federal-provincial environmental review?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Yes.

Agricultural Policy Framework Environmental Plans

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): The Minister of Agriculture has just returned from Ottawa and

further discussions on the APF agreement. Part of the agreement, as I understand it, will be the inclusion of five-year environmental plans to be registered and submitted by farmers. Can the minister apprise us of where that is at today?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, the Agricultural Policy Framework does indeed have five pillars. One of them is the environmental pillar. There is a working group between the federal government and the provinces looking at how various aspects can be implemented. That is still in the discussion stage as to how environmental plans will be implemented. When those details are available I will provide them for the member, but there are no details at this point, only discussions taking place.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister apprise this House of whether any assessment has been done as to the cost to the farm community of registering those kinds of environmental plans in the future?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, indeed those are the things that are being considered. What is being considered is what an environmental plan should look like. There are environmental plans in other provinces now. Ontario has them, Prince Edward Island has environmental plans, and what the department staff are looking at is what those environmental plans look like in other provinces, what will be the value of the environmental plan, what will be the cost of the environmental plan and who will pay.

Transition Funds

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit today to putting her \$40 million in place to assist farmers in the transition program that the federal government and the provincial government have signed as part of the APF agreement? Will she now commit her 40 percent to the cost to help offset these costs that farmers will incur?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Well, Mr. Speaker, we have told the member time and again that we are not, as a provincial government, stepping in to take over federal responsibility when it comes to trade injury. The member is now asking me to

put money into another area when he does not even know what the costs are going to be, whose responsibility it is going to be to pay or what the environmental plans are going to look like.

I would ask the member to be patient. If he has suggestions, bring them forward, but there is a working group that is developing the various components of the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement.

Limitation of Actions Medical Treatments

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. It concerns the use of a medical treatment. In the case of Mr. Ray Garnett and Mr. Ron Arnason, in the gallery today, it was lithium, which appears to have caused major progressive, long-term medical complications, in this case kidney disease, for which they now require dialysis.

I ask the Minister of Justice whether he will review The Limitations of Actions Act as it applies to chronic, progressive medical conditions where the precise onset of complications and precise awareness of the seriousness of the complications is very difficult to determine.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I could rise on a point of order, I suppose, but the member is seeking a legal opinion. I trust the individuals, the claimants or the plaintiffs have counsel, but that is a legal question that in a civil action they are entitled to seek legal advice on.

Mr. Gerrard: A point of order, or was that a reply?

Mr. Speaker: Reply.

Point of Order

Mr. Gerrard: Well, I rise on a point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. For clarification of the House, I took that as a reply and now the honourable Member for River Heights is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: I just want to clarify that the question being asked was not a legal opinion. This was whether the Minister of Justice would review the circumstances around the—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to once again remind all honourable members the purposes of points of order. Points of order are to be used for departure of the rules or departure of practices of the House and not to be used for means of debate.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River Heights, with your question.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary is to the Minister of Science (Mr. Sale), who has been talking about scientific evidence.

I ask the minister whether he will review for lithium, which may be similar to hormone replacement therapy which many women received for many years on the basis of inadequate evidence. Will he review the Government's approach to who is responsible and how citizens can seek compensation for side effects of medical treatments where there is not adequate scientific evidence of health benefit?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of whether there is a legal remedy for allegations here raises a number of legal issues. First of all, when the cause of action arose and then when that question is answered, whether the limitations act is a problem or not, sometimes it can be difficult I know in determining that question. If the member has these questions and he wishes answers, he could pass that on and perhaps representatives from Civil Legal Services or other representatives can attempt to provide an answer.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the minister. I ask the Minister of Science whether he will commit today to review the provincial approach to evidence-based medicine as it relates to treatments and complications of therapy as part of a provincial effort to decrease medical errors and to decrease medical complications.

* (10:50)

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very interesting point. I think it is a point that bears careful thinking about. The member will know that we recently changed The Workers Compensation Act on the basis of presumptive illness related to particular issues that came to light after a great deal of scientific research. So I think the evidence, historically, is that when there is a reason for reviewing statutes that generally happens. I think the member has raised an interesting point.

Pension Plans Flexibility

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have asked questions with respect to the flexibility of pensions within our province and their planning for retirement. Can the Minister of Labour and Immigration inform this House what actions are being taken to address these concerns?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, The Pension Benefit Act was last updated in 1984. As everyone knows, there have been many changes in the last 18 years, both in the nature of work, the needs and the requirements and the wishes of retirees. What we have done, the Pension Commission has undertaken a discussion paper which is forming the basis of public hearings that are being held in January in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson, with availability for people to write in and make written presentations or appear before the Pension Commission. That will form the basis of an analysis of legislative changes to be made to The Pension Benefit Act so that it can more effectively and efficiently represent the situation as it faces Manitobans today.

