

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.
VACANT	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

Thursday, April 24, 2003

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

Speaker's Statement

Resignation

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have a statement for the House.

I must inform the House that Linda Asper, the honourable Member for Riel, has resigned her seat in the House dated April 21, 2003. I am therefore tabling her resignation and my letter to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council advising of the vacancy thus created in the membership of the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Provincial Road 304

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

Provincial Road 304 is the main connector road between Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 and Provincial Trunk Highway No. 59 for residents in Pine Falls, Powerview, St. George, Great Falls, Manigotagan and Bissett who wish to travel in a southwesterly direction to Selkirk and to Winnipeg.

Provincial Road 304 from Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 is in a southwesterly direction, is travelled by approximately 1000 vehicles daily and shortens the travel time to Winnipeg by at least 30 minutes.

The 14 kilometres of Provincial Road 304 to the south of Provincial Trunk No. 11 is in very poor condition, has no shoulders and winds among granite outcroppings and through swamps, creating very dangerous and very treacherous conditions for the travelling public.

At least six people have died needlessly in the last eight years on the 14 kilometre stretch of Provincial Road 304 south of Powerview.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) consider rebuilding and reconstructing the 14 kilometres of Provincial Road 304 to the south of Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 at the earliest opportunity. I request this on behalf of Diane Dubé, Don MacLellan, Tammy Murphy and others. Thank you.

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)

Supported Living Program

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I wish to present the following petition.

The reasons for this petition:

The provincial government's Supported Living Program provides a range of supports to assist adults with a mental disability to live in the community in their residential option of choice, including a family home.

The provincial government's Community Living Division helps support adults living with a mental disability to live safely in the community in the residential setting of their choice.

Families with special-needs dependants make lifelong commitments to their care and well being and many families choose to care for these individuals in their homes as long as circumstances allow.

The cost to support families who care for their special-needs dependants at home is far less

than the cost of alternate care arrangements such as institutions or group and foster home situations.

The value of the quality of life experienced by special-needs dependants raised at home in a loving family environment is immeasurable.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Caldwell) consider changes to the departmental policy that pays family members a reduced amount of money for room and board when they care for their special-needs dependants at home versus the amount paid to a non-parental care provider outside the family home.

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing consider examining on a case-by-case basis the merits of paying family members to care for special-needs dependants at home versus paying to institutionalize them.

This is presented on behalf of Connie Harder, Henry Hildebrand, Irene Peters, Ernest Peters and others.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Red River College English Language Training Centre 19 students under the direction of Ms. Barb McCandless. This school is situated in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Sale).

Also in the public gallery we have from Bemidji State University 19 university students under the direction of Mr. Tom Beech.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

SARS Management Plan

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans want to know if this Government is ready to act should the SARS virus strike in this province. I want to commend health care professionals, especially those at St. Boniface Hospital, for their commitment, compassion and professionalism dealing with what they thought could be a SARS case last month.

Yesterday, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) said he would table information about SARS indicating what precautions health care professionals have been advised of to deal with the possible spread of SARS in Manitoba. All Manitobans and health care professionals deserve to know what steps their Government is taking to deal with SARS should cases appear in Manitoba. Can the First Minister explain to Manitobans why his Health Minister has not provided the information he promised to table in the House about this very serious issue? Why has he not made a ministerial statement?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I will table material from the Chief Medical Officer. There are three sets of correspondence from the Chief Medical Officer, Doctor Kettner. I would also like to congratulate the leadership of Doctor Kettner, the Health Department and the front-line medical staff on the issue.

The first potential situation with SARS was handled following the protocol. Proper procedures were utilized by the front-line medical staff and the professional staff at the St. Boniface situation. We certainly know that people are alerted to the issue of SARS. We have an excellent Chief Medical Officer. I also want to thank the Department of Health and the Chief Medical Officer for the work on other areas of vulnerability for the citizens, some of their work over the years on flu prevention, meningitis work.

* (13:40)

Just recently there was a national analysis of how prepared public health officials were for the

West Nile disease, Mr. Speaker. It was identified that Manitoba was the only province in Canada that was prepared and had a strategy in the summer of 2002 and legislation that was brought in and introduced in 2001 to deal with the emerging health care crisis. I have tabled the material for the member.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue. What is troubling, I think, is the fact that we have heard from health care professionals who have had difficulty getting information from the employer and his union about how to keep his family and his friends safe from SARS should he become a carrier. This Health Minister (Mr. Chomiak) should not leave health care workers and all Manitobans in the dark on this very serious issue.

Why is it that the minister or the First Minister has not ensured that all those people have the appropriate information? Why the delay?

Mr. Doer: One would hope that a serious issue like SARS is not going to become a partisan issue. We should all be working together.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard we have tabled material to the member opposite dating back to March 27, 28 and previous to that. If there are workers that feel the material that was circulated by the Chief Medical Officer has not been received by them or not properly circulated, I would entertain any specifics from the member opposite. I am meeting with the Chief Medical Officer myself later today on another matter of public health policy, and I would pass that on to him.

Mr. Murray: Again, this is a very serious issue. The fact of life is that when health care workers are coming forward because they are concerned they are not getting the information and they feel they have to raise it through members of the Legislature to challenge the Government where the information is coming from, I think that is unfortunate for those health care workers in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and that is the issue.

I say this is a very serious issue. We know from reports in the media that there are some issues they are dealing with in Toronto. We understand that, but I wondered if the First

Minister can tell this House: We understand that he has nearly drained the rainy day fund. I just wondered if the First Minister has done any research into what kind of effect the SARS outbreak might have in the event that it happens in Manitoba, what effect it might have on the Manitoba economy.

Mr. Doer: Dealing with the first statement made by the member opposite, the amount of money in the rainy day fund, I believe, was 264 when we came into office, with a \$185-million drain the two years previous to our election. I believe now it stands at \$145 million. Secondly, the capital commitments made by members opposite, the cancellation of those capital commitments, you will find—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are 18 isolation rooms right now and there are isolation rooms that were planned in the Brandon General Hospital and not completed because the construction was not completed. Those plans are almost completed.

There is a record number of nurses graduating, our highest number of nurses graduating tomorrow from the Faculty of Nursing at any time in 60 years. We have more doctors today than we had in 1999. I would again say to all of us who are dealing with our constituents here in Manitoba that vigilance is extremely important.

I really believe it is important for all of us to know the symptoms of the SARS disease and virus. All of us must continually inform each other and the people of Manitoba take the leadership from our excellent and I say excellent public health leadership in Manitoba. Doctor Kettner, in my view, is one of the best in Canada in terms of a public health officer, and I am proud that he is working for Manitoba. Whatever advice he has to me or, I would suggest, to members opposite, we should follow that advice. Thank you very much.

* (13:45)

SARS Management Plan

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I find the response from the First Minister very,

very disappointing and disconcerting to Manitobans who have the right to know all of the information that is out there. For the First Minister to table information of which the latest date is March 28 I find totally unacceptable. The minister knows there has been lots of change. This is ongoing. *[interjection]* Yes, on the 28th of March. For example, we see in Ontario, health care professionals are double-gowning, they are double-gloving. Has that been changed? Why do we only have information dated March 28? This is a fluid situation. Should the protocols not be updated? Do not Manitobans have the right to know the changes that are going on? For example, what are we doing at the airports? What are we going to do? The onus is on this minister to provide all Manitobans with detailed information on what protocols need to take place. I would ask the minister to provide us—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if you could kindly remind the member to put his question. In fact, I think I might have heard three questions in the rambling. Would you please remind him of his obligations under the rules in *Beauchesne*? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on the same point of order?

Mr. Loewen: Yes, on the same point of order. All this could have been avoided if the minister would have had the common courtesy to have a ministerial statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before making a ruling, I would like to, once again, remind all honourable members, when rising on a point of order, it is to point out to the Speaker the breach of a rule or departure from practices of the House or the use of unparliamentary language. Points of order are not to be used for debating.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to

take this opportunity to remind all honourable members, according to *Beauchesne* Citation 492, a preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. I ask the honourable member to please put your question.

* * *

Mr. Loewen: I would ask the Minister of Health if he would inform us today of the latest detailed plans that he can provide to Manitobans, to front-line health care workers on how they should react should this province suffer from an infection of SARS.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would urge Manitobans is not to take the advice of the Member for Fort Whyte. That would be very cautious because he has been inflammatory and inaccurate in a number of his statements. On March 18, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued an advisory to all emergency departments about the signs, symptoms and protocols concerning emergency departments for SARS, very far in advance of any other and most jurisdictions. I might add that, subsequent to that, a notice and protocol went out to all first providers outlining the protocol, and subsequently on March 28 another control measure notification was sent out to all providers: triage, nurses, receptionists, primary care providers and others who may have initial face-to-face contact with patients presenting with symptoms. In addition, letters went out to all family physicians and, in addition, there have almost been daily press conferences between the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the public. I suggest to the public that they listen to the Chief Medical Officer of Health and not the Member for Fort Whyte.

* (13:50)

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, what we are asking for is for the minister to show some political leadership. I would ask the minister if he does not agree that there should be updates to the medical protocols, given what we have seen in Ontario where they have been advised to wear masks, where they are double-gowning, where they are double-gloving, because this situation is very, very fluid. This infection is travelling at a

rapid rate of speed. We know already that it has a higher incidence of death in 25-to-40-year-olds than the 1918-1919 flu. I would ask this minister if he would be so kind as to update the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Chomiak: With respect to the double-gowning, the double-gowning was a recommendation by Centers for Disease Control from Atlanta to front-line clinical workers undertaking clinical work in a clinical setting for a severely compromised SARS patient. That was the question with respect to that. There is also further information that is being provided with respect to the Ontario outbreak.

The member in some of the statistics he is choosing I think is not being helpful to the situation. We will provide the member and any members that want briefing on this information. I might point out to the member, that to this point, there has not been widespread community infection. I just came off a conference call with all ministers of Health, Liberal ministers of Health, Conservative ministers of Health, and I provided an extensive briefing at 5:30 p.m. yesterday to the reporters and, through them, to the public to assure them of the latest information that has been provided. In addition, Doctor Kettner was available after.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I would then ask the minister if he is willing to be so forthcoming with information, if he recognizes what a serious issue this is and how all members of this Legislature need to convey this information to our constituents. Why then when I phoned this morning and asked for a briefing was I told by his staff that it could not happen before next Wednesday at the absolute earliest? Does he not recognize we need to look after this today?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I advised my staff to set up a meeting with Dr. Joel Kettner as soon as possible. I am glad that, after the SARS outbreak that has been going on for a month, I finally heard from the member from Fort Whyte requesting a briefing.

I might add I provided one briefing with respect to meningitis, and the former critic then ran out and did a press release that was totally inaccurate. Notwithstanding that, I am totally

prepared as soon as possible to provide a briefing to members opposite with respect to SARS, if only to prevent them from going around and giving misinformation which has been their pattern in the past.

Cardiac Surgery Program Review

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, nine patients have died in Manitoba waiting for cardiac surgery under this Minister of Health's watch. I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he can tell us why he did not heed my first warning in December 2001 that the cardiac surgery program was in trouble and offer to send patients out of province for surgery before they started to die.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, just prior to that, the Member for Lac du Bonnet had advised me both in this House and otherwise that we should send all cardiac patients to Health Sciences Centre, which was not appropriate. That was, as usual, typical advice.

I might advise that we, two years ago, advised the health authorities and the health authorities through their surgeons, and sent letters to all of the surgeons saying that if they felt any of their patients were in clinical danger, they have the authority to go out of province.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he can tell us why he did not heed my second warning last summer and order an external review of the program before three more patients died.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, at that time the member was talking about waiting lists and matters of that kind.

An Honourable Member: No, I was not.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the member will get her chance to try to dig herself out of it.

At that time, in September of last year, during the summer of last year, I said wait until the statistics come out. The statistics came out in September of all cross-Canada comparisons of

rates of cardiac surgery which showed that Manitoba compared favourably with other provinces. Then there was not a peep, not a word from members opposite when we provided that information, which was cross-Canada comparisons, to the entire Legislature. It was tabled in the Legislature. It was provided and members opposite did not say a peep, and we did provide that opportunity to them.

* (13:55)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this Minister of Health how he can sleep at night knowing that his negligence in not taking action earlier, after getting two warnings from me, has contributed to the death of these patients in Manitoba. This was a ticking time bomb and he did nothing.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, in the mid-1990s, one baby died, two babies died, three babies died, four babies died, five babies died, twelve babies died during children's heart surgery and there was no inquest. When the first light of information came to us about problems in the cardiac program, not only did we offer to send, in addition to sending patients out the additional funding, we put in an outside review. We reviewed the case, we brought in extra surgeons, and it has been recognized that we have done all that we could do.

I might add that the surgeon who came in from Nova Scotia to look at the situation said not only were our waiting lists not inappropriate but they were longer in the jurisdiction he came from than they are here, and that is public.

Mr. Speaker, I tell members I never blamed any ministers then for the 12 baby deaths. I think they should be more careful and appropriate when dealing with public health and dealing with this matter.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, answers from the minister that involve recounting deaths in Ontario and baby deaths does little to console the loved ones of the nine people who died on the waiting list due to his negligence.

Cardiac Surgery Program Review

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): On June 27, 2000, this minister, in his press release,

announced that he was going to dedicate \$20 million to, and I quote: "Develop one of the best cardiovascular care programs in the country." He went on to say there would be a general strengthening of our overall heart care program in Manitoba. This was in 2000.

I would ask the minister if nine people dying while waiting for heart surgery, does that fit his definition of providing the best cardiovascular care in the country.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that press conference was a five-year plan of \$20 million to develop the heart care program that had been left in such disrepair when we came into office. We are halfway through it; a number of elements are already in place. There is more to come in place, and when Doctor Koshal makes his final recommendation in August, we will continue along that path to having one of the best cardiovascular programs in the entire country.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, how many more people have to die before you finish? I would ask the minister if he can explain to Manitobans and particularly to the families of the loved ones, the loved ones of the nine individuals who died as a consequence of his mismanagement, why did the member not take action. Why did he not heed the warnings from the member from Charleswood when she gave him those warnings in December 2001? Why did he not listen to Doctor Peachell who told him in 2001, and I quote: "His patients could die if they do not get surgery?" Why did he not act?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, that is why, for the first time in the history of the province, two years ago we wrote to the surgeons and said if your patients are in any compromised situation you can go out of province. Never before done. We did that with cancer surgery and we—

An Honourable Member: That is not true.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Honourable Member: That is a lie.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Honourable Member: You are lying.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is getting very difficult to hear the questions and the answers. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members because I need to hear the questions and I need to hear the answers in case there is departure from the rules or unparliamentary language, which I am sure that each and every member in this House expects me to make a ruling on. If something happens and I do not hear it, how can I make a ruling? So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I find it very curious that the member wants to talk about statistics and waiting on statistics. The waiting list for heart surgery is now lower than it was when we came into office when those members controlled the Government for 11 lean, mean years.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Could I please once again ask the co-operation of all honourable members so that we will be able to hear the person that has the floor. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps referring to a letter that he wrote to the doctors, and we wonder if we could get a copy of the letter seeing as he referred to it a number of times.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker. That letter has been made public.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, the letter that the minister was quoting from—[interjection]

The rules of our House are that if it is a signed personal letter that a member is quoting

from, then we could request to table it, but if a member is not quoting from a letter, so the honourable Official Opposition House Leader does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, the letter may have been sent, but why did the minister stand in the way and why, at December 22, 2001, had no patients left Manitoba, a year after that letter was sent? I would ask the minister if the solutions that you are talking about are so straightforward and if they were so simple, then why the heck did you not implement them in 2000 and save nine families from having to attend the funerals of a loved one? Why did you not do it then?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, we have done and we will continue to do everything in our power to try to provide the best form of health care for all Manitobans. We have acted diligently. We have acted quickly on every single matter that has been raised. Manitobans know that. They can judge us with respect to the record of our health care and what we have provided. They will note that the waiting list for cardiac surgery is lower now than when members opposite were in power and that speaks volumes.

