

**Fourth Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
**and**  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**First Session—Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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

Friday, April 25, 2003

**The House met at 10 a.m.**

### *PRAYERS*

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### **Supported Living Program**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I wish to present the following petition and these are 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 Michelle Hay, George Hay and F. I. Winter.

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

#### **Highway 276**

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition, the background of which is that:

Grain farmers require a safe, dependable and efficient means by which to transport their grain to market. Grain elevators have been closed at McCreary, Ste. Rose and Makinak. Due to grain elevator closures, farmers north of Ste. Rose are required to use long-haul trucks to transport their grain to market. Load limits are in place on Highway 276 north of Ste. Rose, preventing grain farmers from using long-haul trucks to transport their grain on this highway, causing considerable additional cost. Farmers north of Ste. Rose have no alternative route to hauling their grain on portions of Highway 276.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Smith) to consider the reduction or elimination of load limits on Highway 276 north of Ste. Rose to permit grain farmers to haul their grain to market using long-haul trucks.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider upgrading

Highway 276 to enable farmers to drive long-haul trucks on this highway and remain competitive.

I present it on behalf of Russell Panagapko, Walter Iwanchysko, Mike Kolochuk 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.

\* (10:05)

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Office of the Children's Advocate for the period April 1, 2001, to March 31, 2002.

#### 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 the Springs Christian Academy 16 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. David Vadersteen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

Also in the public gallery we have from Churchill High 25 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Tim Friesen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training (Ms. McGifford).

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

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Taxation Provincial Comparisons

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, this morning there are a number of nurses that are being pinned, and I think we on this side of the House would like to congratulate the Faculty of Nursing who aggressively went out and recruited these nurses. We think it is an important day in Manitoba.

The Budget that was brought down earlier this week gave young Manitobans no hope for the future. There was nothing in the Budget to make Manitoba competitive. Today, as I said, hundreds of nurses are being pinned and may be graduating, but there is no guarantee at all that they will stay and work in the province of Manitoba. In fact, the Government offered no incentive in their Budget that would give nurses any reason to want to stay and work in Manitoba. I would like to ask the Premier why he insists on making Manitobans the highest taxed west of New Brunswick.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps members opposite have collective amnesia. They may recall that after 11 years in office and after they presented the '99 Budget, they woke up one day in August and said, oh, there is a massive tax gap in Manitoba versus other provinces in Canada. There is a massive tax gap that we did not fix, that we left here in the province of Manitoba. Now we have had a conversion on the road to Damascus and we are going to fix our own tax gap. We have the tax gap that you left us after 11 years in office.

You know what the problem with members opposite is? Not only did we inherit a tax gap from them that we have started to correct with an over 10% income tax cut since we were elected, the real issue in Manitoba is not just the tax gap, it is the credibility gap of members opposite.

#### Nursing Profession Full-time Employment Opportunities

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when the Premier talks about a credibility gap. It was in 1999 that this member, this Premier, looked at Manitobans and said elect me and I will hire more full-time nurses. Under his watch, the nursing shortage has doubled. You want to talk about credibility, that is the lack of credibility. This is just one of the health care promises that this Premier has broken when he committed to Manitobans.

Why, in the fact that he made that promise to Manitobans and has failed, should any Manitoban have any confidence that the majority of

much-needed, full-time nurses will be offered full-time jobs when they graduate?

\* (10:10)

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we are graduating three times more nurses today than we did in 1999. The salaries—[*interjection*]

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The numbers of nurses that are graduating and staying in Manitoba is very, very positive in terms of the numbers. It is partly due to the fact that members opposite eliminated the RN training program in Manitoba. They eliminated it. They abolished it, they destroyed it, they got rid of it. Eighty-five percent of the nurses working on the front lines in Manitoba in 1999 were RNs. The members opposite got rid of it. We reinstated it and we are graduating nurses today.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the president of the Manitoba Nurses' Union says in the most recent edition of the *MN* news magazine, reference that magazine, that we are heading into the worst time of the shortage, talking about nurses. It also says we are witnessing, I think members on the other side would be interested in this if they would listen, we are witnessing—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Murray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am quoting from a magazine, the MNU and the message from the president of the MNU and she says: We are witnessing an exodus of new nursing grads who cannot get full-time work. She goes on to say: We cannot afford to let this continue.