Conawapa Dam Construction Costs

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): In recent weeks, the Minister responsible for the Kyoto accord has mentioned the construction of hydro dams, in particular the Conawapa dam, as essential to Manitoba's ability to meet its Kyoto commitments. Can the minister tell this House if the Manitoba government has compiled the costs

of building the Conawapa dam and if he will now share these costs with Manitoba?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): First of all, I thank the member for his question. It does contain an error. I have never said, and our Government has never said, that Conawapa was essential to our meeting our targets under Kyoto. In the plan that we have put forward, we have shown a number of measures, including ethanol, aggressive demand management in Hydro, the development of methane capture, the development of wind energy. We have a wide variety of strategies which, if the member will recall from reading the plan, which I am sure he has, we estimate that we can be about 22 percent or 23 percent below our 1990 level, not just six percent or seven percent below.

I think what we have to remember is that our great advantage in this province is we have about 5000 uninstalled megawatts of clean, low-impact, run-of-the-river type dams. There is a market for good power in North America. We hope there is a market in Ontario. That is why we are looking at this issue, and to correct the member earlier—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Power Purchasers

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Can the minister tell this House if Manitoba has a firm commitment in place from the Ontario government, or is there another buyer to purchase the power that would be produced by the Conawapa dam?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): It is clear that, unless there are buyers for power, it is not prudent to develop a dam, and we would never do that. That does not make any sense. I should tell the member that I think he probably has access to the newspapers, and he would know that, in Ontario, there is a considerable uncertainty as to what organization has a mandate to provide power for the citizens of Ontario. It used to be Ontario Power Generation, but with the deregulation and re-regulation, there is considerable uncertainty. That is one of the issues, of course, that has to be resolved. Who is responsible for providing

power to the citizens of Toronto? Is it Toronto Hydro? Is it Ontario Power Generation? Is it some mixture of those? That is one of the issues that we have to sort out. That is what we are doing.

East-West Power Grid Manitoba's Costs

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Would he now release the estimated costs of Manitoba's portion of constructing an east-west power grid, should Conawapa go ahead, should agreements be signed? What would be the cost to Manitoba for its portion of the power grid?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): It is delightful to have the Opposition so interested, for a change, in hydro. The mothball party is finally interested in hydro as a potential part of Manitoba's future. I think that is a good thing, Mr. Speaker. I welcome their interest. I think that shows a good kind of conversion on the road to a cleaner economy and into a stronger economic future for Manitoba.

When there is an agreement, if there is an agreement, projects will be tendered, prices will be announced. All things will be costed, and I am delighted the member is so interested, for a change, in Manitoba's economic future.

Bill 2 Penalties

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, when one carefully considers the provisions of Bill 2 proposed by this Minister of Justice, that this bill will not be able to shut down the commercial store of the Hells Angels even if the bill did apply to that store, which it does not, the proposed bill has no teeth in terms of penalties, and it is evident that this Government is, in fact, soft on crime and afraid of taking on organized crime in this province.

Is this minister prepared to increase the penalties in Bill 2 to ensure that the criminal organizations do not merely get a slap on the wrist but instead are dealt with severely to ensure that criminal organizations are eliminated from this province and discouraged, not encouraged, from establishing in Manitoba?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, this legislation is currently before the House, and there will be time for discussion on this in committee hearings, but I do not find much credibility from the Opposition.

When they were in government, they had plenty of time to deal with gangs, and the one initiative they came up with was a so-called gang hotline. Mr. Speaker, it was a cold line. We discovered that, in fact, no one was even answering that telephone for up to five months at a time.

They do not have credibility when it comes to gangs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, is the minister in favour of empowering communities and people within those communities such as we propose in our bill and such, as contained in the Criminal Code which allows people to bring private prosecutions against others for crimes?

Is this minister in favour of allowing communities and residents to participate in the elimination of criminal organizations and gangs from their communities and neighbourhoods and allowing them to take action under Bill 2, instead of just the police chief as he proposes? Will he let them do that?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, after consultations, it is our approach that we trust the police. We trust their investigations, their intelligence, their strategies in countering organized crime. It is our policy not to undermine the police in that effort.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, is the minister in favour of expanding the ban on gang colours in his Bill 2, to ban gang colours from all public places including schools and shopping centres, not just from liquor-licensed establishments as proposed in his Bill 2?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would urge the member opposite to get legal opinion on this one and ensure that any ideas that he brings forward can, in fact, stand up in court and can be useful.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we have introduced is the first legislation of its kind. One part of it is

based on an Ontario statute. Other parts are cutting new ground. I certainly look forward to ideas from the Opposition, but I urge members opposite to make sure that they have a legal basis, that they are not going to expose everyday Manitobans to risks and make ordinary Manitobans have to go to court to stand up against organized crime.