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Fort Whyte, on a new question?

Mr. Loewen: On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once again this minister points the finger of blame here, there and everywhere. It is always somebody else's fault. Now we hear this minister attempting to blame the surgeons for not sending people out of the province. He said it himself. He sent the letter two years ago. No one has taken advantage of it and people were dying. I would ask the minister: Why did you not take this issue seriously? Why did you not take action? Why did you sit idly by as nine people died?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable Minister of Health to respond to the question I would like to remind all honourable members, when putting a question or answering a question it is to be put through the Chair.

Mr. Chomiak: The member forgets about the critical issue. In fact I did several media reports

and I think I have mentioned it several times in this House that when the members opposite fired a thousand nurses and they were forced to leave the province, we were short nurses. Not only that, we were graduating 200 nurses a year compared to now 600 nurses a year. That is why there was big shortages.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. All too often this minister keeps producing this lie of a thousand people fired. It has been proven wrong in the media that no thousand people were fired. We only wish this minister would stop lying. This is an issue around the lives of nine people who have died.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable Minister of Health, I would just like to remind the honourable Official Opposition House Leader that when dealing with a member, all members are honourable members and the word that the minister was "lying" is unacceptable practice in this House.

Mr. Laurendeau: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I did not say deliberately lying.

Mr. Speaker: When using the words "lie," "lying," it provokes reactions in the House that are not positive for this institution.

Mr. Laurendeau: I take back the "lying." It is factually incorrect.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for that.

Now I will recognize the honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have tabled in the House a report that has been used by members opposite that says and quotes a

thousand nurses were fired during the Tory years. I have tabled that over and over and over again and I will provide it again when I have opportunity for a copy to give to the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not going to allow points of order to be used for debate when members are rising. I have heard enough to make a ruling.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable ministers that *Beauchesne* 417: Answers to questions should be brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and to not provoke debate.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I ask the honourable minister to conclude his comments.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, this was not and is not an attempt to blame anybody. The fact is that a letter went out to point out that because of the nursing shortages and the lack of critical care beds, it was difficult to do all of the surgeries and people were advised to contact the wait list co-ordinator to deal with that. I might add that before 1999, lists of waits were not kept so it is very difficult to do comparisons to pre-'99.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I am appalled that this minister would think that his answer of accusing people of firing nurses would be any consolation to people who have watched their loved ones die on the waiting list.

I would ask this minister: Why did he not jump in sooner? Why did he not do something when it became obvious that the number of heart surgeons had dropped from eight to five, that the number of cardiac surgeries had dropped from 1400 to under 1200? Why did he not act? Why did he sit and do nothing?

Mr. Chomiak: First off, Mr. Speaker, we have asked for an outside review of independent expert Doctor Koshal from Alberta, who was very concerned about this becoming a political

football, but wants to come in and do a good job and deal with recommendations. If memory serves me correctly, I was not the Minister of Health when members opposite were in power when the surgeries dropped from 1400.

Mr. Loewen: I would ask the minister to focus on this issue and take it seriously. If in fact the solutions are as easy as he says, an external review bringing in doctors from out of province, why did he sit idly by? He owes this explanation to the people of Manitoba, he owes it to the loved ones of the people that died on the waiting list.

Why did he sit by and do nothing? When is he going to take responsibility for his lack of action and stand up and admit the problem lies with him?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, when the recommendations came out from the 12 baby deaths, the Sinclair inquiry, the entire approach of health care changed in this province, and it changed for the better. It changed to recognizing error, to putting in place systems.

Let me give you an example. There were problems with the cardiac surgeon, and instantly the system went into place. In this House members opposite wanted me to hire back the cardiac surgeon. They yelled at me, they asked me to hire back the cardiac surgeon. We did an external review. That external review said with that cardiac surgeon all procedures had been followed.

We now identify mistakes, we look at errors, we try to fix them, we try to improve the system. I am sorry that that kind of information did work in the nineties. I am sorry that we did not keep track of people that died on the waiting lists in the nineties, but it is a different era now. We keep track, we follow up and we do what we can every single day.

*(14:10)

Budget Reporting Process

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has asked for clear financial reporting and has said of the Minister

of Finance, as long as the Government continues to focus on a Budget prepared on a basis different than most other governments in Canada, the Legislature and the citizens of Manitoba will be hindered in their ability to hold the Government of the day accountable for its management of public money.

I ask the Minister of Finance why he continues to present a Budget that is different from most other governments in Canada and why he reports a Budget as being in surplus when it is really a Budget in deficit. Why are the numbers, as one might say, fudged?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): The Budget we presented was a balanced budget under the law of the Province of Manitoba. In addition, we are the first government in the history of the Province to also present a summary Budget. We have followed more accurate reporting than any time in the history of the Province.

Half of the provinces use a summary budget approach; the remaining half of the provinces use another approach. So it is a methodology that is being used equally by two different parts of the country. Each part is doing it a different way. The point is that the balanced budget legislation in Manitoba is considered among the most stringent in North America. It is one of the few pieces of legislation that requires a debt repayment before you balance. I can assure you that the information we provided meets all the tests of the law of this province plus the summary Budget reported for the first time ever in the last two years.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Ma question supplémentaire au ministre des Finances : je demande au ministre pourquoi il nous donne un budget au surplus quand en réalité c'est un budget en déficit.

Translation

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): *My supplementary question to the Minister of Finance: I ask the Minister why he is giving us a surplus Budget when in reality this is a deficit Budget.*

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Comme j'ai expliqué avant, notre budget en

vertu de la législation de cette province, est équilibré comme prévu avant le budget, comme on a fait dans les quatre derniers budgets. Chaque année on a équilibré le budget et chaque année on a donné plus d'information que jamais dans l'histoire de cette province. On a mis devant le public notre budget équilibré et aussi un sommaire du budget avec tous les organismes gouvernementaux inclus avec un plan très clair pour l'avenir, pour éliminer la dette causée par le fait que l'ancien gouvernement, en fait il n'y a aucun gouvernement pendant les 40 dernières années qui a mis en place un plan pour les pensions publiques dans cette province.

Translation

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): *As I explained earlier, our Budget, under the legislation of this province, is balanced as planned prior to the Budget, as we did in the last four budgets. Each year we have balanced the Budget and each year we have provided more information than has ever been provided in the history of this province. We have put before the public our balanced Budget as well as a summary Budget with all the government agencies included and with a very clear plan for the future to retire the debt caused by the fact that the former Government, in fact no government in the last 40 years, put into place a plan for the public pensions of this province.*

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary is to the minister. I ask the minister: Why does he continue to employ, as the Auditor General says, a device, a problem that was invented by the previous administration? Why does the Minister of Finance not listen to the Auditor General when the Auditor General says that the Government should be talking about real numbers and the actual deficit or surplus in any given year rather than the makeshift, murky numbers that the Government is employing.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, first of all, we promised to balance the Budget under the existing balanced-budget legislation in Manitoba. That balanced-budget legislation included the operating losses and surpluses in the operating sections of the Government. It also included, quite clearly, the Crown corporations and excluded the pension

liability that was developed and generated 40 years ago. We, of course, knew that it was going to take a number of years to correct a problem created 40 years ago.

I would say to the member opposite he only has to look at the Moody's independent report that upgrades the credit rating in Manitoba because of the performance of this Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was walking around with a little prop after the Budget was presented just a couple of days ago. The only budgets I can remember from any member in this House was members opposite when he was a Liberal member promised to abolish the GST in 1993. That is why he was defeated in 1997.

We have kept all our financial promises, Mr. Speaker.

Nursing Profession Education and Training

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): My question is for the Minister of Health. Given the important role that nurses play in our health care system today, could the minister update our colleagues in the House today in regard to the recent developments in regard to training nurses?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that this year over 600 nurses will graduate in this province, which puts us back to the historical levels that used to be in place before the 10 dark years, as quoted by the president of the MMA, of the Tory years. Tomorrow, the largest graduating class in the history of the Faculty of Nursing will occur at the Faculty of Nursing, the largest graduating class ever.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with nurses, doctors and other professionals to train and develop more because that has been the underpinning of our system and our policy over the last three years, to rebuild the human infrastructure that was allowed to deteriorate so unfortunately during the 1990s.

Sunrise School Division Funding—Collective Agreements

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, during Question Period, I

asked the Minister of Education about the strike at Sunrise School Division. I pointed out to him that in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on April 19, it reported that the Government came up with cash to end the strike at Sunrise School Division. To say the least, I was extremely disappointed at his response when he replied wait until the Estimates, which, of course, as we all know, may be after the next election.

I ask this minister again, and all Manitobans are waiting for his response including those in the press gallery today: Can he provide this House with information about the amount of money which, by the way, is rumoured to be in the neighbourhood of a million dollars that he provided to the Sunrise School Division and over what period of time?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth): Number one, Mr. Speaker, we stand with the parents and with the students, and we are very, very pleased to see that the Sunrise labour dispute has been solved, hopefully.

I just want to say that the member opposite may deal in rumour and innuendo, but the fact of the matter is we provided, for example, \$50 per student for amalgamated school divisions, which is about \$3.6 million overall.

So, without dealing with rumour and innuendo, this Government has supported the amalgamated division process, and we are very, very proud of that.

Mr. Hawranik: Will the minister acknowledge that \$50 per student in Sunrise School Division for amalgamation costs raises only \$250,000 over three years, and yet salary harmonization in Sunrise School Division will cost upwards of one and a half million dollars over three years, and that cost will probably be borne by the property taxpayers in Sunrise, not by the province as a whole.

Will he make a commitment to ensure that the taxpayers of the province as a whole cover that cost?

* (14:20)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Agassiz School Division, between 1990 and

1999, had a \$343 tax increase because of cut-back after cutback after offload after offload.

You talk to the property taxpayers in the Agassiz-Lac du Bonnet school division with our ESL changes, and they are much further ahead with this Minister of Education as opposed to members opposite.

Sunrise School Division Amalgamation Costs

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

Mr. Hawranik: On April 19, in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, it was reported that the Manitoba school trustees have been warning the NDP for the past two years that harmonizing contracts after forcing amalgamation would hit taxpayers hard. Now we are seeing the real effects of forced amalgamation, an increase of 8.46 percent in the school mill rate in Sunrise School Division and, on top of that, provincial money flowing to help with salary harmonization.

Would the minister not agree that, because the Province is responsible for forcibly amalgamating the Sunrise School Division, the Province should be responsible for all the amalgamation costs and not the taxpayers of Sunrise School Division?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): For members opposite to feign interest in property taxpayers and their education bill, as a former premier once stated, is like expecting a buzzard to say grace before meals. The average—[interjection] You cannot handle the truth.

The average tax increase—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would just like to remind all honourable members and I am sure all honourable members know the rule about exhibits in the House. I would just like to ask for the cooperation of all honourable members.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite quoted statistics in terms of increases. The

average increase of school divisions from 1990 to 1999 with the cutbacks in the operating grants to the school divisions, the reduction in the property tax credit and not one cent move on the ESL, the average increase was 65.6 percent. That is their record.

The average decrease with the \$80 million more directly to taxpayers that we are putting into school divisions is a minus 7.4 percent. We are delighted to talk our record over your record any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Dakota Collegiate Black and Gold Society

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a group of Dakota Collegiate high school students who—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Can we have a little decorum in the House. The honourable Member for St. Vital has the floor for Members' Statements, and it is very, very difficult to hear.

Ms. Allan: I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a group of Dakota Collegiate high school students who do excellent volunteer work in my constituency, the Black and Gold Society. These young people work hard to host community events that bring seniors, teens, young children and their parents together.

In December, the Black and Gold Society held its second annual Christmas party for kindergarten and Grade 1 students at Lavallee, Victor Mager and Victor Wyatt Schools. With the guidance of two school community liaison co-ordinators, Leslie Later and Linda Watson, and with support from Youth Connections, 63 student volunteers decorated the cafeteria, organized games and prepared and served food for 94 children. These hardworking students also raised funds by selling Christmas trees from a lot at the school's tennis court.

Mr. Speaker, I was also pleased to see the members of the Black and Gold Society work with Dakota's parent council to present their annual seniors' evening. Approximately 200 seniors attended and were treated to music by the school's band and choir, scenes from the production of Grease, and refreshments. The student volunteers received handmade mitts, headbands and toques that some of seniors had knitted for them.

Also, the students have gone to the seniors' homes to help set up e-mail accounts and computers and visit with them for an evening.

What is remarkable about this group is that membership has grown significantly in the five years since it was created, from 15 to this year's record of 94.

Mr. Speaker, these youth are acquiring a wonderful learning experience. They will gain valuable leadership skills and a deeper understanding of society. St. Vital is fortunate to have dedicated volunteers like this.

I would like to congratulate everybody at the collegiate: the students, the staff and the parents for organizing these wonderful events. It is great to see the members of the Black and Gold Society set such a high standard and display the importance of giving something back to their community.

Mennonite Collegiate Institute Theatre

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exciting new project in my constituency that has been anticipated by many people in the Gretna area for quite some time.

Mr. Speaker, Mennonite Collegiate Institute will soon begin work on a new state-of-the-art performing arts centre. The plans of this new \$2.1-million, 455-seat theatre were recently presented to the public at the MCI's annual fundraising banquet. The design for this facility is the creation of the MCI alumnus architect Raymond S.C. Wan.

Mr. Speaker, features of this new performing arts centre include a main entrance with 28-

foot-high ceilings and a 28-foot-high wall of glass at the end of the foyer, which will overlook the grounds of the school. In addition, the north wall of the foyer is also planned to house a heritage gallery where photos, artwork and other heritage artifacts that represent the culture and history of the region will be on display.

Undoubtedly, the performances that will take place in this new centre will be second to none. The theatre plans include a seating area with clear sight lines from all areas and an area in front of the stage that will feature an orchestra pit to accommodate the musicians.

To ensure the acoustics are excellent, the design committee, in addition to the drawing of the local expertise, will consult with an acoustical company to ensure that the architectural work is superior in regard to sound. A spacious backstage area will feature full dressing rooms which will be a welcome change from the cramped quarters that the participants in school productions had previously in their accommodations. Another initiative will see the transformation of an older classroom at the school into a new workshop where stages can be set and built.

Mr. Speaker, the new performing arts centre at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute will give MCI students and community residents an opportunity to enjoy a remarkable facility in which they can develop and display their artistic talents. I would like to congratulate the MCI on their successful efforts to raise funds for the project and to wish them all the best in the future. May they enjoy their facility forever.

River East Collegiate Jazz Band

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): I rise to recognize the River East Collegiate Senior Jazz Band for being invited to participate in the 8th Annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition.

The River East Collegiate Senior Jazz Band was one of 133 schools across Canada, the United States and Australia to submit tapes for adjudication. The top 15 bands are invited to a final competition at the Lincoln Centre for Performing Arts in New York City. River East

Collegiate Senior Jazz Band was the only Canadian school to qualify for this honour. In fact, the River East Collegiate Senior Jazz Band is the first Canadian ensemble to reach the final of this international contest.

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity for students to practise and play with the leading jazz musicians and to visit and experience the dynamic and exciting cultural and historical sights of New York City.

I want to recognize the school and students for this achievement. I also want to recognize Jeff Kula, the music director at River East Collegiate, for his dedication, hard work and leadership in music. Mr. Kula has a strong music program at the collegiate, which is appreciated and supported by students, parents and community. I commend him for his good work.