I would make one clarification in what she is saying. He cannot afford to let this continue, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing very full-time nursing jobs being offered. We are seeing high taxes in this province. There is no opportunity for these nurses to even look at Manitoba because of the high tax regime being introduced by the Doer government. When he has an opportunity to make Manitoba more competitive, knowing that we need more full-time nurses, why does he

insist on making hardworking Manitobans the highest taxed west of New Brunswick? Why does he do it?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, members opposite cherry pick all kinds of numbers. When we came into office, the middle-income tax bracket that was bequeathed to us by the persons that had their conversion on the road to Damascus, after 11 years in office, the middle-income tax rate was the highest in Canada. The corporate tax rate was the highest in Canada. Those are the facts. We have decreased that rate by over 11 percent. Just in this recent Budget, it is a 6% tax reduction for people that would be in the nursing classification.

We have not only the 6% tax reduction on top of the wage increases that we had to deal with when we came into office, we also have a joint committee with the Nurses' Union because part of the problem is the supply of nurses. Part of the problem has been in the salaries of nurses. The third problem, of course, is many of the collective agreements, which we again inherited from members opposite, provide for full-time nurses to have every second weekend off which is a structural challenge that we have to deal with in co-operation with the nurses in terms of dealing with that challenge.

Having said that, I am pleased the member opposite has now found credibility with the Nurses' Union and the Nurses' Union president, he will now acknowledge that it was the Nurses' Union that said that the Tories under Connie Curran fired a thousand nurses here in Manitoba.

### **Out-Migration Reduction Strategy**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, a recent poll conducted by the Canada West Foundation found that nearly eight in ten Manitobans feel that retaining our young people is a high priority. According to the provincial government's own statistic, twelve Manitobans are leaving each and every day to find opportunity elsewhere, yet this Doer government fails to address this issue.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance honestly believe that an extra \$4 per day that his

so-called tax cuts puts in the pockets of a young person will do anything to keep them here in Manitoba?

\* (10:15)

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, it is passing strange that the member opposite with her one-trick pony questions on tax reductions would fail to tell the public and this Legislative Chamber that the priority of tax cuts—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order

**Mr. Doer:** The tax cut priority in that same poll that the member opposite was quoting, it was No. 10 on the priority list for Manitoba citizens. Obviously they see a government dealing with the credibility gap and the tax gap that was bequeathed to us by the Tory government. Obviously they see that.

Let me say that the issue here is in migration and out-migration, and we accept the fact that the net out-migration in the 1990s was over 600. It is now at 250 net out-migration for young people between the ages of 18 and 25. We are not perfect. We think reducing it by over 50 percent in three years in office is a good start, but there is more work to do.

That is why this Budget has co-operative tax credits for students or new students hired in a co-operative education program. That is why we have extended by six months the period of time for student loan interest rate payback. That is why again we have a middle-income tax cut to go along with the tax rates at the lower income which are some of the best and most competitive in Canada. That is why we are continuing a low tuition rate policy here to keep young people in this province. You will see that 250 people that we have still got to deal with, that 250 people in out-migration, you will see that overcome with the over a thousand students who will be at the new Red River College in September of 2003. Hang on.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, does the Premier not read the *National Post* and realize that this is

a No. 1 issue for Manitobans, the mass exodus of our youngest and brightest?

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for asking the question because it provides me an opportunity to show how consistent the members are on the other side of the benches. I would like to point out that the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) has been quoted and wrote a report indicating that he felt that the brain-drain was an urban myth.