We trust the police, Mr. Speaker. We trust their strategies in dealing with organized crime. We want to add to their toolbox.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gun Control Legislation

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I found the Premier's (Mr. Doer) new-found opposition to the federal government's gun legislation very interesting.

I should remind the Premier about a letter written by his Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) and some quotes from other NDP MLAs when they were in opposition in the 1990s that highlight how members on that side of the House actually supported Ottawa's gun legislation.

To hear the Premier (Mr. Doer) claim that his party now said from the beginning that this program was regrettably dead on arrival and would not work is so far from the truth, it is outrageous.

Here is what the Minister of Labour wrote in 1993: I urge you to implement, as quickly as possible, the recommendation for stronger gun control legislation. It only makes sense from safety, quality of life and financial perspective to institute these measures immediately. Strict gun control legislation will go a long way toward ensuring that safety.

* (11:00)

Also, here is what the Minister of Health had to say in 1991 about the gun control legislation: Given what I have seen, I am

relatively pleased with the legislation. The current Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) said in 1994 about the gun control legislation: I am concerned the proposal does not go far enough.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier knew where his party stood and should be ashamed for suggesting otherwise. If he is so opposed to the federal government's gun control legislation, then his party should have spoken up a decade ago.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Member for Riel—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very difficult to hear. If you wish to have a conversation you can use the loge or the hallway. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Sustainable Development Award

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the former St. Vital School Division, which is now part of Louis Riel School Division, for receiving a 2002 Sustainable Development Award of Excellence. This year 43 awards were presented to individuals, groups, communities, businesses and youth in Manitoba. These recipients have demonstrated the ability to undertake initiatives and develop them into concrete and lasting achievements so as to improve life in the province. They have shown understanding and leadership in instigating the principles of sustainable development and have successfully captured the spirit of co-operation to promote economic development in harmony with the environment.

The former St. Vital School Division implemented a recycling program for its 22 schools. The Multi-Material Recycling Project aimed to increase waste diversion rates throughout the school division to increase school revenue from the sales of recyclable items and to determine options for maintaining and expanding recycling programs.

I am pleased to note that the former St. Vital School Division attained considerable savings from the decreased cost of garbage pickup. Furthermore, the community and the entire province have benefited from reduced environmental damage because there is less garbage going to the landfill. As well, the school division has worked tirelessly to promote and encourage environmental responsibility to its students.

Over the past year, students from kindergarten to Grade 12 played a part in numerous special events related to recycling, waste reduction or the environment in general. Examples of their activities included planting trees, cleaning up school yards, attending Al Simmons' performances sponsored by the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation and conducting ecological mapping of school neighbourhoods.

I would like to congratulate the former St. Vital School Division, all its staff, for receiving this prestigious award and for showing us how to initiate, embrace and practise sustainable development.

Queen's Jubilee Medals

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the recipients of the Queen's Jubilee Medal in Fort Garry. It has been a very special year this year with the Queen and His Highness Prince Philip also coming to Winnipeg. The monarchy shows the roots that we have here in the province of Manitoba, the beginnings of our history. It is very important, very honourable to have the opportunity to be the recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal in this most memorable year.

I would like to acknowledge Don MacAngus, Steven Fletcher, Rick Pinchin and Gisele Fyfe, Lesley Iredale and Rajesh Joshi who have received the medals. Mr. Don MacAngus has been a pillar in the community in Fort Garry. He takes his responsibility to community very seriously and shares his good fortune with others. He has a very generous heart, very good man, someone who is certainly, as I said before, a pillar in the community.

This outstanding individual has displayed exemplary leadership skills and dedication to building the community. He indeed is a role model to every Canadian citizen, as is Steven Fletcher.

Steven Fletcher, who, after a tragic accident, received his Bachelor of Science, his Master of Business Administration and did a lot of wonderful things and continues to do so, has become a local hero. Rick Pinchin, who has put a lot of time into the Lions Club and the Kinsmen Club and the Boy Scouts, along with Gisele Fyfe and Lesley Iredale, who have outstanding records at the Victoria Hospital in terms of supporting the initiatives there, as well as that young man, Rajesh Joshi, who is now in Cambridge, England, studying and who has shown exemplary leadership in youth.