The three-day music festival begins May 17 with workshops, rehearsals, a banquet dinner and jam sessions with members of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. On the last night of competition, the top three bands will perform alone with the well-known Wynton Marsalis as soloist.

Mr. Speaker, as a former teacher of River East Collegiate, I am proud to recognize this achievement. River East Collegiate has always been recognized for its success in sports, arts and academics. This achievement is a continuation of its high standards in education. Thank you.

* (14:30)

Provincial Parks-Parking Fines

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, as the warm weather returns, people will soon be visiting our provincial parks in droves. Let this be a warning to them. Have your parking permit or be prepared to pay. I was shocked to learn that fines collected for parking tickets issued in Manitoba provincial parks has jumped from \$444 in 1998-1999 fiscal year to a staggering \$32,059.61 that has been collected, and the fiscal year has not even been concluded. That is to March 14 of this year.

Similarly, the number of parking tickets issued by this Government has skyrocketed to

1090 in the same period compared to only 10 in the fiscal year 1998-1999. Purely and simply, this is another tax grab. This is all about government that is so hard up with money that it is turning its sights on our provincial park visitors. Some have complained that they were not even given an opportunity to purchase a parking permit because there was no one at the gate whom they could buy it from.

Mr. Speaker, the practice of issuing hundreds of parking tickets to unsuspecting park visitors creates a very negative perception of our park system. I am sure that some of the people who have been ticketed are wondering what truly friendly Manitoba really means. I also wonder as to whether they will ever return to some of our provincial parks.

I wonder why the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Ashton) is having his staff ticket park visitors who have not even been given clear direction as to where to buy a park pass. Does he believe that this is a reasonable policy? Does he believe that this type of ticketing practice sends the right message to park visitors? I really, truly wonder also what this does to the morale of our conservation officers. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Junior Achievement Program

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an organization which brings education, labour, business in the community together to assist Manitoba's youth. Junior Achievement of Manitoba is an organization which introduces students to the basic economics, the advantage of staying in school, basics of running businesses and safety on the workplace. It is offered to students from Grade 4 to Grade 12 in many schools. Programs are offered throughout the province including the North, rural Manitoba, Winnipeg and a new Franco-Manitoban initiative.

I was involved in initiating the Junior Achievement Program in the North while working as an administrator with Frontier School Division seven years ago. Now it has expanded to most communities in the North and the entire province. Programs are offered in a hundred rural communities throughout the North and

many in the city of Winnipeg. Over a hundred economics of staying in school programs will be offered this year.

This program gets Grade 9 students to realize the importance of staying in school and getting a good education. Mr. Speaker, 180 students will be participating in the Business Game at the upcoming Rural Forum in Brandon. Most of the students participating will be from rural areas, including our Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, this game teaches some of the business fundamentals and how to run a business. Recently a number of senior high students competed for provincial honours in the company program awards. These senior high students have started businesses, produced goods and services and run a business to start up a company. Excellent business skills and life skills are learned in this activity. A new partnership with Workers of Tomorrow will provide workplace safety and health as it relates to young workers.

Mr. Speaker, Junior Achievement is an organization which works co-operatively with business, education, labour and the community to teach skills and attitudes that are important to the future of our province. I have been proud to serve on the board for the last five years and with the number of people who are committed to the betterment of youth. I would like to commend the staff and volunteers who commit thousands of hours to ensure the continued success of the program. I would also like to invite all people to go to the annual business dinner tonight at the Fairmont. Thank you very much.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Third Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resumed debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition and the debate remains open.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the recent Budget

presented Tuesday by the Minister of Finance. I will begin with some comments from January by the Auditor General on the practices of the Government and the Minister of Finance in reporting the Budget. The Auditor General criticized the NDP government in January for continuing to employ certain accounting practices used by the previous Tory government which obscure the Province's true financial performance. Mr. Singleton, the Auditor General, goes on to say this is a problem which was invented by the previous administration, continued by the current administration, and he admonishes the Government to talk about real numbers and the actual deficit or surplus in any given year.

I want to continue with more words from the Auditor General. The Auditor General had asked for clear financial reporting in this year's Budget. He said that as long as the Government continues to focus on a Budget prepared on a basis different than most other governments in Canada, the Legislature and the citizens of Manitoba will be hindered in their ability to hold the government of the day accountable for its management of public monies.

What the Minister of Finance has done this year in tabling the Budget is continue the flawed practice of the last several years, a practice which hinders the public and the members of the Legislature from fully understanding the books and the balance, whether it be surplus or deficit that the Government is presenting to the people of Manitoba. Clearly we should have had better. Clearly we should have had some changes in the way that Budget was approached so that we could get a picture of the real numbers rather than the numbers which were not presented as clearly as they should have been. From the way that the Minister of Finance has taken money from the rainy day fund and the way that he has managed the books, it is likely that this is really a Budget in deficit rather than a Budget in surplus. It is clearly time for better accounting and it is time that the Minister of Finance and the Government are more honest with the people of Manitoba as to what the real numbers are.

One of the major changes in this year's Budget was the addition of a large amount of new money for health care. This is welcome by

the people of Manitoba because we have recognized for some time that there were major problems in the health care system and in the way that the health care system in Manitoba was being managed by the present Government. Indeed, one of the extraordinary things about the last several years has been that time and time again the Government has overspent its allocation for health care by tens of millions of dollars. Three years ago this was more than \$50 million. Two years ago it was more than \$50 million. This year, in the third quarter account, it is projected that this year's, that is, the one we have just completed which ended March 31, 2003, that the health care budget will have been overspent once more, this time by about \$56 million.

It should be stated that these over-expenditures come after large increments in health care spending in each of these years. Of course, one has to wonder this time around, with the addition of \$164 million from the federal government money, additional monies, \$7 million from smoking and the normal increment from year to year, whether in fact the Government will again overspend its budget because it has not managed to put in place a responsible way for managing the budget for health care.

*(14:40)

There is a big question which is left here. After having big mistakes in the way that the Budget was managed for three years in a row, the Finance Minister fails to provide any details of how he will provide any better or more effective management of the health care Budget this year. It is a sad day that we did not get at least that information.

When the federal government agreed last year to provide some substantial additional monies in health care, there was really a quid pro quo, an understanding that in reply or in response to getting the large amount of additional federal money for health care to improve the system that the Government would listen carefully to the large number of recommendations in the reports of Romanow and the reports of Kirby. Those reports provided for major reforms to the health care system, reforms that would have changed the approach to the health

care system to a much more patient-focussed and service-focussed system.

What has happened? This Government has taken the extra money, but there is no evidence that it plans to deliver the quid pro quo, to deliver the major reforms that are needed to make it a more patient-focussed and a more service-focussed system. Sad for the people of Manitoba that we have not had the kind of changes that we really need but rather the government of the day, the NDP government, is just putting the money into more of the same rather than really making the necessary changes to the system.

Let us take another example of one of the recommendations. Principle 20 in the Kirby Report says very clearly that there should be care guarantees. The federal government should provide a lot more money. The federal government did.

The Province should provide the care guarantees to guarantee that people should have access to care, whether it be physician care to surgical procedures to diagnostic tests, within a clearly defined length of time and that the Province should be able to offer that guarantee to citizens of Manitoba as part of the quid pro quo of receiving the additional federal health care expenditures.

But there is no evidence that there is, in a meaningful way, any presentation of such a care guarantee as we should have expected. There was not, as we should have expected in this Budget, the deliverables that should have been delivered by the Province in response to the major increment of financing from the federal government. The federal government on this occasion did its part, but the NDP government has failed miserably to deliver to Manitobans what should have been delivered in this Budget, a clear commitment, a clear plan to make the major reforms that are needed to the health care system. There was no plan. That is the unfortunate circumstance around this Budget. It is a government which is proceeding to spend without a plan to change things, to improve things in ways that will make the kind of a forward thinking approach which is more patient

and service oriented than we have had to date in this province.

One of the major issues of today is the fact that we have many people from Manitoba going to other provinces and far fewer coming from other provinces to Manitoba. We are a net exporter of people to other provinces. It is particularly young people and it is particularly people who graduate from post-secondary education institutions and then go because they do not see the opportunities, they do not see the potential, they do not see that this province, our province of Manitoba is competing for the hearts and minds of young people and providing the kind of competitive fiscal environment, the kind of opportunities for exciting and challenging employment and rewarding employment both financially and from a point of view of being able to get some exciting things done.

What we should have expected from this Government was a focussed plan to make Manitoba much more attractive for young people so that we would be attracting young people instead of exporting young people. Young people, after all, are the most important resource of this province. They are our future. They are what we want to build our future economy, our future health care system, the future of this province on. If we continue to export people as we have been doing we are exporting our future instead of building and attracting a future here because we have made Manitoba an attractive place to be.

Let us start with the income taxes for young people who are at the most mobile point in their career who are looking at whether they are going to stay here or move to another province or who are in another province and looking at whether they are going to move to Manitoba or stay where they are. What we see is that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), for the middle-income earners, has made some very modest tinkering changes. The marginal tax rate has been changed from 14.9 percent down to 14 percent. Well, let us compare the tax rate for the same income tax bracket with people in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario. If we take the average of the other four provinces what we see is that the marginal tax rate is not 14.9 percent, it is not 14 percent, which is the target here, but it is 10.25

percent. It is almost 40 percent lower than we have in Manitoba.

This Government is not even trying to compete with the other provinces on either side of us. This Government seems to have given up. It is a sad day for Manitoba when we have a government which has given up, which does not even try to compete for the young people of Canada, to make Manitoba attractive and an attractive environment to be in. It is sad as well that the changes which were made were so modest in things like the co-operative education program, a positive step, but far too little to make the real change that is needed to make this province attractive for young people, an exciting place to be. We can no longer have a government with an economic policy which is just an education policy and which stops the day you graduate. We need a policy which links what you learn with what your employment opportunities are going to be in this province. We need a government which thinks a step beyond and a step beyond to make Manitoba attractive and make it a very attractive place for young people.

We also need a government which is going to look at the business environment, is going to create an environment where businesses are attracted here and businesses which are here will grow here and build here and employ young people and provide exciting career opportunities for people of all ages.

Sadly, this Government has done very little to change the business environment. As I visit people in the business community, one of the sad realities of the way the Government is structured, the tax system in this province, is that there is a payroll tax which when companies reach a certain size and they are starting to pay or look at paying payroll tax, they have a big incentive to moving people out of the province. It is a message through the tax system to business owners in this province: We are going to penalize you if you build in Manitoba; look at putting people elsewhere. So that is what the companies do. When they reach a certain size, they look to putting people in other provinces or in other countries rather than continuing to build in this province. What we need is to change the tax system so it is an incentive to grow and build here rather than an incentive to move people out of this province to other jurisdictions.

*(14:50)

It is a tax system which is set backwards, it is a tax system which needs to be turned around. We no longer need the backward-thinking approach of the NDP, we needed a forward-thinking Liberal approach, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, because this backward-thinking NDP government is not helping this province. We are moving backward instead of forward.

Let us look at one of the most important industries in this province, the agricultural industry. We have a government which is not even ready to partner with the federal government in providing farm safety net supports. We have a government which is not able to provide fairness in removing the education tax from farmland. We have a government which still penalizes the input by putting PST on farm input, business input when the Maritimes, when Saskatchewan, when Alberta have taken such taxes off the inputs of farmers.

When it comes to highways, maintenance and transportation, we have a situation where the Government is saying, well, we really are putting most of the fuel taxes into constructing and maintaining highways, but if you look carefully, there is a lot missing. As Chris Lorenc with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association has often pointed out, there is a lot less that actually gets to building and construction than there is actually raised in fuel tax because this Government run by the NDP party is a very inefficient government and does not deliver the dollars to where they really need to be.

In education, we have a rather odd circumstance where the NDP are taking and decreasing the provincial education levy which is there to provide equity around the province. They are moving toward a situation where they are taking off that provincial levy and the provincial support and providing for greater inequity. What a strange way for the NDP government to work. It is odd, but that is the reality of the circumstance.

This is a government which has decreased the Budget for sport. What an odd message in a world where we should increase healthy lifestyles, where we should increase fitness.

If the Budget was brought down on Earth Day, some Earth Day budget. True, there was some talk of Kyoto and ethanol production, but in a lot of areas, protected areas, in a lot of environmental areas, there were blanks. There were items missing which should have been there. This was an Earth Day budget. It was an opportunity to have a Budget which was well grounded, well grounded in good environmental approaches, and yet this Budget fell short.

I would comment as well that when it comes to ethanol, a careful look would suggest that the savings in greenhouse gases may be somewhat overstated, but we will leave that to another day.

One of the claims that the Government made was that the province of Manitoba had, I think, a level of research and development spending which was about 1.2 percent, as I recall. In reality, 1.2 percent of GDP. In reality, the level of research investment in this province has for too long been far too low. When you look at the standard which has been set by countries like Finland, by nations and jurisdictions which are leaders in the world in innovation and productivity and economic growth, but that standard is closer to 3 percent. This Government is missing the mark by a long, long way. We need to catch up, not fall further behind, and under this Government, we are falling further behind.

There is, I suggest, not only a shortfall in the way that the dollars are allocated, but it would appear that there is a real shortfall in the way that this Government is planning. We have seen this very clearly in their approach to building dams in the North and to the environmental reviews of these dams and the process that has to be taken to have a rigorous look at the justification, both economic and the impacts on the environment of dams like the Wuskwatim dam.

It was about 15 months ago, January 29 of 2002, that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) very proudly stood up and, with a lot of fanfare, announced that he was going to have a clear and rigorous process for reviewing the Wuskwatim dam so things could proceed in as quick as possible fashion because most of us in this province have the impression that these hydro-electric dams are a high priority for this Government.

While that process was laid out, step by step, it included a look by the Clean Environment Commission. It included hearings by the Public Utilities Board of the fiscal and economic aspects and it would progress then to licensing by the end of this year. And that process was proceeding fairly close to schedule up until only a few weeks ago. Everyone involved had the impression that the process was on track, was proceeding, was structured in a reasonable way to go through their review and undertake the due process that was needed to build the dam. Then, all of a sudden, a few weeks ago, out of the blue, the Minister of Science and Technology (Mr. Sale) said: Oh, no, we are going to change the regulatory process. Well, first of all, it was odd because he was Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro when, as a minister for Manitoba Hydro, he should not have been changing the regulatory framework. But what was more peculiar was that he could not clearly, to start with, enunciate the plan but then, when it did come out, that the plan was not to proceed on the time line that had been laid out, not to proceed on the plan for the Public Utilities Board that had been laid out, but to put the whole thing on hold for about six months and then to have a huge review by the Clean Environment Commission starting this fall.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that will delay this process by about six months and the dam and the construction and the process that was proceeding apace, was on track, all of a sudden now, is delayed. It really raises the question if the Government of the day cannot get its planning process in procedures in place, that people know where it is going and then go there, then it is a problem for all of us because, when you change your mind like that, when you dippy-doodle all around, you create unexpected delays, all sorts of obstacles that were not there to begin with, and we have to wonder if this Government, which has put a priority on building dams and hydro construction, really has a coherent idea of where it is going when it changes in midstream, 15 months after what it has announced, what its plans were. A strange way to operate a government, to change and dippy-doodle and circle around and turn around and do a total about-face and make such things much more complicated and probably much more expensive. We hear that this is going to be a huge clean environment

commission and very expensive clean environment commission because they will have to bring in and hire all sorts of economic experts and so on. So we really wonder.

Citizens of Manitoba and its legislators, this Government knows where it is going and the more we see, the more it is apparent that it does not know very well where it is going. So, when this Budget comes to a vote, I will be voting against this Budget because I do not believe that this Budget serves well the people of Manitoba, that this is a Budget which could have been much, much better than the Budget that we were presented.