**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. Maybe she should listen to the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I would like to remind all honourable ministers that according to *Beauchesne* Citation 417 answers to questions should be as brief as possible and deal with the matter that is raised.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Mr. Speaker, what I was trying to point out is that this takes this issue of out-migration very seriously, not like members opposite who have publicly written reports that it is actually a myth. We do not agree with that position and in fact have taken specific strategies to stem the outflow of youth, which is a very important issue.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, when is this Government going to get its head out of the sand and realize that the mass exodus of our young people from this province is a significant cost to our economy? When are they going to wake up

and realize that this is a serious issue and do something about it?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, out-migration, ages 15 to 24, 1999 to 2002, net 251 people; 1990 to 1999, 601. You are almost three times the mass number you are saying in terms of your years in office. We have always—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** I think the essence of the *National Post* survey and the Canada West Foundation has some very, very interesting findings for all of us. That is why this Budget dealt with so many action plans to continue to make progress on the 600 or so people that were leaving the province on a net migration basis, over 600 compared to 251. This Budget acknowledges that we have made significant progress but there is more work to do. I think that—

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

\* (10:20)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** All around us we see the signs of this progress. The endangered species of the building crane is now returning to Manitoba for the future of our province.

#### **Nursing Profession Full-time Employment Opportunities**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the nursing shortage has skyrocketed to over 1500 vacancies under this Minister of Health's (Mr. Chomiak) watch. The head of the Nurses' Union has said, and I quote: As we head into the worst time of the shortage, we see nurses working in multiple positions to get full-time hours.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if today he would promise full-time work to the 1300 nurses who are working between two to four jobs right now just to get full-time work in Manitoba.

**Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, we are delighted that more than 600 nurses will graduate, including significant numbers from the RN program that represented 85 percent of our nurses during the period before you cancelled that program.

In 1999, which is three and a half years ago, 210 nurses graduated. It was entirely predictable that the nursing shortage would be a problem, because the Opposition when they were government cut programs that would graduate enough nurses in 1999 so that in the year 2002-2003 there were enough nurses.

That said, we have made incredible progress in regard to the nursing training situation. We have enough critical care nurses now that we have been able to reopen some beds that were closed in our ICUs. We will be graduating 600-plus nurses every year that this Government is in power. That is good news.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The Acting Minister of Health did not answer the question. I would like to ask him: Of all the nursing students who are being pinned today, how many of those nurses who will graduate later this summer have a contract right now for full-time work in this province?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, we are delighted to congratulate the 351 nurses that are being honoured this morning with the completion of their program at the Faculty of Nursing.

There are well over 200 available full-time jobs in Winnipeg right now, and there are more, in fact, available if we continue our very good partnership with the nursing union to work at the question of how we can employ more nurses when the contracts that this previous government entered into made it mandatory that people would have every second weekend off. That is a structural issue which cannot be overcome outside of the collective bargaining framework. That is why we are working co-operatively with the nursing federation. That is why we are working to create the flexibility in the system so that those jobs can be found. We are not laying off a thousand nurses; we are graduating 600.

### Education and Training

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the acting minister again did not answer the question and I would like to ask him: Considering the shortage we have of nurses in Manitoba right now, why were 160 potential students turned away from the university nursing program in the year 2000 and why were 260 potential students turned away in 2001 when we have a nursing shortage that has doubled grossly under this Government?

\* (10:25)

**Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, the member has a lot of nerve to ask that question when in 1999 the nurses that they allowed into the profession were 210 and when in this year we have over 600 that will be graduating. We have tripled the enrolment. They have a lot of gall to ask that question.

Mr. Speaker, the casualizing of the nursing profession began under the previous government when Connie Curran's work resulted in the abolition of more than a thousand jobs, and in order to share the remaining available work, some flexibility was entered into which has now created in the collective agreements some of the problems. It stems from the layoff of a thousand nurses and the incredible cutbacks under the previous government, and those kinds of structural issues can only be dealt with overtime. That is why there are 600 more graduating this year, 210 graduated the year they left office. We are solving the problem. We have done a lot but there is more to do and we acknowledge that.

### Fiscal Stabilization Fund Transfer Payment Return

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, he still has not answered how many he will employ of the new graduates.