I congratulate them.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, on the evening of December 19, at 7:30, at the Elks Hall in Dauphin, five of my constituents will receive the Queen's Jubilee medals, and I am very proud of these constituents.

The Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) is right. It has been quite a year in terms of celebration in Manitoba with the Queen's visit to our province, and I am very proud of the fact that Bob and Bev Mackenzie, who live in Dauphin, Walter and Lillian Peirson, who live in Dauphin, and Anna Stewart, who lives in Roblin, will be recipients of the Queen's Jubilee Medals.

These two couples plus Mrs. Stewart are very deserving members. They spent a lot of time volunteering in our communities of Dauphin and of Roblin and I am very proud that they are the recipients of these medals.

The Mackenzies have a long list of volunteer service in our community, and I just want to highlight one for Bob Mackenzie. I served with Bob on the Fort Dauphin Museum board. Bob has been involved with the Fort Dauphin Museum for quite some time and many other projects in our community. One example for Bev Mackenzie is her volunteer work at

Canada's National Ukrainian Festival, along with many other events that she is involved with.

The Peirsons: Mary has been involved with the Dauphin Agricultural Days, a key volunteer with that group. Walter is actually a new R.M. councillor in the R.M. of Dauphin and is an active member in the Dauphin Legion, among other organizations.

Anna Stewart has been very involved in the community of Roblin, especially at the Seniors Centre.

So I congratulate these people, plus their families, for their support. I want to say that all our communities depend on volunteers, in specific, and, in particular, our rural communities, our small communities, are very dependent upon people like these.

Springfield Christmas Open House

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, last night, I hosted the fourth annual Springfield constituency Christmas open house, in Oakbank, Manitoba.

As in past years the turnout was overwhelming, the food was tremendous and to top off this year's festivities I had the opportunity to present certificates to six individuals who served their respective communities in an extraordinary fashion. These individuals served as councillors in the Rural Municipality of Springfield and the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul. These individuals did not return to their respective councils.

I would like to, first of all, list the councillors for Springfield: Councillor Vince Boileau, who served from 1995 to 2002, serving seven years; John Sokal, who served from 1995 to 2000, also seven years; Ken Lucko, who served from 1998 to 2002, for four years; Councillor Garry Brown, who served from 1980 to 1983 and from 1986 to 2000, a total of 19 years; and Steve Pochuk, who served seven years from 1995 to 2002.

Serving in East St. Paul was Councillor Leonard Kmacovich, who served from 1995 to 2002, serving seven years.

All of these individuals served their communities well, putting a lot of time in. As members of this Chamber can appreciate, it is a hard job and involves a lot of time away from your family. It means going to a lot of events and it is quite a job. In sincere appreciation for the years that they gave as councillors in their respective communities, we certainly appreciate the sacrifices that they made.

I would like to thank Gayle Dowler, Nancy Toyne and Bev Zarazun for making the evening the success it was and again congratulate those who were not returned as councillors for all the years of service they gave to make Manitoba a better place to live.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is leave to rise today at 11:45?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to rise today at 11:45?

Motion agreed to.

* (11:10)

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Sixth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food, who has 14 minutes remaining.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few moments to conclude my remarks and take this opportunity to thank the people of Swan River constituency for the tremendous support and advice that they have

given me over the years. The people of Swan River also appreciate the work this Government has been doing and the services we have been providing. I am very pleased to have that opportunity to continue to do that.

Other speakers who have spoken before me have commented on those people who have made their decision not to serve in this House again. I would like to add my comments to the ones others have put on the record, to commend those people for the time they have served in the House. I guess I also want to reflect on rural members who have decided not to seek further office and pay tribute to their families, because rural members serving in this Legislature are much different than an urban member in the time that they are away from their families, their homes and their communities. So I would like to pay tribute to the members from the opposite side who are rural members and have chosen not to seek re-election again, as well as, I mentioned yesterday, my colleague who is the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) here.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments I want to say I am tremendously proud of the Throne Speech we have put forward and the work we have done. I would ask others to look at the pamphlets that have been put out which speak of our record for the past three years. There are many things we have done, but there are many things people do not even realize we have done. Our record in this province is certainly one I am extremely proud of and I look forward to continuing on and delivering on what we have outlined in this Throne Speech and in many throne speeches to come.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): It is a pleasure to again have an opportunity to speak on the Throne Speech and put a few comments on the record, but first I would like to welcome you back, Sir, as the referee in this Chamber, the table staff who do such a wonderful job from day to day under very trying conditions. A welcome to the new pages and the new interns. I cannot help but think what a wonderful experience this is for young people to be able to sit here and observe in the Chamber. Many of them we meet later in life and they speak about what a positive experience it was.