* (15:00)

This is a Budget which could have provided the deliverables on the health care side. It is a Budget which could have provided the environment to attract young people and to attract business and build business in this province. It is a Budget which could have provided a clear understanding that we need to restore the public trust to the management of environmental issues. It is a Budget which could have provided a clear planning process that was understandable that we would not always have this question: Is this Government going to do an about-face?

It should be remembered that it was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) who stood up January 29, 2002, and said this is what is going to happen. And we are left now with the question: With all that was put on the table on Tuesday, whether, in fact, in the not too distant future we are going to have the Premier stand up and say we have done a total about-face; we are going in a different direction. I would suggest that is not very good planning. It does not give a lot of credibility to this Government. It does not give a lot of reliance in the trust of this Government that we should have had.

It is too bad. I think it could have been a much better Budget than it was. It could have been a budget which really delivered on a positive future for this province, but I am afraid it was a budget which says: We have got more money; we are going to do more of the same.

We are likely going to have more people from Manitoba moving out of the province

because the opportunities are not what they should be here. This Budget should have been different. This Budget should have been a positive budget which attracted people and business. This Budget should have set a standard in terms of the environment because it was delivered on Earth Day. This Budget should have been much, much better.

The people of Manitoba deserve much better. The people of Manitoba do not deserve the kind of murky mediocrity that this Budget delivered. The people of Manitoba deserve an excellent government, an excellent approach. The people of Manitoba deserve a Liberal government instead of this murky, mediocre NDP government that we have got. Thank you.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington): This MLA for Wellington starts with a basic proposition, which I state as follows: Through the maintenance of reasonably stable, effective and efficient national institutional environments in society and through the provision of collective commodities in nation states, the political community represented by the government is unable to maintain security, order and peace in the economic system of marketable exchanges of private goods and services among households, firms and other entities in ways that protect both the private interest and the public interest in the ongoing search for freedom and prosperity to satisfy human needs and wants.

Contained in our main proposition are the following ideas: that there are institutions, formal and informal in our society, in order that we may have security, order and peace; second, that the government provide collective commodities, what the Communists call "public goods," in the form of goods and services; and third, that because these institutions are able to promote economic security, order and peace, economic exchanges of goods and services in the private sector are made possible, and both private and public interests are protected through a balance between economic freedom and the reasonable regulation of all economic and commercial transactions.

The question is: What are the institutions that make possible these orderly transactions in our system of economy called the capitalist

economic system? The capitalistic economic system in our society is basically a circular flow of production factors of land, labour and capital and technological-entrepreneurial ability on the one side and the counter-flow of marketable commodities of private goods and services among households, business firms and governmental units, mediated and accomplished through the use of money and credit transactions taking place within institutionalized entities like banks, stock exchanges and other organized interactions for orderly economic transactions.

Through individuals acting on behalf of entities of households, business firms, decisions are made and actions are done within existing institutions. Households decide and act on how much of their labour, land, capital and economic ability to sell or to rent in exchange for wages, rents, interest and profits which are received as household income. Then households decide and set and act on how much of their income to spend to buy goods and services available in the market.

Business firms decide and act on how much labour, land and capital to buy or to hire and then decide how much of the various types of goods and services to produce to sell.

Governmental units decide and act on which goods and services to produce and provide and then decide and collect taxes from households and business firms for public purposes.

All these decisions and actions of these various entities of households, business firms and governments are co-ordinated in the various markets. There are markets of goods, markets of finances, markets of production factors, and these markets are constantly being changed in terms of price changes that shift up and down and therefore need some kind of regulation by governmental authority.

On the first idea of stable institutions, Professor Douglas North, a Nobel Prize winner in economics in 1993, said that it is the stability of our institutions, like stable government, the rule of law, the recognition of property rights that makes markets efficient, and so a country needs to structure a set of rules and regulations that provide incentives for people to do creative and productive things.

But what are social institutions? Social institutions are simply a framework for norms and rules within which human interactions, whether political, religious, social, economic or whatever, take place. The normative rules of institutions may be formally structured at the very foundation, in the very inception of a country, such as what happened in 1867 in the British North America Act, which established this Dominion of Canada and was later modified by the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Alternatively, a country's institutional rules may have evolved through time, slowly, in the course of its history, such as in the case of the United Kingdom. These institutions and these rules give us lots of freedom to make and enforce contracts and agreements between and among our people, and also with others with similar social, political and economic institutions such as the Americans with whom we conduct external trading agreements and economic relationships.

*(15:10)

This is stable. It is good for Canada. About 80 percent of our trade is with the United States. This stable social, political, economic environment of institutions and rules produces economic efficiency. This is the historical explanation why we have sustained economic growth in Great Britain, in the United States and here in Canada and elsewhere, like Australia. A stable institution and dependable rules also tend to provide incentives to people to save and to invest because if rules are dependable and institutions are stable, they will go and invest.

In material resources, we invest in research and development. We invest in human resources in order that we may be able to efficiently produce more and better quality goods and services at nominal lower costs.

As part of Canada, here in Manitoba, we have such stable and dependable social, political and economic institutions, and that, with appropriate government economic policy framework, in a modest way, we are capable of encouraging investments in human capital, investments in physical capital, investments in technological knowledge, and investments in research and

development in order to increase our productive capacity in a sustainable way towards the well-being and prosperity of our people.

Broadly, in every society the issue of how much the government takes upon itself to direct and how much it should leave to private initiative with as little interference as possible, within the stable framework of institutions in society, is a matter of empirical experience, not ideological or doctrinal disputations. Therefore, the doctrine of *laissez faire*, "*laissez faire*" meaning allowed to do minimum interference in economic affairs of individuals and groups, a doctrine first used by Marquis d'Agenson in 1751, and espoused by the British classical economists like Adam Smith, John Marshall and David Ricardo, needs to be moderated by government regulatory power.

On the second idea that it is the public sector, the government, which provides non-private, collective commodities, what economists call public goods. This is done by the government. The doctrine of *laissez faire* is the dogmatic belief that the best government is that government that governs the least leaving the resolution of economic disputes in the mechanism of the market. A market is simply a societal institution of rules and practices that facilitates exchange of economic values according to the impersonal law of supply and demand.

Exchange is the trading of certain definite quantities of one commodity for another commodity of a different kind. In the impersonal economic law of supply and demand, supply simply means the actual physical quantity of goods that will be offered for sale at a given specific price. Demand means the actual physical quantity of goods that will be taken off the market at a given, specific price. The convenient medium by which sellers and buyers can fix the exchange value of any commodity in relation to any other commodity is money expressed as price. Price is the rate at which a unit of any commodity will exchange for the desired number of units of money. Every seller offers to sell at a variable price. Every buyer offers to buy at a variable price mediated by the supply and demand, the two sides of the mechanisms of the market.

The price of a commodity is an impersonal, non-governmental regulator of the quantity of commodities that will be demanded and the quantity of commodities that will be supplied. If the price is too low, the quantity demanded exceeds the quantity supplied. If the price is too high, the supply exceeds the quantity demanded. Therefore, the price level fluctuates up and down until there is neither shortage nor surplus of commodities. The price at which the commodity demanded equals the quantity supplied is the so-called equilibrium price, which is the market price at which the exchange of trading takes place.

Almost all commodities can be traded in the market except non-private, collective commodities. What are these types of commodities? They have two essential characteristics. First, they have non-rival characteristic in the sense that for any given level of production, the consumption of that commodity by one person does not decrease the consumption of the same commodity by another person, for example, education.

Second characteristic, they are non-excludable in the sense that it is not possible or extremely costly to prevent another person from benefiting from that same commodity. For example, in Manitoba mosquito abatement to promote health is a form of public goods. Due to these characteristics, therefore, non-private commodities are not being produced by the private sector. Why? Because the private providers will not be able to charge a price for this commodity sufficient to cover the cost of the resources used. There will be nothing left for profit for the provider. Therefore, the provider of public goods will be unable to receive reasonable returns for their investments.

In brief, they are not marketable. Public, collective commodities are not marketable in the ordinary market. In the private sector the private corporations will not produce them, because it will give them no money. So who is left to produce all these things? The government. The government has to provide public goods such as health, education, social services.

Since health and education are both forms of public goods, let us be specific on these two

public commodities. The chartered accountants of Manitoba, in collaboration with the consulting economists, produced a report called *Manitoba Check-Up, Edition 2002*. They assess Manitoba on the basis of indicators such as income, health, education, poverty, safety. The accountants' overview stated as defined by these indicators that Manitoba's quality of life has improved over the last decade. Manitoba has the second highest increase in the number of doctors for 1000 population and the second highest increase in the proportion of post-secondary enrolment from the 18-to-24 age category. There was a small gain in real income, and both poverty and crime per capita declined slightly.

In sum, Manitoba's progress in living conditions since a decade ago ranked second among western provinces, Ontario and the national average.

In the matter of health, while many factors are important in assessing the quality of health care, the key indicator has been the number of physicians and nurses. The number of physicians per capita in Manitoba has increased by 1.7 percent between 1992 and 2001, bringing the average up to 182 doctors per 100 000 population. However, according to the Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons' Physician Resources Statistics of April 2001, only 25 percent of physicians practise outside Winnipeg. In 2001, there were 15 new medical school places added, bringing the total up to 85.

Foreign-trained doctors currently comprise about one-third of practising doctors in Manitoba. In 1999, there were 2037 licensed doctors in Manitoba. Now, after the NDP government was elected, there are 2122 licensed doctors in Manitoba.

* (15:20)

While there is still a shortage of nurses, the number of nurses per capita in Manitoba is the highest among western provinces, Ontario and the national average. Manitoba currently trains 1400 students in its post-secondary institutions and in licensed practical nurse training programs.

The third idea in our main proposition is that security, order and peace is possible because of

stability in our society, and because this is regulated, the interests of the individual person and the collective interests of everyone is protected.

Security is a difficult word to understand. Security is the condition of safety. It is stability and freedom from doubts and fear in our family and in our communal and social relationships. Not having a perfect world, there are dangers and risks everywhere we go in this world. The worst kind are the so-called security risks who are persons who can easily be blackmailed, whose desire for wealth or for notoriety may compromise them to commit acts of indiscretion or criminal behaviour, or worse, espionage, harming the security of everyone. Security allocation is increasingly becoming a major item in the national budget in Ottawa as well as in our provincial budgets.

Order is a condition of understandable arrangements among separate parts of a whole society, such as the existing institutional and organizational structures maintained by the rule of law.

Peace is an idea which is usually linked with order and security. It is a very elusive kind of concept to comprehend. In essence, peace is the serenity and calm that result when there are relatively no wars, no violence, no hostilities, no pestilence, nor similar personal or societal disturbances.

The elusiveness of this peace which nations and leaders seek had been gleaned from the various expressions in our historical experience. As early as 49 B.C., the Roman senator Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote in Latin the negative form of the phrase *turpi pace* meaning "peace with dishonour."

In 1878, Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of England, when Great Britain intervened in the Russian-Turkish treaty, and the Russians, fearing war with England, were forced to give back Macedonia to the Turks, and he came back with Cyprus for England, Prime Minister Disraeli was held as a hero at home, only to be turned out of office 18 months later with his famous phrase, "peace with honour" because England was embroiled in a war with Afghanistan in the east and in another war with the Zulus in South Africa.

In 1938, the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, paraphrasing the remarks of Disraeli and returning from the Munich Conference, after giving concession to Hitler to dismember Czechoslovakia and convinced that he had secured peace, he stated: This is the second time in our history that has come back peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time. In World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's "V" sign reversed Woodrow Wilson's dictum of peace without victory to make the world safe for democracy and insisted on unconditional surrender which General MacArthur demanded from Japan. It was not until the Vietnam and the Korean wars that the Americans reverted to the honourable solution of peace without victory meaning never peace without defeat. How do we find peace in this world?

Repose-toi sur le Seigneur de tout ton coeur mais ne t'appuie pas sur ton sens propre. Dans toute ta conduite, songez à lui et il aplanira tes sentiers.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall smoothen thy path.

Then the Lord Jesus Christ said:

Je vous ai dit cela qu'en moi vous ayez la paix.

These things I said to you, that in me you might have peace.

Peace, what type of peace?

Je vous laisse la paix; je vous donne ma paix. Ce n'est pas à la manière du monde que je vous la donne. Que votre coeur cesse de se troubler et de craindre.

My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, it I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, let it not be afraid.

The Member for Wellington now wants to wind-up, because we only have 30 minutes instead of 40. Most democratic societies

including Canada have stable institutions such as stable government, the rule of law, property rights, markets, banks and other economic organizations.

Most democratic societies also have capitalist economy which includes a public sector, which produce collective commodities and capital goods, which does not give profit to the producer. Governments are designed to provide for these public goods which otherwise would not be produced at all because they make no profit, they give no profit to the producer. A stable institution in capitalistic society has been permeated by the doctrine that the best government is the government that governs the least in economic transactions, but this doctrine has to be moderated and regulated by elected governments to preclude self-dealing and other faults of the capitalist economy motivated by the materialistic self-interest which is a form of covetousness.

The Decalogue states:

Tu ne convoiteras pas la maison de ton prochain. Tu ne convoiteras pas la femme de ton prochain, ni son serviteur, ni sa servante, ni son boeuf, ni son âne, rien de ce qui est à lui.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

Spanish spoken. Translation unavailable.

An Honourable Member: Sounds better when you sing it.

Mr. Santos: I will do that.

Now, with respect to human beings and their relations to what they covet, the material things in life. There are at least four types of character traits that develop among people and among nations as well. What are these character traits? Some will say: Mine is mine, yours is yours. This is the character trait of the average person—[interjection]—and the average nation. The second type: Mine is yours and yours is mine. This is the sincere person. The third kind says: Mine is yours and yours is yours. That is the

character trait of a saintly person. Lastly, many, many will say: Mine is mine and yours is mine. This is the scoundrel, whether it is a person or a nation. I am talking generally.

* (15:30)

The moral principles. What moral principles do we have to follow when we become a spokesperson of government, a spokesperson of institutionalized arrangements like banks, stock exchanges, big corporations, when we become the mouthpiece of all these players in the economic interactions in our society? What moral principle do we need to all the time bear in mind and apply in our everyday dealings with others and with ourselves, whether they are both citizens of Canada or foreigners with whom we trade?

It is written: Ne vous amassez point de trésors sur la terre, où la mite et le ver consomment, où les voleurs perforent et cambriolent. Mais, amassez-vous des trésors dans le ciel, là, point de mites, ni de vers qui consomment. Point de voleurs qui perforent et cambriolent. Car, où est ton trésor, là aussi sera ton coeur.

Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and worm doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor worm doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

So we have to be mindful of that all the time. Our tendency is to get, get, get, amass, amass, amass until we have so much we cannot know what to do with it.

The Lord said: Do not be embroiled with material things. You rather enrich yourself with things that are relevant in heaven, because all these things you will leave behind. That is what He is saying to us. So we have the saying: You cannot take it with you.

An Honourable Member: I am not leaving anything behind.

Mr. Santos: Are you carrying them with you? Oh, you will be buried in the pyramid with all

your slaves, with all your gold, with all your wealth. And what happened to you?

The important thing is that we cannot serve both gold, the Mammon of this earth, and Him by following His commandments.

Nul ne peut servir deux maîtres. Ou il haïra l'un et aimera l'autre, ou il s'attachera à l'un et méprisera l'autre.

Translation

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or attach himself to the one and despise the other.

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

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have the opportunity to put a few comments on the record regarding the Budget that we just heard, or the reasonable facsimile of a budget.