When we talk about balanced budget in this province, we believed that it would be done in a fair and reasonable manner, but this Government has managed to avoid balanced-budget legislation by stealing money out of Hydro and now they have perpetuated the myth. I actually think as a person the Minister of Finance is a gentleman, but why would he promise in the March 31, 2002, report that he was going to

return \$150-million transfer from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in lieu of payment from Hydro? This will be returned. Why did he not return it?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** The member from Ste. Rose, having had experience in government and I would say having had experiences being a minister, will understand that things change and when things change governments have a responsibility to respond to those things. When a provincial auditor recommended that a transfer from Hydro be handled in a certain way, that was listened to and respected.

In addition, we have also seen other changes in terms of transfer payments in the last quarter where the federal government has rebased its equalization payments based on a different data base from a different year which has also resulted in an adjustment in the last quarter in equalization payments. So, when those things occur, we make the appropriate adjustments and fully report them to the Legislature as is our responsibility.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that this Finance Minister could not better explain why in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund report he indicates and repeats that, as a transfer measure a \$150-million transfer was made in lieu of a payment, the fund will be replenished, in lieu of a payment from Hydro. Why can he not explain that promise broken?

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, as I explained to the member from Ste. Rose, there was a recommendation to record that transfer from the provincial auditor which this office has respected and showed accordingly and been fully accountable to the Legislature for that.

**Mr. Cummings:** This minister has presided over the spending of an additional billion dollars worth of revenue to this province and his best explanation is things change. Then he repeated that again in this report, Mr. Speaker, the financial quarterly ending in September '02. That is not very long ago, Mr. Minister. Why did you mislead the people of this province?

\* (10:30)



**Mr. Selinger:** As I indicated earlier, when accounting issues are addressed by the Minister of Finance and his officials, we report those changes in our quarterly reports, we report them in our Budget, and we have fully done that. We have indicated to all the citizens of Manitoba and the Legislature why the change was made. The provincial auditor wanted that transfer recorded as a subsequent event in a different financial year and we complied with that as was his recommendation.

### **Manitoba Hydro Debt**

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier has drained Manitoba Hydro dry. We know that this Government has increased Manitoba Hydro's debt by almost a billion dollars. We know that Hydro profits are down 70 percent and now Manitobans are facing a 20% rate increase.

Can the Energy Minister (Mr. Sale) confirm that Manitoba Hydro's total debt for the very first time is now larger than the province's general purpose debt?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that members opposite would pay over \$445 million for Centra Gas when they were in office, not record it in the general debt line of Manitoba Hydro, and when this Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) acts in a forthright way to put that debt that they incurred on the books, they would then have again a latter-day conversion to ask questions about that.

The debt, there is over \$1.5 billion in investments in capital in the Hydro books, \$500 million of that is the surplus over the last four years, profit over the last four years that has gone into the operation of the company and another billion dollars, half of which went to Centra Gas is in for capital assets, Centra Gas, Winnipeg Hydro, the gas turbine plant in Brandon for \$185 million, the Selkirk gas plant to eliminate the coal plant in Selkirk, Manitoba, over \$35 million.

The Hydro corporation has made approximately \$750 million over the last four years. The dividend is approximately \$254 million for a net capital asset gain of about \$500 million in the corporation. Mr. Speaker, the biggest, largest

amount of capital debt in the last four years on the books for Hydro was the Centra Gas company, a decision made by the opposite members when they were in government.

**Mr. Tweed:** Mr. Speaker, I will take the Premier's answer as a yes, that it is now exceeding the provincial debt.

### **Rate Increase**

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** I would like to ask the Energy Minister (Mr. Sale) or the Premier, if he cares to answer: Can he guarantee Manitoba ratepayers that they will not see an increase in rates by his Government forcing Manitoba Hydro to build a new headquarters?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member opposite has pointed out that the debt level for the general purpose debt of the Manitoba government has gone down and down and down over the last four years. If you look at—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was interested to read a newspaper article with a set of numbers from across the country dealing with debt levels on the operating side of governments across the country.