I would also like to recognize the wonderful constituency of Minnedosa, both under the old

boundaries and the new boundaries, how it has been a distinct pleasure to represent that particular area of the province, the tremendous co-operation I have always received from municipal councils, the school board and others.

I do not want to dwell too much on the fact that perhaps this is my last opportunity to address the Throne Speech. Personally, I do not think it is. I have listened to the Premier (Mr. Doer) and studied a little bit of history. I think there is going to be ample opportunity for us to continue to meet for some time yet. I know he is aware of the late Premier Peterson of Ontario who went a little early in his term and it kind of backfired on him. I suspect that we will all have a chance to gather again.

I would point out there are only two other people in the House, today, who were elected for the first time in 1988. That is my friend, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), who are both in attendance today. That was the class of 1988. It was not a time when the government caucus was growing. In fact, there was some shrinkage that happened at that time. I think all of the members who returned were incumbents. We were faced with, on this side of the House, 18 new Liberal members who came in with Sharon Carstairs who had been the lone Liberal member. As the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) said, it was quite an experience. I recall the Member for Thompson sitting over in this area here with, I think, 11 others, back up there as a matter of fact. It was a time when there was a lot of strategy being used in this House by all parties. I suppose one of the realities of that time was that the Liberals did not have a lot of strategic experience.

I remember the passage of a particular budget which happened on a Monday night after supper where there was a lone Liberal sitting in here holding the fort. He was going to stand up and object. It was the former Member for Inkster. He was encouraged to maybe leave his objection to a later time. We passed concurrence that day. It was one of the more humorous times in the House. I have enjoyed, in the last 15 years, the thrust and parry that goes on here from time to time. I know that sometimes, if somebody just visits here to watch a Question Period or attend a

particular debate, they do not get all the nuances of what happens in this House. Those of us who have spent a little more time here can reflect on those happenings from time to time and understand those issues and have a little laugh about them.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I would like to recognize my former critic when I was in Family Services who said that I drove him to distraction. I know that is not a medical term, but I hope there was not any long-lasting issue with that. I am happy to say it is totally forgotten now. I also recognize the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), whom I worked with when I was in the Department of Labour and always appreciated the tenacity he brought to the debate. There were times when there was a little give and take on both sides. I appreciate that, particularly over a late amendment that we once brought in to a piece of labour law. At any rate, that is all of the reminiscing I am going to do at this time because I do think that I will have another opportunity.

I want to turn my attention to the Throne Speech at this time. I would have to say it is sort of the Bud Lite of throne speeches. Usually, the press cover these speeches on the front page, on the editorial page, in the early part of the newspaper. I could not help but notice that the Throne Speech got relegated to page 12 in the *Winnipeg Free Press* the next day. It was indicative of the fact that, as I have said, it was the Bud Lite of throne speeches. It did not have the usual substance, the direction. It looked to me like it had not had a lot of thought put into it. Another newspaper said: What a snoozer. NDP Throne Speech dull, weak and shallow. We know that the press sometimes have some biases on this, but I think they were close to being right as they analyzed it. In fact, I remember hearing an old friend of mine, but a good friend of the Government's, Rob Hilliard, commenting in the media that the Throne Speech was light on promises, direction and vision. This is one of the supporters of the New Democratic Party and his view of that particular Throne Speech.

I would also note that the Premier seems to be rather sensitive when it comes to any kind of

criticism of the Throne Speech, to the point where he did make some personal attacks on Shelley Wiseman of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, on Graham Starmer, who is the president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, and on Victor Vrsnik, with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. So I hope the Premier does not have too thin a skin when it comes to criticism of his Throne Speech. I am concerned that, instead of reacting to what people are saying, he is making a rather personal attack on these people, accusing them of never having run a business in their life.

* (11:20)

I happen to know all three of these people, and I think they are very fine Manitoba citizens who have a job to do and who represent thousands and thousands of other taxpaying, voting citizens of this province. I would hope this pattern of making these personal attacks on these individuals is something that he did in a fit of anger and that he got over it, because they do add to the debate in this province. They do have a legitimate right to comment on the Throne Speech. I am not sure that his comments serve any good purpose, and if he thinks he is going to back people off by making these kinds of personal attacks on these leaders of very significant organizations in this province, he is wrong.