We heard over and over again that there were tax breaks. We heard over and over again that this Budget was good for Manitobans. Unfortunately, the tax breaks were veiled with other things. The tax breaks were not really there. This Budget, in all due respect, was a budget filled with reannouncements. It was a budget filled with a lack of understanding of what Manitobans actually do need in the area of real tax relief and it was a budget that was filled with unanswered questions.

Unfortunately, it was a disappointment to the people of Manitoba because here in Manitoba we have had an era since the present Government came into power where the jobs have virtually shut down. Manitoba now has only a hundred new jobs. Having said that, with only a hundred new jobs created, there is no place for the economy to grow.

Now, having said that, we have to look at what the public is saying about this Budget. Here in the Legislature, parties on both sides of the House have their own agendas, I will admit that, but unfortunately this particular governing party who is in power right now is about to go into an

election with a budget filled with misleading news, filled with empty promises, empty promises like in 1999 when for six months and \$15 million they promised the people of Manitoba that health care would be fixed. That is very unfortunate because much money has been spent on spin doctors, much money has been spent on messaging but not much thought or problem-solving has been built around the problem of families needing to have a better quality life here in Manitoba.

What do families want? That is what is important, that is why they elect governments. Families want a better quality of life where their kids can have music lessons, their kids can go to hockey practice, they can have groceries on the table. The other day I brought in a letter from a constituent who is on the verge now of losing her house because of the increase in energy costs in her house. Having said that, what does the public say about this new Government, this new Government's Budget?

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation, which is a well-respected federation, has a lot to say about it. They said that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation reacted to the Budget in such a way that they have described it as the Manitoba Government delivering a classic tax-and-spend budget, which, of course, we all know the present Government has become well known for.

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

Spending from this Government has increased by \$348 million, and what have Manitobans got for the money. So, after being elected in 1999, the federal transfer payments were over \$2 billion to the province of Manitoba. In 1999 the revenue was over \$6 billion in Manitoba. So this Government came into a province that had a balanced budget, had money in the bank and a bright future. So what have Manitobans received for their so-called money that has been spent? I quote from Provincial Director Adrienne Batra of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and this is directly from a quote from what she said: "If this is the Government's idea of a joke, no one is laughing," stated Provincial Director Adrienne Batra.

Once again the Government has missed an opportunity to put Manitoba on the economic

road to prosperity, has missed an opportunity. Indeed, they have missed an opportunity because coming into government they had a fat bank account. They had everything set for success in 1999, and what do we have now? They spent so much that the NDP government forced Hydro to give them \$288 million. The rainy day fund is going down and down and down. What is happening in this province of Manitoba? The Province has raided the piggy bank to the tune of \$48 million to balance the Budget and leave a thin \$10-million surplus or over-taxation. They take money from Hydro when the debt has risen in Hydro from \$6.3 billion to \$6.7 billion. According to the Budget documents, at the end of 2000 there was \$320 million in the FSF, and at the end of 2003 only \$145 million will remain in the rainy day fund. The Province's overall debt has also increased by \$538 million.

So what is happening? What is happening? The budgets are going awry. The spending, the priorities are all askew for the spending here in the province of Manitoba. We have here at this time many people leaving, many people giving up, many people discouraged by what has happened. This is Manitoba. This is our wonderful province that was set for success, was set to be a have province and at this point in time is forced to still be a have-not province. The thermometer is going down and time is running out.

* (15:40)

The reduction in the middle-income tax bracket to 14 percent is welcome. I must say that, but Manitobans are still paying some of the highest taxes west of Ontario. So we ask: Why are there only a hundred jobs created? Why are people moving out? That is the reason. Any of the paltry savings which do not come into effect until January of 2004 will be eaten away by bracket creep. Nobody has thought of that.

We saw in the Legislature today in Question Period and yesterday in Question Period when we saw that Sunrise School Division was helped out with their negotiations in CUPE, and indeed they needed to be helped out, but there were no answers as to how much money that was. There were no answers to what do we do with all the other organizations that need to have salary

equality. So when the questions are asked, there are no answers forthcoming, and this is very scary for the people of Manitoba.

Last year, an average of 12 people a day left Manitoba for other provinces—12 people a day. To put that in perspective, it is like 3 families leaving your community every day because they felt they could make a better life for their families elsewhere, and we say that we are set for prosperity? I do not think so. Tell me, the rainy day fund is being depleted; money is being raided from Hydro; our debt is going up and up; the present Government has only created a hundred jobs, and they have the audacity to say that we are in prosperity? What they did was they raided the piggy bank because they had some money to spend, and instead of budgeting in a proper way and balancing other budgets without stealing from Hydro, really looking at the dollars and cents and creating jobs, they elected to pay off their voters and continue on.

This provincial Budget has done nothing to help Manitoba farmers. It has done nothing to provide young people with a reason to stay here and build their futures. In 1999, the average Manitoba family paid \$250 less in income tax than the average Saskatchewan family. Today the average Manitoba family pays \$942 more in income tax than a family in Saskatchewan.

Under the Doer government, Manitoba is now the highest taxed province west of New Brunswick. Coast to coast we are taxed the most. The problem is what do we get for our money? Grand announcements are made, and yet when we see things like the rainy day fund going from \$285 million when the NDP took office to \$145 million at the end of this year, we have problems. We have big problems, and the present Government is also projecting a further \$39-million draw on the rainy day fund next year.

Now, there was a written commitment by the Doer government to replenish the rainy day fund of a \$150-million temporary or transitional withdrawal in 2001 or 2002, but guess what? It has never been replaced. What is wrong with this picture? That means that the promises that have come down from the present Government are empty.

Graham Starmer, president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, said the Budget had very little imagination, and the tax relief and the incentives are just not there. The NDP government gloats every day, on a daily basis, over their so-called tax cuts. But, Mr. Acting Speaker, in 2002, a middle-income, two-earner family of four, earning \$60,000 paid \$3,409 in provincial income tax. In 2003, this same family will pay \$3,395, a difference of only \$14. That is less than what it takes to go out for a cup of coffee with your family at Tim Hortons. So all this spin about tax breaks and all this spin about how well everything is going is nothing but empty promises and spin.

Robert Kerr, the academic vice-president at the University of Manitoba, said, and I state: "We are getting pretty close to the line. It is going to take some very tight budgeting to balance what they want to do out at the university." And Nick Louizos, the UMSU president, said, on tuition freezes: "The students suffer because the quality of education is diminished."

So we talk about the kind of priorities that this Government has. I have seen, as MLA in Fort Garry, some pretty shocking things happen in the Fort Garry region. Things that have happened related to taxes and things that have happened related to forced boundary changes, forced amalgamation. We have seen a top-down, Big Brother government, telling the people of Fort Garry what they want from them, and not listening to the Fort Garry public.

The removal of the taxes from the University of Manitoba, as welcome as it was to many of us, put a lot of burden on the taxpayers around the university because there was no plan to shore that up and help the taxpayers around who live in Fort Garry, who lived around the university. So, on one hand, it was an attempt to help the University of Manitoba, while, on the other hand, forcing an incredible tax burden on the people of Fort Garry.

There was also a very clever plan set up by the present Government to slice and dice Fort Garry, chop it all up, and then put the ownership on the City of Winnipeg to fix the mess up. So in December of 1990, the Winnipeg Wards Boundaries Commission presented a number of

recommendations to the then-Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Included in these recommendations was the commission's request for greater flexibility in determining the number of wards in Winnipeg.

Now, in July of 2001, the present Government, the Doer government, amended The City of Winnipeg Act to allow the Winnipeg Wards Boundaries Commission to change ward boundaries in Winnipeg and to make the ward boundaries established by the commission final and binding. Unfortunately, the Doer government and its ministers failed to provide the commission the flexibility they had asked for in their December 1999 report. In the commission's final report, the commission states, "Notably, the commission recognized that it had the luxury of determining the number of wards as recommended." As recommended in the 1999 study, the addition of an additional ward that would provide a solution to the Fort Garry problem.

What really happened is that the present Government rejected those recommendations, sent it back and landed up slicing and dicing Fort Garry. In fact, if you are a business person on Pembina Highway and you are on the east side you have to deal with one councillor, and you walk a few steps across the street on the west side and you deal with another councillor. And then it was chopped in the south and chopped in the north. So, virtually, Fort Garry lost a lot of its heritage, a lot of its history, and the Fort Garry people now, at a public meeting that was packed with people demanding that this be turned back.

What we are hearing from the Government is, oh, it is the City's responsibility. Well, I will remind this Government that it was not the City's responsibility when this Government went into power. This Government planned this. This Government targeted south Winnipeg because that is where their voters were not. They wanted to make sure that they could try to slice and dice and politically malign the Fort Garry area.

I see the member from Fort Rouge laughing at this and I find it passing strange that when the name "Fort Garry" was going to be changed to "Montcalm," it was before the '99 election, and the present member rose up and said, oh, no, we

need the name "Fort Garry." But this same member supported what happened to Fort Garry being sliced and diced. And now, as I sit here today, I see his laughter, I see his nonchalant attitude. Well, I am not nonchalant. As MLA of Fort Garry, I want Fort Garry put back together again. East and west Fort Garry are one community, and we are going to fight until that happens.

So you talk about this present Government being able to govern. I think not. I think not. It is a Big Brother government that does not know how to balance budgets, does not know how to reduce taxes, and does a lot of things for people that are very, very detrimental. I have so many, so many people that come to me and say what are they doing.

* (15:50)

The other day in Question Period, when I brought forth a letter that was of deep concern to me, about a family who was having great financial problems because of their increase in energy costs, and they were afraid when they got the news that there is going to be 20% hydro increase, they said: Look, we cannot do this. We cannot live. We cannot live in our house.

I asked the question here in this House. And, you know what? No one on the other side of the House was really interested in giving me an answer. They had rhetoric. The comments that came back had no solutions to anything that was said. And I tell you, it is hard as MLA, when you sit across from people and you see the tears come up in the eyes and the people saying you know, we cannot do this anymore. We are going to lose our house. Senior citizens.

We have many people on the other side, including the present Premier, who live in very expensive houses; \$260,000, I understand, is our present Premier's house. Yet these people who live on Lake Village Road have a little house that they can live in, and all they want to do is be able to eat. And so that letter explained from this constituent that they have a choice. They either buy macaroni or they heat the house. I do not think this is funny. I think this is terrible.

You have all these little sneaky kinds of taxes. We hear the Justice Minister (Mr.

Mackintosh) saying, oh, by the way, there are going to be 15 bucks added to every ticket that you have, because he has made such a mess of what is happening in the court system that he needs to grab the money from somewhere. Why? Because the rainy day fund is depleted. I mean, where do they go for money now? Where do they go for money?

So with this family, what happens if they get a 20% increase in their hydro? Is it okay that these people do not eat? I do not think so. So we stand here today, and we are supposed to be speaking to the Manitoba Budget. What budget? Where is the vision? Where are the priorities? The priorities should be to build families and build communities, to keep people in Manitoba, to provide jobs. The priorities should be to build the economy, to give a future to the citizens here in Manitoba.

And at the end of the day, when you see a government that came in with a great, big, fat piggy bank and that piggy bank is all spent, and, not only that, there is all these sneaky little taxes coming in, the increase in utilities are happening, there is something wrong with this. This Government cannot govern, This Government cannot budget. This Government is putting terrible, terrible consequences, terrible things on people's shoulders.

The fact of the matter is they have to look at kick-starting the economy here in Manitoba. We want to have an economy built where people want to go into Manitoba and build communities and build businesses. The people are speaking. Folks, a hundred jobs are here, a hundred new jobs. The people are speaking.

I would like to complete my speech today by reading this. This is a letter from two senior citizens. The gentleman has had a quadruple bypass, he is over 60 years of age, his wife is roughly the same age. They have worked all their lives. They have a little house in Fort Garry. They live very frugally.

This is what she says: I am directing my concerns to you with the hope you will be able to be of some assistance to us, not only us, as most of the concerns are related to many people on low and fixed incomes, pensions and

disabilities. Our utilities are completely out of sight and now even more since Doer, in all his glory, decided to balance his Budget by taking millions of dollars from the Hydro. We, the majority on low income and pensions, not by our own choice, have to choose to heat or eat. I received our gas bill last week, and our budget escalated from \$94 to \$144 per month.

The problem is that when all these taxes come in and all these little things like the \$15 tax grab on top of any ticket that you get that comes into a house, the problem is that people cannot support the Government's spending like this.

The Government has to be able to put a plan in place where there are sufficient tax cuts that really make a difference to families and to people so they can have that disposable money in their own homes. They have to have a government that is able to bring people into a province, where people want to live here, not leave. When we have a province that under this Government is riddled with the highest crime rate in Canada, and when we see the burden of taxation that is so prevalent in our province as compared to other provinces, we think it is a very sad day for Manitobans.

Manitobans now are becoming more and more aware. I was last night at a day-care meeting, and I have to tell you that the people at that day-care meeting were saying, gee, they had high hopes for more support being put into child care. The salaries of day-care workers are being enhanced, and that is good, but there is no money for the spots for the children. There are many two parents who are out there working.

This Government has not been able to prioritize. They have not been able to take a look at what is important and get rid of the rest. So there we have a new announcement every day with a great, big plan to spend more money, and we do not have the priorities in place to build families, to build communities and make Manitoba a place where families want to live, grow, raise their families and keep them in the province of Manitoba. So, in speaking to the Budget, I have to say I am very disappointed. I think it is very unfortunate that those 100 jobs

are probably right here in the Legislature being put out for the spin doctors and the people to sort of spin the present Government's message. This is very unfortunate. Looking at the hard data, 100 jobs and this kind of thing happening is bad for Manitoba. I have to say that without it improving with this Government, if it comes in, in another decade this Province will be bankrupt. Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise to speak against the amended motion on the budgetary policy of the Government and I will speak on the budgetary policy.

First, I would like to pay tribute to three of our colleagues, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), the MLA for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and the MLA for Riel (Ms. Asper).

I was elected with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs as part of the class of 1990 and I have always admired her thoroughness, especially how well prepared she was in giving speeches in the House. I have appreciated her role as the chairperson of the Neighbourhoods Alive! committee and I have had the pleasure of serving with her on that committee. The minister has always asked for my opinion on decisions being made by the Neighbourhoods Alive! committee, and I have appreciated that.

* (16:00)

The MLA for Radisson is another member of the class of 1990, and we will miss her and especially her contribution to the NDP caucus. I think it would be fair to say and we can say now that she has always pushed us from the left, in a very positive way. Whether it was on issues of the environment or housing or poverty or the fairness of the decision-making process, she has always been pushing us in a more progressive direction and we thank her for that. We hope that whoever replaces her and others in our caucus will continue the same good tradition.

I would also like to mention the MLA for Riel, who was elected 1999, and therefore I do not know her quite as well. I have always admired her fluency in French and she has always asked good questions in the legislative review committee of caucus. She was one of the

people who, I think, suffered the most due to the excessive heat in this building in the summer and the lack of air conditioning. She would have appreciated the new rules requiring us to adjourn in June and saying we cannot come back until a date in September, but she will not benefit from that, unfortunately.

I would like to thank all three of these members for their contribution to our party, to our Government, to their constituents and to the people of Manitoba. In December, in my Throne Speech Debate, I paid tribute to our colleague from Wellington (Mr. Santos).

This morning I got a phone call from one of my constituents and he had received my householder in the mail. He was complaining that the NDP government has not done anything for the people in the North End. So I took him on and told him what we have done for people in the North End, but he did not want to listen to me and he kept cutting me off. Finally, at the end, I said, well, why do you not run for the Conservative Party, because I know that is his party. He said he might. He might run in Burrows, in Kildonan or St. Johns, so I hope he will take me up on this challenge.