It is interesting to note that Manitoba's debt rate—[interjection] Perhaps members could pipe down, Mr. Speaker. The debt level in Manitoba was second only to that of Alberta and that is why this Government has received a higher credit rating from Moody's looking at all the entities of government.

We may not be perfect like the Member for Turtle Mountain, but our credit rating is better than the Member for Turtle Mountain, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Tweed:** Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain to Manitobans why every time Hydro puts out a forecast, the third one in the last 12 months, that targets are pushed back, debt is increased and rate increases are hiked? Can the Premier explain that to Manitobans?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I think it was almost a year ago when we had the predictions about a drought and then we had monsoons in July. Most of the time the Tories want it two ways, but today they want it three different ways.

First of all, the rates have not gone up in Hydro since we were elected. The rates have not gone up in Manitoba Public Insurance since we were elected, and, in fact, the rates for rural farmers have gone down under this Government, something that was opposed by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the rates have gone up over 65 percent for telephones after members opposite voted with the brokers of Manitoba instead of with the rural communities, and you will be accountable for that.

Finally, the members opposite identify the fact that we are going to have the issue of the debt. Either Centra Gas is a debt that they incurred that has an asset behind it equal or better than the \$450 million that they spent in that decision, or they were misleading the people of Manitoba when they made that decision. You tell us what the truth is, Mr. Speaker.

### **Health Care System Advertising Campaign**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, this year, we are all grateful for a huge transfer of dollars from the federal government for health to our province, transferred with the understanding that the provincial government would deliver on real reform to the health care system and would use evidence-based decision making to ensure wise spending of the federal health care dollars.

I ask the Premier today: Why are federal dollars being spent on an NDP pre-election advertising campaign rather than on improving health care for Manitobans?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the member will know that when he was in office, the amount of money that was voted in the Budget, and only a few Liberals had the courage to stand up for patients and the member opposite was not one of them. They paid an ultimate political price, but the share of money from the federal government that was in the '93 Budget

was 18 percent, and the '95-96 Budget was cut down to 14 percent. He voted for that. He voted for a cutback of \$240 million in terms of the reductions in health care spending here in Manitoba. He voted for the equivalent of closing down every hospital in rural and northern Manitoba. That is what he voted for. So he had his chance. He had his opportunity. He voted for a bad budget in '95-96. He did not vote for health care or for the patients of Canada or Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerrard:** And what is clearly needed is better accounting for how federal dollars are spent, quite frankly.

Je demande au ministre des Finances pourquoi il permet l'utilisation des fonds fédéraux pour la santé d'une façon qui ne démontre aucun bénéfice pour l'amélioration de la santé des Manitobains.

### **Translation**

*I ask the Minister of Finance why he is allowing the use of federal funds for health, in a way that is of no demonstrated benefit in improving the health of Manitobans.*

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I respect the abilities of the member to speak in French. I also respect the abilities of many other members to speak in French in this House and in the province. I thought the member opposite today would apologize for his comments dealing with the member of St. Boniface because I think all of us should give due credit for the work and efforts of all people to learn other languages, whether it is Cree, Ukrainian, French, English. We should be proud of people learning other languages and I would hope the member opposite would apologize for his comments.

### **Election Finances Act Review**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I encourage and I am glad that the member yesterday spoke in French and I wish the Premier had given him an opportunity to answer today.

My second supplementary: I would ask the Premier today why he is indulging in such flagrant abuse of the power of the public purse. Will the Premier today commit to a fair, all-party

review of The Elections Finances Act so that the flagrant abuse which is occurring today cannot happen in the future? Why is the Government, when it spends health care dollars in pre-election advertising, showing more interest in using a loophole in the new Elections Finances Act than in following the spirit of the law?

\* (10:40)

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Le député de River Heights a posé une question : pourquoi il y a de la publicité dans le domaine de la santé. C'est clair dans la Commission Romanow. Il est nécessaire de mettre devant le public les idées, les possibilités d'utiliser les services d'une façon plus efficace. On a utilisé un petit peu de ressources pour éduquer le public sur ses options. Pour les autres dimensions du domaine de la santé, on a mis tout l'argent, toutes les ressources du gouvernement fédéral, dans le budget pour les programmes prioritaires demandés par les citoyens du Manitoba.