We saw a continuation of that today when he attacked another Manitoba company, Western Opinion Research, who is hired from time to time by businesses, by government, by political parties, by other people in this province to take a sample of opinion on some very important issues. His response today was to throw dirt at them, to indicate that their track record is not very good. I do not think it is the Premier's place in this House or in this province to bad-mouth Manitoba companies who are here to do business, who hire people, who pay salaries, who have a legitimate right to do the business that they do. I am rather concerned that the Premier would attack these leaders of legitimate companies and make them out to be antagonistic towards the Government. In fact, they have every right to their views, and, of course, the media go to them in the fact that they represent Manitoba businesses, Manitoba citizens. I would

urge the Premier to stay on the high road and not make these personal attacks against these individuals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot help but note that the Premier often refers to people with new opinions as sort of changing their minds on the road to Damascus. There can be no better example of that than the Premier's view of balanced budget legislation. We all have had a chance to review the comments that were made at the time the balanced budget legislation was being debated in this House and noted that, not only the Premier, but pretty well every member of the opposition side at that time spoke on that issue. I noticed the member from Elmwood yesterday saying there was anger towards the NDP because they had changed their mind and stolen a policy of the Progressive Conservative Party and the government of that day. The quotes and the comments are on the record, and they certainly resound with many Manitobans how the NDP were really quite opposed to balanced budget legislation.

I would say that, if they have embraced it, they have only embraced it as a political tactic, and I think that it is important that they not only follow the letter of the law but the spirit of the law and truly balance their budgets. We have seen this Government make an unprecedented raid on Manitoba Hydro, a Crown corporation that has a fine history and record in this province, and a corporation that has significant debt. There is over \$6-billion worth of debt in Manitoba Hydro. In fact, they forced Hydro to borrow more money. This is money that should have been spent paying down debt, paying down Hydro debt. They should not be using Manitoba Hydro as a cash cow. This is wrong, but I note that the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) has made a commitment to continue that practice, not only for the current budget year, but future budget years. I believe that he knows that this is wrong, that the Crown corporation already paid through something called water rental rates a dividend to the Government. Now, we are seeing this Government so strapped for cash, so strapped for income that they are attaching responsibility for the provincial Budget to Manitoba Hydro. I believe that they are not following the letter of the law, and they certainly are not following the spirit of the law.

We have seen this Premier (Mr. Doer) and many members on that side now talk favourably about balanced budget legislation, but in my estimation, they are circumventing it, and it is wrong, and Manitobans know it is wrong.

I would like to make a few comments on health care. I find it interesting that the Premier often leaps to his feet in front of other members when the member of the Liberal Party stands on his feet to talk about health care and reminds the Liberal member that he was part of the Cabinet in 1995 that withdrew hundreds of millions of dollars in transfer payments from the Province of Manitoba. Yet, on the other hand, he never recognizes the difficulties it caused the government of that day who had to make decisions to keep a balanced budget, who had to make decisions on expenditures in this province, because the federal government unilaterally withdrew hundreds of millions of dollars in income from the Province of Manitoba.

So, on the one hand, the Premier likes to recognize that at any time he can be critical of the Liberal member in this House, and rightly so, but he also should acknowledge the very, very difficult position it put the government of that day in, in attempting to keep a balanced budget and to fund all of the necessary requirements of the government of that day.

Through that period, we consistently gave additional resources to Health and Family Services and Education. It was a very difficult time. This Government has had the luxury of not only having that money reinstated in 1999-2000 but, now, apparently, are on the verge of having a commitment for the federal government to put considerably more additional money into the coffers of the Province to deal with health care and other social issues.

I would also like to mention that the Premier (Mr. Doer) today and at other times talks about the fact that procedures at the Pan Am Clinic can be done for a couple of hundred dollars cheaper than they used to do them. He should factor in the fact that \$7 million was expended to purchase this clinic. That is why, by the Government owning the bricks and mortar, that those procedures can be done for less money. If he wanted to give a true balance sheet of what is

happening with the costs, he should also factor in the money and the interest, the borrowing costs on that money if he wants to make a true comparison.

I cannot leave health care without mentioning the fact that we still have hallway medicine. There is no end in sight, even though in many cases the NDP government has redefined hallways to make them holding areas for patients. We are seeing longer and longer waiting lists, and I daresay everybody in this House will know somebody who is on a waiting list, a waiting list that is much too long, one that is growing.

This Government seems to be very insensitive to the fact that people are suffering, that people are on those waiting lists far too long, and that is really the issue that is behind the whole waiting list and whether we use outside private clinics with public money. It would mean that the Government could no longer ration the amount of expenditures and the number of procedures that are being done in this province. I would say that this is a major shortcoming of this particular Government, the fact that those waiting lists are growing, that people are suffering. I can tell you we could trot people in here on a daily basis who have had their surgeries delayed, who have been given dates into the next calendar year, into the next budget year simply because this Government is rationing those services. There are solutions there, and using some of these private clinics would be an example of assisting.