I would like to tell him and my other constituents and members opposite in the House of the many, many things that our Government has done in a positive way for not just my constituents, but all of our constituents in the North End, beginning with the North End Wellness centre. There are three levels of government that have been asked for funding to rebuild the North "Y" at College and McGregor. There is only one level of government, the provincial government, that has publicly committed \$1 million.

The North End Wellness centre committee have a business plan and they have asked the City of Winnipeg for a financial commitment basically by way of forgiving property taxes, donating the land for a dollar and paying for building permits and zoning fees. So far they have not made any announcements so we are still waiting for the City of Winnipeg to come on board.

What about the federal government? Well, federal Minister Pagtakhan promised me, in

person, that the federal government would be at the table, they would commit their money. That was last October. I also wrote him a letter, and I still have not received a reply to the letter. So we are still waiting for the federal government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is a member of the Conservative caucus, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) who was involved with the North End Wellness committee before he got elected as an MLA, and he promised to raise \$2 million from the private sector. Well, I am very happy that the Member for Fort Whyte wants to raise \$2 million in the private sector because he has contacts in the private sector that I do not have. But his commitment has changed very interestingly—[interjection]And I have contacts that he does not have; right.

I am very disappointed in your colleague from Fort Whyte because now he has changed his commitment. He is no longer saying, I will raise \$2 million in the private sector. Instead, he is saying, if the federal government makes a contribution. Now that is a huge if because so far, you know, we have an oral commitment but nothing in writing from the federal government.

So I would hope that the Member for Fort Whyte might rethink his commitment and raise the money in spite of the federal government because if we wait for them we may never get a North End Wellness centre built at College and McGregor.

It is something that people are waiting for. We have a business plan. We are hoping to announce the business plan soon, but we are waiting for our partners and we are waiting for the Member for Fort Whyte who, as far as I know, has not raised a nickel in spite of his promises that have been there for four years. We are waiting for them to make a contribution. We are the only level of government that has publicly made a commitment and that commitment is a million dollars for renovations and new construction.

I would like to talk about Neighbourhoods Alive!, which is helping many, many residents in the North End in three different communities: in Point Douglas, in Lord Selkirk and in William Whyte. This is a targeted program. It is making a

difference in these neighbourhoods. We are building infill housing. We are renovating existing housing and the result is that property values have gone up by 66 percent in real estate area 4A.

Now, my constituent challenged me on this and he said, oh, you made that up. Where did you get that? Well, I did not make it up; I got it from the Real Estate Board of Winnipeg and it has made a huge difference in the William Whyte and other areas. It has helped all our property values in the North End. We know that things are improving because people have hope and some really positive anecdotal stories illustrate that.

For example, Mr. Acting Speaker, I live on Machray Avenue. Two doors down from me a landlord moved into his rental property, totally renovated his house, his yard and his garage, and listed it for \$107,000. Well, everybody thought he was nuts. He would never get \$107,000 because the average house on our street is about \$75,000. However, he got \$99,000, which totally astounded everybody in our block.

It is a wonderful indicator that people are willing to invest and spend a lot of money buying a house in an older neighbourhood in the North End. I know a staffperson who works for the Legislative Assembly who was helping her mother sell her house on Boyd Avenue. To their great pleasure, the price went up by \$3,000 on the day that it sold, on Boyd near Arlington.

Now I have not looked at what is happening in the different Real Estate Board areas. I should look at that, but certainly a 66% improvement in one area, which is a large area of the North End, is extremely positive. It is a totally opposite direction from the way property values were going under the lean, mean Tory years, the 1990s, when there was no investment in social housing from 1993 to 1999.

The result was that we had an arson problem and we had declining property values. We are starting to turn it around, but it is going to take time and it is going to take a substantial investment. We are very pleased that the federal government is making a contribution and that we

are close to renovating or building 1000 houses in the city of Winnipeg.

Another program that is benefiting our constituents in the North End is Building Communities. There are two Building Communities areas in the North End. One, Burrows Central, is, I am pleased to say, entirely in Burrows constituency, and the other is the Luxton neighbourhood.

In Burrows Central \$1.4 million of the city-provincial program will be spent to enhance community facilities. One of those is Boyd park or actually the former Boyd Park Community Centre, which is now part of Sinclair Park Community Centre. They are going to get upgraded facilities. We have an empty school ground where the former Margaret Scott School was located. It is a large site. It has been empty since the school was torn down, and it is going to see a major investment to make it into a park that people will actually use.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is also a plan for small parks along the beach line railway track so that there is a walking path and small parks connected by the walking path. That will be of benefit to many, many constituents in the North End. There is also a plan for improved lighting, for example, around Millennium Villa at 800 Burrows Avenue. The Community Advisory Committee has allocated money for Sergeant Tommy Prince Park and for the Nomads Football Club to expand and renovate their facilities.

Another program that is helping people in the North End is Flora Place public housing. Many of the old houses that were built after the Second World War as temporary housing for veterans have been torn down and the residents association have been negotiating with the City and the Province for many years and now there is a promise to build 24 new houses for seniors. That is a very positive development. It will make the neighbourhood look much nicer, it will expand the park area. In fact, this is a compromise that has been brokered between the neighbours and the residents of Flora Place and part of the former property occupied by housing will be Sergeant Tommy Prince Park and part will be 24 new houses.

There is also the North End Community Renewal Corporation. This is one of several community renewal corporations in the city of Winnipeg, and they are funded by the provincial government. They are getting money for things like safety initiatives and small grants.

Now, one of the things that I try to tell my constituent was about our approach because our approach is different. This is not something that we just decided upon when we became government. As people who follow politics will know, you cannot decide what you want to do in terms of your action plan after you get elected. You have to decide what you are going to do before you get elected. The day after election, you have to hit the ground running, as the expression goes. And we did that.

For example, I talked to the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) before the 1999 election. I said I think there is a willingness in the community to do things differently as a government. We know that in the seventies under Premier Schreyer, in the eighties under Premier Howard Pawley, that the government was involved in very many initiatives such as Manitoba Housing Authority, Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation to build new houses and to renovate houses. Well, I said to our Housing critic at the time, I think we should instead give money to community groups to deliver those programs on behalf of government. The Member for Radisson said yes, and I see the Member for Portage La Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) agrees with me. She said that it is already in our platform. When we became government, we did it. And this was very interesting because shortly after we became government and before we had announced this plan—[*interjection*]

* (16:10)

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Member for Portage contends that those programs were only in Winnipeg, Thompson and Brandon, and he would really like them to go to Portage la Prairie. I think his idea has merit and I think that if the people in Portage la Prairie voted for a government MLA, they might have a better case, but notwithstanding, I think there could be a case made for having some of these good programs expanded if we had more money. The problem is

that the Official Opposition is saying we are spending too much, which begs the question: What do you want us to cut in order to pay for your tax breaks? You would have to cut programs and services to pay for your tax breaks and then we could not expand government programs to places like Portage la Prairie, could we?

However, Mr. Acting Speaker, I digress. Shortly after we got elected, we had a housing coalition meet with us in caucus, and they said exactly the same thing that was in our platform. They said, we want community groups, non-profit organizations to deliver these programs instead of government. And we were able to say, yes, that is our plan. That is what we are doing now through the North End Community Renewal Corporation, through the North End Housing Project and other non-profit housing organizations in the inner city of Winnipeg and Brandon and Thompson. We think that it is a good approach because it really has to do with building capacity in the community and these organizations are community-based, non-profit organizations who are delivering these programs.

I am pleased to say that the Speaker of the Legislature, the Member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) and myself, if we were not founding members of the North End Housing Project, we were there attending meetings at the very early stages, and month after month we attended those meetings, but the problem was this was the 1990s and there was no provincial government money so nothing happened. It only got some action when the government changed. We had an NDP government and then they started flowing the money to the North End Housing Project and they are doing an excellent job. Not just renovating houses but training people to be carpenters, giving them skills, life skills and job skills so that they can get off social assistance and work to make their living.

So, not only are we doing community development, but we are renovating houses and building infill houses and many other smaller programs in the community, like community gardening projects and grants to homeowners, and it is making a difference. We have renovated or built almost 1000 houses in Winnipeg alone,

and you can see the difference if you drive down streets like Alfred Avenue, which have been disaster zones, to put it politely, in the past because there were boarded-up houses. There were houses that were burned out and there were vacant lots, and now it is being transformed.

When people see houses being renovated, when they see new houses, they start to fix up their own, and so there is a spin-off effect in the neighbourhood that is positive. In a lot of these programs the idea is to lever money either from the private sector or from individuals who voluntarily fix up their own homes. There are statistics on some of these programs. I did not bring all my Neighbourhoods Alive! materials with me; I wish I had. But I know that this is leveraging money from other sectors of society, and this was true when the opposition party was in government and there were things like the Winnipeg Development Agreement and, before that, the Core Area Initiative. The idea was that government money would leverage money from the private sector and other sectors, and it works. We have some good stats on that.

Now I would like to touch on the Budget because I would say that almost all of the budget provisions that I am going to highlight benefit our constituents in the North End contrary to what my Conservative critic alleges.

Well, I have a three-ring binder full of good news announcements from the Budget. I think I have about 15 minutes to make it through this, and I am sure I will succeed—*[interjection]*

Well, I am only highlighting, and I am only talking about the North End. So I will not be talking about agriculture or rural development or northern. Perhaps the member missed the beginning of my speech, but I am rebutting my constituent who phoned me and said we were not doing anything for the North End. So the whole focus of my speech is saying these are all the good things that our NDP government is doing for our residents in the North End.

Well, I am going to have to go quickly because there are so many things that we are doing. For example, changes in this Budget include an income tax reduction for middle-income earners, and the vast majority of my

constituents are low income or middle income. I do not have any high-income taxpayers or very few in the constituency of Burrows. We have a new co-operative education tax credit for businesses hiring students and a co-operative education program. So that will benefit students in Burrows and other North End constituencies.

Regarding income taxes, we have made the largest three-budget tax reduction in 50 years. There has been a 14% cut in provincial personal income taxes since 1999 for the average Manitoban; \$220 million have been cut in personal income taxes since 1999; \$271 million, including the property tax credits and ESL cuts. ESL cuts are one of the most popular things that this Government has done because people complain that it is regressive, not progressive. As we know, the income tax system is progressive. The property taxes are considered regressive because it is not based on ability to pay or income; it is based on property. So we have promised to reduce it and eliminate it over five years and we have made progress because in two budgets we are starting to get rid of it, and in five years we just need another mandate to finish it and we will get rid of the ESL.

By contrast the previous government cut personal income taxes only \$141 million during the entire 1990s. Regarding school taxes, our Government has increased funding to schools by \$87 million in four years. We have increased the property tax credit back up to \$400. We reduced the residential ESL by \$27 million over two years with, as I said, a commitment to phase it out over five years. The total net education property taxes have gone down by about 7 percent for the average Manitoba homeowner since 1999, and that is good news for all the property taxpayers in the North End of Winnipeg.

Now I would like to turn to advanced education and training and tell you about some of the highlights there. For example, we have maintained the 10% tuition reduction for students. I think this is one of the best things that we as a government have done and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) has done; that is, we have reduced tuition by 10 percent and we froze it for each year after that. What has the result been? The result has been more students going to

university and more students going to community college, and affordability is certainly a barrier to post-secondary education for our constituents in the North End because so many families are low income. For example, the last time I looked, I think the average family income in Burrows was about \$28,000 a year, one of the lowest in Manitoba.

We have increased funding for access programs. The non-bursary portion of program funding has increased by 8.4 percent. Regarding colleges, we have had a major expansion of college enrolment. College expansion initiative funding has been increased by 56 percent this year. University enrolment is up by 20 percent in three years. We are well on the way to meeting our commitment on college program expansion, which reminds me, I left out something when it comes to the North End. I had a list. I guess I did not make it entirely through the list because I forgot about an educational institution which is being relocated from McPhillips Street to Selkirk Avenue. That is the Urban Circle Training Centre, an excellent program. The executive director is Eleanor Thompson. This provides education and training for Aboriginal youth. It has been expanded over the years. The success rate of its students being placed is very good. We are proud to say that we support access programs like this.

Manitoba's university and college tuition continues to be among the lowest in Canada. The provincial bursary and the Canada Millennium Scholarship combined will assist about 5500 students. Colleges will continue to support expanded nursing education, as well as new programs in areas such as biotechnology, information technology, aerospace training, precision agriculture. New in this Budget is a further six-month deferral on interest on student loans. That is going to benefit students who live in the north end of Winnipeg.

* (16:20)

Moving on to education and youth, we have met our commitment to increase funding at the rate of economic growth, \$23 million in new funding this year, a 2.8% increase. We have funded \$300,000 for strobe lights to improve the safety of school buses. We see those in the city

as well as in rural areas. A new \$1-million class size fund to support divisions where class size and composition are a concern, particularly in situations with high special needs and at-risk youth, is definitely going to benefit Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and students in the North End, because we have a very high percentage of special needs students in Winnipeg School Division No. 1. In fact, frequently, parents move from other divisions into Winnipeg School Division No. 1 so that they can get programs and services that other divisions do not offer. We have put in an additional \$5.6 million for special needs programming. We have a new \$900,000 early numeracy grant to assist divisions in the implementation of strategies designed to improve the mathematical skills of students in kindergarten to Grade 4, and an additional \$130,000 for early childhood development.

We have made a major new investment in school capital, repairing school infrastructure after a decade of neglect. When we became government—the Minister of Education, I am sure, could verify this—there was an infrastructure deficit of \$200 million, so we have a huge backlog to catch up on because of the cuts in the lean, mean Tory years of the 1990s. I am very happy to report that I was with the Minister of Education at Robertson School in Burrows constituency to make an announcement that they are getting a new gymnasium and classroom space. The president of the Parent Council was so happy when she heard this announcement, Karin Mazowita, that apparently she cried with delight. We are very pleased that, after they have waited for four years, they finally got an announcement and there will be a study and, eventually, new construction. We announced a new capital program of \$50 million this year alone, and the four-year total is far above anything done by the previous government.

I would like to move on to Family Services and Housing, another department where we have done a great deal. For example, over successive budgets we have begun to restore the National Child Benefit that was clawed back under the previous Tory government. In July 2001, the National Child Benefit was restored for all families with children ages six and under. In January 2003, we restored it for children ages six to eleven. In this Budget, it is available for all

families. We ended the clawback completely. The total increase, this year, for restoration of the National Child Benefit is \$3.7 million going back to children and families. Since taking office, and including in this Budget, the total amount for the restoration of the clawback is \$15 million. That benefits children and families in Burrows and in the north end of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, we have increased funds for social assistance. We are providing an extra \$20 a month which is almost enough to cover a telephone which is very important for people on social assistance trying to find a job. How can you possibly look for a job without a telephone? We are making that possible. That is something that the United Church and other people have been lobbying us on, and I am very pleased that we have done that. That is definitely a benefit to many, many low-income families in the North End. It is long overdue. We know that the Conservative Party gave an increase, I believe it was January 1, 1993. There were cuts in 1996 and no increases for the rest of their government. This is the first time that single employables will have had an increase since 1993. *[interjection]* Well, the former minister wants to debate it, but his facts are all wrong.

The monthly increase can assist in the search of jobs by providing a phone, as I said. Under adult services, a \$12.5-million increase in grants for adult services, including residential services, supporting living and day program agencies and some of those are located in the North End. *[interjection]* The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) wants to talk about the Gospel, but he is taking on somebody who can actually debate that with him. I think he needs to be careful when he is saying that his facts are akin to the gospel, either the biblical Gospel or the gospel according to the Member for Lakeside. He had his facts wrong once again.