#### **Translation**

*The Member for River Heights asked a question as to why there is advertising in the area of health care. It is clear in the Romanow Commission. It is necessary to put before the public ideas and possibilities for using services more efficiently. We used a small amount of resources to educate the public about its options. As for the other dimensions of health care, we put all of the money, all of the resources from the federal government into the Budget for the priority programs called for by the citizens of Manitoba.*

#### **Livestock Industry Tuberculosis Control**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** On Thursday, April 17, there was a documented web posting that indicated that we now have the third infected herd of tuberculosis in the province of Manitoba. Could the Minister of Agriculture, for the benefit of the House today, tell us how many cattle have been killed in the province of Manitoba since the infection started.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** The member is accurate.

There has been a third infected herd that has been put down. I can tell the member that it is in the range of 200 animals that have been put down because of suspicious TB. I do not have the exact number with me, but I would provide that for him. I can tell him that it is in the range of 200 animals.

#### **Elk Population Tuberculosis Control**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I wonder if the minister could tell this House what conversation she and the minister of parks, Sheila Copps, have had in regard to eliminating the disease in the Riding Mountain National Park over the last couple of weeks.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say that our Government has been very aggressive on this issue, very different from the previous administration. In 1997 the previous administration was told that there was TB in the park. They decided to ignore it and capture elk and then disperse those elk in the farming community.

Our Government, as soon as we took office, put in place a TB strategy, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Ste. Rose, on a point of order.

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot stand in her place and imply that those elk were unhealthy. They were the most tested elk in Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Ste. Rose, before making a ruling I would just like to remind all honourable members when rising on a point of order it is to point out the departure from the rules or unparliamentary language, but not to use points of orders for debate.

The honourable Member for Ste. Rose does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we took office and recognized that there was a problem, we put in place a TB strategy committee involving parks, involving Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Agriculture and Food, the Manitoba Cattle Producers and other groups. We have put in place a plan.

Mr. Speaker, our Government, our representatives along with farm organizations, went to Ottawa to make representation, and the Minister of Conservation and I both wrote a letter to Sheila Copps. That is why there is now some action taking place in the park. We are acting not ignoring the problem like they did.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Emerson, on a new question?

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Emerson, on a new question.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** The Minister of Agriculture has consistently said that this is Ottawa's responsibility. In a news release on April 17, Sheila Copps, the Minister responsible for parks in Canada insisted that she is not the one responsible to solve the problem. We, in this Legislature, passed a piece of legislation giving the authority of this Government, this NDP government, to put a quarantine on that park, if they chose to do so and cause action to happen.

When will the Minister of Agriculture and her Government put in place a quarantine that will cause the federal government to take action to eliminate the tuberculosis in the Riding Mountain National Park?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, the member raised that particular point last year about the legislation saying that the legislation gave us the authority to fence the park. He is wrong. That is not what the legislation does. The Province does not have the ability.

Mr. Speaker, the member seems to be ignoring the fact that action is being taken. Because of the law being that we did, because of the letters that we wrote to the federal minister, because the activity of our Government has led to, the federal government is acting. The federal government is collaring and testing animals within the park. Yesterday and today, they are putting down suspicious animals.

Let him not say that our Government is not taking action. Let him remember 1997 when they knew there was TB in the park and all they did was capture them, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PTH 352 South

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, on October 2, 2002, I wrote to the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Smith) regarding a serious road condition within my constituency. More than 40 people at that time wrote me letters with their concerns in regard to PTH 352 south. In many of the letters the people commented on the serious disrepair of the road, the dangerous conditions and the high cost of repair and also the fear of safety for the people on the roads for their lives. Many of the people in their letters commented that they had increased car expenses and automotive expenses and many of the people feared for their lives when travelling on that road. These letters were forwarded on to the minister's office on October 2, and asked the minister to respond as soon as possible to take care of the safety and concerns of the people that live along Highway 352.