We have also seen the downsizing of the provincial commitment to chiropractors, a very, very needed service, an area where the Government backtracked a little bit to eventually fund some of these chiropractors after there was a considerable amount of pressure put on them.

* (11:30)

I would note I mentioned what Rob Hilliard said the day of the Throne Speech. I will also mention what my friend Paul Moist said the day of the Throne Speech. He said government must be doing something to fix health care. It was a recognition by a union leader who has very close ties and connections with the New Democratic

Party, in fact, there are some who think he may be a candidate in the next election. I have not talked to him, and it very well could be true, but Paul Moist made the comment the day of the Throne Speech that the Government must proceed to fix health care. I think that sort of advice coming from one's own friends should be listened to with some urgency.

I would like to also talk a little bit about education. I welcome a new Education Minister (Mr. Lemieux), a man who has a little background in education, a little background in hockey. We had an opportunity to talk about some of his exploits in hockey the other day. I am sorry that he is not able to hear me at this moment, but I welcome him. I think he comes to the Education portfolio at a good time because he is going to have the opportunity to pick up some pieces left behind by the previous minister and deal with some of the issues that I think were not well handled—and I will just leave it at that—by the previous minister.

One of the things that has been dumped on his lap, on his desk is the Nicholls report. Mr. Glen Nicholls, a man I think that we all have a lot of respect for, came through with the \$80,000 report to government, one that gave them a good critical path to follow in terms of what they should be doing on class size and composition. He left them with seven recommendations, and the key recommendation is one that I mentioned in this House yesterday, that there should be a three-year moratorium on the issue of arbitration and the Government should undertake at that time to do a whole variety of things to enhance the class size and composition issue. The Government has rejected that. The Government has turned their back on the Nicholls report, and I think it is a shame.

I had asked in this House the previous minister, I asked at Estimates, whether a commitment or promise had been made to somebody which is going to have them proceed with allowing class size and composition to go to the arbitration process. The previous minister said no, that he had not made a promise. I asked if the Premier (Mr. Doer) had made a promise, and he kind of waffled on that and skated around it. It appears that that promise was made and that

promise is now being kept, but what it is doing is putting the Nicholls report on the backburner.

I know the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) would have read the Nicholls report and would have a respect for this critical path that was outlined by Mr. Nicholls. I am a little surprised that she has not used her considerable authority and clout in Cabinet to say that the Nicholls report should be followed instead of being rejected and put on the shelf, because there are real, I think, positive indications in the Nicholls report of what critical path the Government should have embarked on. They have rejected that, and I think that is a shame.

I want to move next to the Gaming file. I have been asked to be a critic on the whole issue of gaming and gambling in this province. I note the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), who has spoken on the gaming issue in the *Brandon Sun* and has indicated it is now a dead issue that will not be revisited, shortly after that—*[interjection]* Well, the Member for Brandon West is sort of indicating that I am not giving him due respect for the stance that he is taking.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

On October 1, he said the Province is not interested in putting more casinos up in the province of Manitoba. I am saying that without a shadow of doubt. On October 25, the Member for Brandon West said, with three Manitoba plebiscites rejecting casinos, Smith says the message is clear. Obviously, that tells us they do not want gambling of any sort. That is the way the Government is going. I want him to acknowledge his words. There are quite a few other quotes in here, where Smith defends the Government on casinos. I am quoting from the headline, sir. It appears now that the Premier is saying we made a mistake. The Premier is saying the chiefs have made a mistake. The Premier is saying we have to jump-start this initiative again. I think he is undercutting the Member for Brandon West.

I know we will have other opportunities to talk about this, where the Member for Brandon West has been very clear in his responsibilities for gaming, that the issue is a dead issue. The Premier, in 1996, was very clear that casinos

should not be put into communities without having a plebiscite, without having a vote by those communities. It appears now that the Premier is changing his mind. I hope he does not leave the Member for Brandon West out on a limb for the things he has said in Brandon and that, perhaps, he is not going to be able to live up to because the Premier is going a different direction on gaming, but we will have that further debate at another time.

I am concerned with the Government's stance on natural resources. The Member for Dauphin knows full well that the Government is stickhandling and slip sliding away on this whole issue of using gill nets for fishing in this province. This Government, the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers), the various ministers of natural resources have allowed this situation to continue, have allowed this situation to fester. I can tell you that there are anglers in this province who are very angry because of the fact that the sport fishing industry is going to be severely damaged. This Government wants to stand on the sidelines. This Government wants to ignore the fact that there is considerable damage being done to the sport fishing industry in this province. In fact, I think the Member for Dauphin-Roblin has had indications within his own community as to the extent of the anger and frustration that these anglers have. Sitting on the sidelines much longer is not going to do the member very well the next time that we go to the polls. *[interjection]*

Well, the Member for Dauphin-Roblin says that is what it is all about; that drives their policy setting, that they set policy based on when the next election is going to be instead of doing the right thing. Instead of doing the right thing and the courageous thing, they are stickhandling with an issue, and they are failing at it.