Child day care. I think in our first Budget we put \$9 million more into child day care. In this Budget, we put another \$6 million into child care as part of our five-year-*[interjection]*. Contrary to what the member is saying, we have put a total of \$22 million into child day care since taking office to create more subsidized spaces,

more resources for children with disabilities and wage increases for day-care workers. Day-care workers have been some of the most underpaid, undervalued employees in Manitoba, and we have added more spaces.

Regarding Aboriginal Child Welfare Initiatives, something that we promised to implement because it was recommended in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report of 1991 that the former government left sitting on the shelf collecting dust, we are implementing many of those recommendations. We have allocated \$2 million to fund the ongoing transition to an Aboriginal child welfare system.

Moving on to Health. All of the federal money, the new money for health from the federal government is being dedicated to our public health system, a budgetary increase of 7.2 percent and we are planning to spend 46 million on medical equipment. I think one of the most positive announcements was that we were buying equipment for Brandon, I believe it was. The first time—what is it?—an MRI is going outside the city of Winnipeg and it is going to Brandon for the residents of western Manitoba.

We have put more into Winnipeg, including Seven Oaks Hospital, which is benefiting the residents of the North End. It is the residents of the North End that fought to keep their hospital when we were threatened by having it closed under the previous government and we are committed to keeping Seven Oaks Hospital as a full service hospital.

Under Intergovernmental Affairs, we have increased the Budget by 2.4 percent. Direct funding support to Winnipeg is \$104 million in 2003-2004. That benefits all the residents of the North End. This is an increase of \$500,000 from 2002-2003. It is up \$9.1 million from the 2000-2001 Budget year. We are increasing support to the larvaciding program. Just like everyone else in Winnipeg, we have lots of mosquitoes in the North End and we are going to kill those mosquitoes. *[interjection]* That is right, and we are increasing funding to the larvacide program and that, once again, is going to benefit residents of the North End. We have increased \$500,000 to the Urban Development Initiative in the city of Winnipeg.

Moving on to Justice, we have given an overall budgetary increase of 9 percent to the Department of Justice. Legal Aid has benefited from this Budget. There is an increase to the child-centred justice fund. There will be \$700,000 added to the victims fund. Funding to Prosecutions has been increased by almost 2 million and a new Youth Justice Committee is being organized in the North End.

Mr. Speaker, I am running out of time. I do not have time to tell you about all of the good things happening in Labour and Workers Compensation Board, for example, the Workplace Health & Safety six-point plan, amendments to The Workplace Safety and Health Act, increased numbers of Workplace Safety and Health inspectors, public awareness campaign about workplace injuries, amendments to The Labour Relations Act, increased minimum wage to \$6.75 an hour, pension legislation review, presumptive WCB coverage for firefighters with certain cancers.

In conclusion, these programs and initiatives in the Department of Labour will definitely affect workers in the North End, because we have a higher percentage of people who are labourers and susceptible to being injured or killed in the workplace. It is a problem. We want to reduce injuries by 25 percent and all of the things that I mentioned today are going to make life better and give hope for the future for our constituents in Burrows and in the North End. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I rise today with a heavy heart to address this Budget on two fronts. Number one, I would like to, first of all, acknowledge the members of this Legislature whom I have had the pride and joy really to serve with for 15 years now. I think our anniversary was yesterday, when we were elected in 1988 and, having had the pleasure of serving with great people, like Harry Enns, the dean of the Legislature, whom I think history will record very kindly because of the work that he has done in the agricultural field, the work that he has done in the natural resource field, and I know that he was a respected minister during his time in office and during our time in government. I know that his constituency will remember him kindly and the people of

Manitoba will remember him kindly for all the work that he has done.

I want to also recognize my colleagues. Harold Gilleshammer was elected during the same time I was elected, came to this place, the Legislature, and who is not going to be this us any further. He also has served with respect in the Cabinet of the Filmon administration, and he will also be kindly remembered for the time he spent here and how he dealt with matters in a gentlemanly fashion, and indeed in a statesmanlike fashion.

* (16:30)

Frank Pitura, another one of my close colleagues, who was elected a bit later, but certainly a friend before he was elected, as an ag rep in my area, that served me well as an ag rep, and during his time in office. He will be remembered for the kind of leadership he demonstrated during the 1997 flood, serving as a minister.

Above all, Ed Helwer, who is my friend and colleague. We shared an office for many, many years and shared many of the staff people that are currently serving our caucus today. I always say Ed and I provided the training ground for many of our staff that serve us well today, very well-liked people. Ed Helwer was the Member for Gimli and served his constituency with distinction and honour throughout his tenure here and one would need to look for a finer gentleman than Ed Helwer.

I want to also recognize the talents of Jean Friesen, who has demonstrated her capacity to be an administrator, I believe, second to none in the NDP administration. She was admired by all the municipal people that she has dealt with, and she was admired for her tenacity and also for her talent of the debate and bringing the issues back to her Government. I say this in all sincerity. She served this province well, and she will be remembered for how she dealt with issues.

I also want to recognize Ms. Barrett as the Minister of Labour for this province and bringing forward a very difficult bill. She changed the labour act which did not, I believe, serve the best interest of the general business community in this province, but she took it through the House.

I think it was a more difficult bill than maybe most had envisioned, but she did it and she did it with tenacity. I respect her for that, and I think all of us in this Legislature respect her for the kind of person she was and the talent she brought here.

Ms. Cerilli and Ms. Asper, both of whom, I understand, will not be running next time, are leaving this Legislature, and we have known Ms. Cerilli since, I believe she was elected in 1988 when I was first elected—

An Honourable Member: In 1990.

Mr. Jack Penner: In 1990, two years after I was first elected, and she certainly did not hedge at all and mince words from time to time to make sure that people knew where she was coming from and what her views were on matters. I truly admired her for that because it is not everybody that takes it upon themselves to come here and voice the opinion of her constituents and how she sees their needs being fulfilled. So, thanks to both of them, to Ms. Asper and Ms. Cerilli, for serving here. We will remember all of you kindly, and we respect the service you have shown to humankind and to the people of Manitoba.

To the constituents in my area who, I think, have been achievers, I want to recognize one person that I have a great deal of admiration and respect for. His name is David Glenn Friesen, who is now the CEO and President of Friesens Corporation, who was honoured just better than a week ago as the Citizen of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce in the town of Altona. David has been an astute businessman, taking a corporation, a printing corporation, that was a small business when it started. It started in a back room on Main Street in Altona and has become the largest printing corporation in Canada. It has spread its wings and its products into virtually every part of the world. They now provide yearbooks to many of the schools and high schools in the United States; that has become a major market for them. They are shipping into virtually every country of the world. David Glenn not only served as president and CEO of a very quickly growing company which, I believe, he was largely responsible for, but he also served his community. He served his

community in many, many different aspects of service which I will not go into, but always there with help, both monetary and always there to pitch in from a personal perspective and not hesitate at all when the need came for advice and also support. He has been a great support to me. When I needed advice I would go sit down with David Glenn and a few others in my constituency and they provide good advice. He was one of those friends.

I want to also recognize the achievements of Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. Golden West Broadcasting was built, and I can remember when they first started broadcasting many, many years ago, the Quakers and the Thiessen family, the Friesen family, amongst others, were very, very influential in bringing the idea of building a small radio station in a small rural community and making it function. It has proven not only to function well, but the young person they hired right out of high school by the name of Elmer Hildebrand, took the corporation and managed it to the point where they now own 20 radio stations in Canada, not only in Manitoba, but indeed in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta. They are spreading their corporate influence right across this country.

Those are the kinds of people that we have in our communities. I look at the Loewen Manufacturing company. Mr. Loewen had an idea that he could actually manufacture replacement parts, concaves for combines, rotor bars that normally wore out, and he said we can manufacture much of this right here in our own community and he did. Again, another corporation right in a small rural community that manufactures and ships their products all over the globe and has done a wonderful job of marketing. Elmer's welding shops and builds row crop equipment to Australia and to the United States and many other countries. Again, starting from a very, very small back-shop base, he demonstrated that he had the ability not only to build and design but had the ability to indeed market, and that is the key to making sure that you create an environment where the people that you employ will have long-term employment.

I am going to dwell on that a bit later on, but I want to mention a few other things in my constituency. When I was first elected in 1988, I

represented the constituency of Rhineland, and then a few years later that was expanded to include all of the Emerson constituency right to the Ontario border. When I first toured that area, I came into Vita, and remember that we had just won the election from the NDP government, defeated the Pawley government. I toured the hospital there, and it was raining the day I toured that hospital, and there were eight pails on the floor of the hospital catching the water coming through the roof. That was the health care that they expected, that the health care facility had to contend with in the town of Vita administered by the NDP, and the NDP had flatly said we will not build a new hospital there.

* (16:40)

Well, Albert Dreidger, two years prior to me coming there, had worked very hard to convince the then-Minister of Health that the Conservatives should at least look at building a hospital. The foundation was in the ground when I became the member there, and we continued to build and finish that hospital, and by 1991-92 we opened a brand new hospital, health care facility, as we did in Altona, as we did in Winkler, as we are now doing in Sprague, built a health care facility there in 1997-98 which I understand the current Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has agreed to expand, and it will keep on providing health care services in southeast Manitoba and southern Manitoba.

Health care is indeed a very important issue to many of us, but we cannot help but not understand how our people in rural Manitoba, when they need emergency services that we cannot provide in our small community hospitals, have to come to the city of Winnipeg and wait months and months and months before they can get in for such things as heart surgery and other acute health care emergencies.

It is simply deplorable, the kind of line-ups one sees in the city hospitals when they line the patients up in the corridors. Somebody told me the other day that he had a friend who had been forced to urinate into a paper cup in the hallway without any partitions or anything like that. That is the NDP health care model that we now have to contend with.

This NDP government is the government that promised the people of Manitoba, for \$15

million and six months, the Premier (Mr. Doer) said, I will fix all that, trust me. Well, the people of Manitoba did trust, and now they have reaped the benefits of that promise. A billion dollars have gone into health care; a billion more is spent on health care today than in 1999. A billion dollars more and it still has not solved hallway medicine.

You know what it will take, ladies and gentlemen? It will not take money to fix it; it will take strategic planning and accept the fact that there are private providers that can provide services at a much more economical rate than we can in the public sector. I know there are people that are saying what we should do is provide each person with a little card like this and say when you need the services, you go same as when you do to buy a tank of gas. You go click, click, and you get the services, and where you get it should be up to you. I think that is what is needed.

We need a management structure that will allow management to manage. We need to get the politicians out of managing the health care system. Until we do that, we are not going anywhere quickly, and we will not resolve and we will keep on throwing money and buckets of money at health care and we will not fix it. You need good management and you need to get the politicians out of the managing of our health care system. I am totally convinced of that.

I want to also remind the current members of the Legislature of some of the things we warned about when the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) came back from Ottawa when she signed the CFIP program, the Canadian Farm Initiative Policy. She said then it was one of the finest agreements that she had signed. I suppose maybe it was the first one that she signed, but the CFIP program did not work. It has received much criticism. Then they said, well, we will change it.

Mr. Speaker, the provinces and Ottawa negotiated and they negotiated an agricultural policy framework, the APF, it is called. Five pillars in agriculture: food safety and food quality; environment; science and innovation; renewal; and business risk management. We have spent two years now debating the business

risk management side of the APF, and where are we today? We still have not got an agreement.

Our Minister of Agriculture signed an agreement with the minister. That agreement was a 60-40 agreement. Part of the risk management program was that there was going to be a transitional program that would be cost-shared 60-40 by the federal and provincial governments.

Well, lo and behold, the federal government had met their commitments, they have honoured their commitments. Yet we here in the province of Manitoba sit and wait for the provincial government to honour its commitment. People are asking me, are these people, have these people no honour, have they no respect for the commitment that they have made?

This NDP government owes the farmers of this province 40 percent of the transitional program. It was put in place clearly. Mr. Vanclief has said this many times, the federal minister. Many times he has said this is not a trade relief program, as our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has tried to make people believe that it is, and it is not. It has never been and it never will be. He said it is a transition program that will get you from the old program to the new program. It is bridge funding to the agricultural community that will get you from one to the other. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) should reprehend his Minister of Agriculture and tell her to get on with delivering what they have promised and committed to the farmers of Manitoba.

I believe that the food safety element and the environmental element, when I look at the draft regulations that are coming out of Ottawa now, are going to cause huge costs that are going to make the Business Risk Management program look pale in comparison. The fuel regulations that are coming out are going to force farmers to change every fuel tank in this province to double-lined tanks. If they are not going to change the fuel tanks, they are going to have to build cement berms around them to contain any spills.

Let me ask anyone in this province, you of those that know the farms. Have you ever seen a

big fuel spill on a farm? Have you ever read about one in the papers? Then why are we forcing farmers to spend huge amounts of money? It will be hundreds of thousands of dollars to change their fuel systems on their farms. Why are we doing these things? Why are we going to force farmers to put a sample of everything they sell off the farms in little boxes and maintain it to ensure identity preservations until that product is delivered to final destination. Can you imagine what will happen when that load of grain is delivered to the elevator and shipped to China and then for some reason it is turned around and sent back?

The farmers are going to have to pick up the bill. That is what is inherent in the food safety aspect and the Variety Identification program. The environmental program is the same. Who is going to pay? We are going to foist all these costs on the primary producers. Those producers are leaving fast and furious.

In the last three years, we have seen better than 3000 farmers call it quits. That is during an era when there was an NDP government in this province and they promised to be the protectorate of the small family farms. Well, the small family farm, according to the Minister of Agriculture and what she put on the record, the meaning of that was they would have to have a job off the farm, maybe both of them, to support their little farm with all farm income.

Do you know what has happened? Those small farmers are saying hold it, you know, if that is what is going to be required of us, to have two off-the-farm jobs to support our little farm, we are not going to stay. If we cannot raise enough money off that farm to raise a family, then what is the point? They are leaving; 3300 of them have left since the last census. I think this province and this Government should be ashamed of how they have dealt with the APF and how they have dealt with the agricultural community.

The other program that is the part of the environmental program is the water issues. I attended the freshwater conference in the city just a few weeks ago when the Premier opened the conference and the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Ashton) addressed the meeting and told

how absolutely flagrantly the farmers of Manitoba were polluting the waterways. He was going to put in place programs on soil testing and tillage practices and many other restrictive measures on farms that would stop the farmers from polluting the waterways with phosphates and nitrates.

* (16:50)

Mr. Speaker, having farmed in this province for better than 40 years, I can be witness to the massive changes that farmers have made. When I first started farming in the 1960s, the mow board plow was the prevalent tillage tool. Everything was black by the time the snow started falling. Today you can hardly find a black field in this province of Manitoba. They are all covered in straw. The mow board plow is gone, zero tillage, direct seeding, and minimum tillage equipment are the norm today. They made millions and millions of dollars of investment to change the way they farm. They are trying to protect the runoff off their farm by maintaining a straw base on top to allow the moisture to soak into the ground much, much more efficiently than it used to. Yet they are being accused of polluting the very soil that they are depending on to make a living. I think it is a shame that a government of this province, a Premier of this province, will accuse farmers in that manner.

The AXYS study that was commissioned by the Province of Manitoba, and I can quote Mr. Dwight Williamson, from the Manitoba Conservation Water Branch, in an interview that he did on CJOB. He said, well, this was a study that was commissioned by the Manitoba government to provide us with some additional tools to assist in managing this particular source of nutrients, that is through the livestock sector. In other words, they are trying to point their fingers that the livestock sector is degrading the environment in the province of Manitoba.

Quite frankly, the livestock, as we heard this morning again on radio, is one of the main economic drivers in rural Manitoba, the cattle industry and the hog industry. I believe the hog industry contributes some \$800 million annually to the economy of Manitoba and the cattle industry is right behind it with some \$500 million to \$700 million annually, depending on

what the prices are. Then, Mr. Speaker, you have a dairy industry, the poultry industry and you have many other sectors of livestock, including the sheep industry and numerous others that are major contributors to the economy of this province.

Yet we have a government that is intent on making sure that they will put as many stones in their way without giving any credence to studies that were commissioned, such as the AXYS study, which was nothing more than a bunch of estimates and guesstimates done. The minister accepted that report and is now using that AXYS report as his reason, or the fundamental document pointing to where the real problems lie. I think that is unfortunate; I think there should be more study done before anybody guesstimates and estimates on a matter that is so fundamentally crucial to this province.

We live far too far away from the export market to be able to economically raise grains and ship them to the China's of the world so that they can raise the livestock. We need to do it here. We could do it in an environmentally friendly manner, as the farmers of this province have proven till now. There are those very small and very powerful and very well-funded groups that have convinced this NDP government that the environment is being destroyed by that livestock industry. I think it is unfortunate that our Premier and the ministers of the Crown sitting there believe those small groups.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on a few other issues; one is the bovine tuberculosis issue. We have not only asked the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) to enforce her own legislation, to bring into being her legislation that would give her the right to quarantine the Riding Mountain National Park, not the areas surrounding the park, the park itself. We have heard now from Sheila Copps, the Minister responsible for National Parks, that she is willing to order action to eliminate the TB disease in that park. It is our minister, our Premier and our Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) that are unwilling to put the resources in place and give the order to put the quarantine on that park that would force the federal government to come in and take action and eliminate that disease. It is unfortunate that

we have people that have had to lose their entire livelihood.

I want to read this into the record. This comes from Grandview. It was a bad enough day when Darrell and Jean Mischuk learned that 40 of their cows, along with 18 calves would have to die. They would have to be killed. But, when their children, aged 11 and 7, heard that their 4 pet goats, 2 dogs and 16 barn cats also had to be slaughtered, killed, it was too much for them. When they were told their dogs and cats had to go, they cried themselves to sleep for a few days straight. This is one thing that I think is inherent about this Government, they really do not care. Just this last week there was another case of tuberculosis that was identified outside of the park in that same region. I think it is imperative that this minister and this Government—and I think it is the Premier (Mr. Doer) that should intervene and order the park to be quarantined.

The other one that I want to touch on is the Kyoto Protocol. We made much to do in this province about the Kyoto Protocol. Very few other countries in the world, including our American friends, have signed on to this agreement. This will be a hugely costly venture. I want to read this into the record. This is an article that was contained in a magazine that I got. At the bottom it says, say no to Kyoto. It says: Four years ago an American study determined that implementing the Kyoto would increase farm expenses by up to 32 percent—increase farm expenses by up to 32 percent, depress annual farm income by 24 to 48 percent.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to put a few

comments on the Budget which was presented this week, Budget 2003-2004.

Mr. Speaker, before I get to those comments, I would like to recognize my colleague Marianne Cerilli, who has represented Radisson for many years and has done an admirable job, always dedicated to her riding, to the people she represented and a very innovative MLA. Developing, I remember one program—many years ago she hosted a seminar for the community at IMAX which encouraged Manitobans to take up the Internet and become enabled in new technologies. Marianne was always, and always took the steps to be, innovative, always with a broad and large focus, a brave woman and always principled. We did not always agree, and I think that is very healthy; but Marianne was able to articulate her position and represent her riding admirably. She will be an enormous loss to our team. I want to recognize her excellence as an MLA.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Mihychuk: Now, there has been some debate on several issues that are very important. The areas that I want to cover today are going to focus on jobs and wealth creation, youth migration, our economic vision, tax competitiveness and some new, innovative programs that have been announced in the Budget.

* (17:00)

Jobs and wealth creation is a very important component of what we try to do as a government, what we try to stimulate or encourage in the private sector primarily. Manitoba has done relatively well. We have the foundation of a solid economic base, and from that we have seen fairly significant job growth. Over the last three years we have seen approximately 21 000 jobs. Last year alone, 9100 jobs were created. That is an averaged amount over the 12-month period of 2002, which I would like to articulate for the record that I find the Opposition's use of one particular month as an indication of job creation to be somewhat devious and playing with statistics. We all know that they are using it to try and make a point. I would say that part of the folly of this is that adjustments will happen and then we may see a recovery of that job number

go from what they call 100 to 5000 in a one-month period. I think that members opposite understand that. The head of the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics explained it clearly that the selection of one month to one month was not an appropriate statistical technique and that this did not represent Manitoba's job creation numbers.

However, members across the way choose to use it to, I believe, deceive the public, mislead them on Manitoba's economy and job creation. I find that disappointing and would ask members to reflect that statistics can come back to haunt you. Again, going back to the advice from the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, it is always better to take an averaged amount than to take one particular month. Another evidence that this number was, indeed, somewhat suspect was that it took them 44 months to find a statistic that they would even be willing to discuss, because the record of job creation has surpassed the Tory years each and every month. So they had to wait almost four years before they could find one statistic which they could use to spin their inaccurate portrayal of Manitoba's economy. I understand it is getting to be a time of anxiousness for members on the other side; perhaps they are speculating about a major job evaluation coming up by the people of Manitoba and wish to try to make immediate scores or points.

But, again, I would just caution you that the statistics come out monthly. What may seem as a jab now may be a large turkey to eat at the beginning of May. So let us just reflect that last year was 9100 jobs and the year before was 3500 and even that, although it would seem disappointing, was the average amount created during the nineties, and it was during the horrific incidents in the United States, September 11 and the downturn in the United States economy. So most provinces in Canada actually saw a much more severe job loss or a harder hit on their economy than Manitoba did. The job statistics have been positive. They continue to be so.

We see continued growth which is very good. Just very recently we have announced or heard about the creation of many new jobs in Manitoba. So far, in 2003, a new Mediplan Internet pharmacy in Niverville is going to be built, employing 300 people. Job postings have been placed for the new Simplot potato plant in

Portage la Prairie of 230 jobs, something, I believe, our honoured member from Lakeside would have said would never, ever happen. We are very pleased that his cynical attitude about that project was actually turned around. We can celebrate the jobs in Portage la Prairie. It is going to be one of the most technologically advanced plants in the world. We are very pleased with that.

We saw the announcement last week of a new \$10-million pharmaceutical plant to open in St. Boniface, Nuco, a company that has chosen Manitoba without grants that used to be the mantra of the Tories, and the Filmon legacy. Without those luring companies, we now see an economic platform which is attracting companies with no subsidies. We are looking at that as a positive indicator, especially in a particularly exciting sector, that being the life sciences sector.

The new \$21-million expansion announced last Friday by Wipak is another success story, which will create more jobs in a high-tech sector. Corner Group Industries has completed a \$12-million expansion with 78 jobs. Biovail in Steinbach announced last month that they will need 100 new employees. By my count, this year alone, we have created 821 brand-new jobs for Manitoba. I think that the Tories, members of the Opposition, need to reflect that when they, again, use selective statistics, Manitobans will not be fooled. They know from their own perspectives that many people have found opportunities to engage the workforce.

We have lowered our social assistance roles to historic levels, and people are finding employment and gainfully supporting their own families. I think it is important that we reflect on the Tory record, and one of the most dismal years was 1996. We will recall when the Filmon government created—well, actually, they lost 400 jobs in 1996. In 1992, even worse, 4600 jobs were lost in Manitoba, and in 1991, they actually lost 8400 jobs. Yes, sometimes there are times when we will see stronger job growth, and times when Manitoba has actually experienced job loss. Fortunately, since 1997, we have seen job growth continue in Manitoba. So I think that, when we look at the record of the two governments, we can compare our record to theirs any

day. I am glad to have an opportunity to put that on the record.

In fact, Stats Canada has indicated that the capital investment in Manitoba, or the increase in capital investment in Manitoba, is actually going to be 13.2 percent. That will be much stronger than B.C.'s capital investment, which is 8.3, stronger than Ontario at 6.7, and more than double of that highly touted province by the Opposition, Alberta; more than double Alberta, which is only at 5.3 percent.

I think it is important that we all recognize that it is important to create jobs in all months, and to be reasonable with statistics. We know that there are variances, and this type of mischief, indeed, is short term, and will result in members opposite red-faced and having to explain their inability to do research once again.

I would like to turn to youth migration and out-migration in general. Manitoba has seen a modest population growth, and something that would indicate we are on the positive track, but, quite frankly, not enough. Not enough. We need to not only grow modestly; we need to grow more aggressively. We need to stem the tide of youth that are choosing to leave Manitoba. We have reduced the numbers of youth that are leaving, but we have not turned it around completely. So it is important that Manitobans continue to give us another mandate so that we will build on that positive record and what was a huge bleed in Manitoba's youth has been stemmed but has not been conquered.

* (17:10)

I think it will take all of us to look at a vision of Manitoba which is aggressive and strong and hopeful and where young people are given an opportunity to earn the same wages as other jurisdictions, to be able to fulfill their career goals as they can fill in other jurisdictions. I believe they could do that now.

I think that there are great opportunities in Manitoba's economy. In fact, we still have a skill shortage. Part of our problem is perception and the way that we think about our own strength. So I would urge all members across the way, instead of looking at doom and gloom and

calling that the sky is falling, that it is in the responsibility of each and every one of us as representatives to look positively at the opportunities for youth, to work co-operatively with the Government, to take on a challenge that is important to each and every Manitoban no matter what their political colour.

We have been reducing the number of young people that are leaving. And one statistic that I find encouraging is in 1999 Canada West Foundation I believe did a survey that found that 60 percent to 65 percent of young people felt they had to leave Manitoba to fulfil their career goals. About a year and a half ago, Canada West did the same survey and 65 percent of young people believed that they could fulfil their career goals at home. So that has turned around, but we need to get it to 100 percent, and we need to attract young people from other jurisdictions and bring them into a vibrant economy where they know that there are opportunities.

So I think one of the ways image and the way we talk about Manitoba's future and the way that we know it is true, is an important part of it, and that we talk to our young people about opportunities. I am proud of the new initiatives that this Government has taken to continue to work on stemming the outflow. Many young people are choosing Manitoba to go to school. We know that those who have had the experience to go to school here have very positive reflections on their time. Many stay from other jurisdictions, and many understand the advantages of being in Manitoba. So that is a very positive aspect.

In addition, the opportunities for having a higher education, we know, are directly correlated with higher wages and it is a very satisfying statistic to know that we have over 20 percent more students in our educational institutions than we did four years ago. So that bodes well for Manitoba as it is providing us access to the skilled workers that we do need to attract and retain. And that opportunity exists, and I think that we will be able to do that.

In addition, we have been successful with our immigration program and many immigrants from around the world are flocking to Manitoba. Applications are overwhelming immigration

staff. The number of people that wish to come to Manitoba from all over the world is heartening, and it is something that we should reflect on, that many people of the world are ready and willing and are anxious to come to Manitoba. I am very proud of a Government that recognizes that, welcomes them and includes them. I think Manitoba should be congratulated for our tolerance, our ability to accept people from other parts of the world. We do that; we are probably the best at doing that in the country. So as that grows I think we can all celebrate in the diversity of the people that are choosing Manitoba, choosing Manitoba to bring their families, to build their lives, and invest.

Our tax competitiveness is important when we compare, particularly opportunities, business opportunities. I know, I have an opportunity to work with Manitoba's most innovative and entrepreneurial, probably eccentric individuals who are the leaders of our business community, and many of them are risktakers. I know that they look at all kinds of factors when they are assessing where to expand and where to develop. We have an advantage in that our leaders are here. They are committed to Manitoba, and they are expanding in Manitoba. But I know when we are attracting others to come to Manitoba, they look at a list of factors. More and more, the No. 1 component for their decision making is the overall economic situation. Yes, it does include tax competitiveness. It includes wages. It includes property taxes. It includes a number of different cost structures. Manitoba's hydro cost structure has now really become a positive on the balance sheet. Moving up their criteria is the availability of skilled workers, and more and more that is becoming a criteria for companies to decide where to expand, or where to locate. Again, it feeds into our No. 1 economic strategy, and that is to build on our educational platform. That also builds into wealth creation.

Now, I think that members opposite, from the looks on their faces, were quite surprised when the NDP once again brought in tax cuts, something that the party did not campaign on but recognized that it was important that the tax structure in Manitoba be competitive with our neighbours. We have, year after year after year, made substantial reductions in taxation to the tune of \$300 million of cost for tax cuts. I think

they were necessary. They are part of an overall set of criteria that we need to do. We were also able to provide more supports to programs. But this year we are focussed on the middle tax bracket, and that, we are proud to say, is being reduced by 6 percent and will cost the provincial Treasury \$40 million annually. There is a new corporation capital tax initiative that will benefit growing firms. We have extended the Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit for another three years, and the small business tax rate moves up to a ceiling this year of \$360,000. All of these initiatives, some that were announced previously but have been maintained, will make a difference to the small business owner, the medium-sized business owner and the larger business owner.

I think the time for the private sector to be the main job creator is here. We see that in every jurisdiction. What we need to do is have a system which encourages private-sector job growth and I think that is what our Government is doing.

I also quickly want to talk about a new initiative, well, two things about the department this year. For the fourth year in a row, Industry, Trade and Mines has reduced its budgetary expenditures. That was a commitment that we made, that we would reduce business subsidies. That we are able to actually increase programs with fewer staff and for less money, I think, is a tribute to the people who are working in the department and understand how it is important to prioritize spending.

I am proud of the civil servants whom I have a chance to work with, their commitment to Manitobans, their ability to see savings which could then be put to other areas which have great needs—for example, our health care system, our educational system, and to those who are, unfortunately, much less fortunate than we are in this House, those who are collecting social assistance. For the first time in over a decade, we are able to make a small increase to those individuals—many on disabilities, many who, although they wish to work, have not been able to become fully engaged in the workforce. So I am proud of that as well.

* (17:20)

My department and our record stands, I think, the test of time, having reduced its budgetary expenditures year after year after year after year. In fact, I have been criticized by some business organizations that the mission of government is to grow, that the business department should actually be increasing its expenditures. I would just like to remind them that, overall, the majority of business people and organizations have asked us to reduce government expenditures, and we have made substantial efforts to reduce the amount of business subsidies, business grants and supports in my department. I think that the budgetary records will prove that ITM has set the mark for a department that has taken on the challenge and met it.

Mr. Speaker, we have introduced a new program, a recommendation by PEAC, which is the Premier's Economic Advisory Council. They recommended an ambassadors program, which engages the private sector, and engages those that are in non-government, to participate in our efforts to grow international and national trade. Our ability to do that is looking to those outside of government to assist us. There are other jurisdictions that have done this successfully; I know of Saskatchewan's. In fact, I had the opportunity to talk to a businessperson who moved there from here, and said they had been an ambassador for Saskatchewan, and would we consider such a program. Immediately, you can see the advantages. The private sector has already an understanding of international markets. They are working in that field all the time. There is a willingness for them to co-operate, to share that. What we can provide to them is our intelligence of various markets, our literature and portfolio, and business cards; we will include them with briefing sessions. We are asking the community to nominate candidates to come and join us on the ambassadors program, and I am quite excited about it. The Premier's Economic Advisory Council adopted that. I am looking forward to moving on that, and facilitating or accessing their expertise.

So, overall, I think, in review, you see a Budget that continues to prepare Manitoba for a positive future, maintains a balanced approach, balances the budget, pays down a portion of our debt, takes care of our liabilities, pension liabilities, invests in our priorities—education, health,

innovation—and you can see some reductions in areas where we can see that those can be made.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for having an opportunity to say a few words on the Budget; trying to put the record straight on job creation, how we have more than tripled the average of the Tory years, and we look forward to continuing such a positive, strong economic legacy in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

When this matter is again before the House, debate will remain open.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 24, 2003

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