I want to talk a little bit about expenditures. I know that this is not a budget speech, but I think it is important that the Government be accountable for some of their expenditures. I cannot help but take exception to the fact that this Government is giving dollars to what is called a left-wing think tank. We recall during the 1990s that the Choices organization had their meetings in the NDP caucus room. The minister of science and whatever was the founding

member of Choices. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) was a contributing member of Choices. That organization sort of has gone into abeyance and has reappeared as the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

To spend taxpayer dollars funding a left-wing think tank like that, friends of the NDP, is wrong. It is not a lot of money, but there are many times we ask the Government to do things and they say, we cannot afford it; we do not have the funds. I do not recall seeing the press release. *[interjection]* The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), of course, who flays out press releases all the time, will recognize that there was not a press release announcing this \$15,000 contribution. It had to be dug out by political pundits who used Freedom of Information to find this. I do not think there was a cheque presentation or a picture taken when this money was spent giving it to this left-wing think tank. This is a terrible expenditure of public dollars and one that the NDP should be ashamed of.

* (11:40)

While we are talking about the expenditure of money, we have many needs in this province and in this city to do with transportation. The councillor for Charleswood recently talked about the footbridge and the accoutrements on this footbridge, the money being spent on that, that there is a cost overrun and the Province is only in it for \$5 million. Where was the Province's thinking when they made this commitment of \$5 million to a footbridge when this city has traffic snarls that should be addressed on major arteries, where there are potholes that have to be addressed?

I know that is a municipal responsibility, but this was an infrastructure program where the Government had the authority, along with the federal government and the municipality, to make a decision about where this \$5 million would be spent. To spend it on a footbridge, when there already are avenues for pedestrians to travel back and forth across the river, is a bad decision. So, on the one hand, we had \$15,000 thrown at the Choices organization, and now we have over \$5 million given to a footbridge.

These are bad decisions of this Government. I go back to the fact that this Government was so strapped for income this year that they had to

raid a Crown corporation to feed their spending habits. This is not good prioritization of precious tax dollars and one that I am very critical of this Government for.

I want to talk about rural development. In the 1990s, a Department of Rural Development was created in this province, and I can tell you that that department learned a great deal about what works in rural Manitoba. Fine communities like Winkler and Morden and Steinbach, who had programs that made their communities strive and grow, were adopted by the Department of Rural Development to try and replicate them in other areas of the province.

This Government surely must recognize what a positive attitude was created by rural development during the 1990s. The first thing the Premier (Mr. Doer) did, in announcing his Cabinet, he said, we are not going to have a department or a minister of rural development; it was just another deputy minister in Winnipeg.

Well, I can tell you it was much more than a deputy minister. It was a department that was farsighted, that was progressive, that helped to change the attitude of rural Manitobans into making sustainable communities in this province. That feeling has now been trashed. That feeling is gone. *[interjection]*

Well, the minister who runs away from her responsibilities when she goes to ministerial meetings should spend more time in rural Manitoba and get a better feel for what people are talking about and what they are thinking about in rural Manitoba, because I can tell you—*[interjection]* You live there? Then you should come out of hiding and understand what people are talking about in rural Manitoba. The fact of the matter is the many progressive programs that were put in place by the previous government are now dormant. They are now dormant, and the attitude that Manitobans had at that time, which was a positive attitude where things were happening, where there was growth of industry, traditional and non-traditional industry, that feeling is now gone. I can tell you it has a very detrimental effect on our communities, on our farms and what people are saying in rural Manitoba.

I would think that, when the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) next goes to rural Manitoba, she should travel far and wide and understand.

We used to have a very progressive member from Swan River, one that the Minister of Agriculture sort of bad-mouthed during the 1990 election and, I do not think, has ever apologized to him for that, nor has the Premier apologized for the comments that he made at that time. I talked earlier about making personal comments about people, and I think the Minister of Agriculture knows full well about the comments her leader and she made at that time.

I want to also talk about the whole issue of immigration. This Government has made a commitment to raise immigration figures in this province to the area of 10 000 people. I think that is wonderful if they can find those immigrants who want to come and work and stay.

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

As previously agreed, the hour being 11:45, this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 6, 2002

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