\*(10:50)

Well, Mr. Speaker, due to inaction of this Government and this minister the letters are now coming back again, and again the concerns on Highway 352 are the same as they were back in October of 2002. The people on these roads have a very high concern for their safety, for the safety of their children and for the extreme costs

that they are bearing because this minister has failed to act on a condition of a road that is deemed unsafe by all the people who travel on it. I will be forwarding these letters again on behalf of the people that live along PTH 352, again asking the minister to reverse his inactive role and take an active approach to securing this road for these people for the safety of their children. They pay their taxes and they say it many times in the letters: they expect the minister to respond.

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

### Youth at Risk Program

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Youth-at-Risk program which operates out of the former Boyd Park Recreation Centre which is now part of Sinclair Park Community Centre. The program is based on the assumption that all youth may be potentially at risk. Children aged 4 to 13 are therefore welcome to participate in a variety of activities.

The program seeks to meet some of the primary needs of children by offering a meal and snack program with the help of Winnipeg Harvest. The centre also provides many activities to keep children off the streets. Students play sports and games, create arts and crafts and learn valuable education and life skills here. Swimming and sports outings are also popular with participants. A computer purchased with the help of the Thomas Sill Foundation assists students with homework assignments.

To date, Youth at Risk has been extremely well received in my constituency. Over 200 children have been registered for the program. There have been between 15 and 30 participants who make use of the meal program and recreational activities.

I would like to commend the current coordinator, Ron Hartshorne, for his leadership and dedication to children and the Youth-at-Risk program. He has assisted with the help of a modest budget and a group of reliable volunteers. Today I would like to recognize the important role Youth at Risk plays in giving

children many types of opportunities. Our Government takes pride in hearing about these unique approaches to strengthening local neighbourhoods.

I am pleased that the advisory committee to the Building Communities program in the Burrows Central area have allocated money to improve and expand the recreation facility used by Youth at Risk so they can provide even better programs in a better facility.

### David Friesen

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Friesen, CEO of the Friesens Corporation of Altona, who on March 22 was named as Altona Citizen of the Year by the Altona District Chamber of Commerce. The Citizen of the Year banquet was held in combination with Altona's fundraising for its millennium facility plan. As a large benefactor of the millennium plan, it was seen as appropriate that David Friesen be honoured at this fundraising event. Altona is proud to be the home of Friesens Corporation, an employee-held company with over 500 staff members. The company was founded in Altona in 1907 by D. W. Friesen, David's grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, David Friesen is in fact not the first member of this family to receive the honour of the Altona Citizen of the Year. David's father, D. K. Friesen, was named as the recipient in 1998 and his uncles, Ted and Ray, have since also been named as citizens of the year. These men were three sons of D. W. Friesen's family and the company that was instrumental in building Altona from a village to a thriving town. Friesens Corporation's facility in Altona is Canada's largest single book manufacturing plant and is the only one of its kind that can handle all the preparation, printing, binding, under one roof. Friesens prints a variety of children's books, trade books, picture books, coffee table books, cookbooks and educational and year-books.

David Friesen is a graduate of the University of Manitoba and is presently the chair of the University of Manitoba capital campaign Building on Strengths fund. He is a director of the Blue Cross Life Insurance Company of Canada,

Crocus Investment Fund of Manitoba, the Premier's Economic Advisory Council of Manitoba, the World Wildlife Fund and community ownership solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate David Friesen on being named the recipient of this prestigious award and to wish David and his wife, Evelyn, and two sons, Noel and Kevin, all the best in the future.

### **Inwood School**

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed with the greatest of pleasure that I rise in the House today to thank the Minister of Education and Youth (Mr. Lemieux) the MLA for La Vérendrye, and the Public Schools Finance Board for the recent announcement on the 16th of April that a new school will be built in the Interlake community of Inwood.

Built in 1961, renovated in 1970, the current facility has deteriorated to the point where nothing but a new school will do. If our children are to grow into productive citizens and leaders in the future, the Government must put in place today the necessary infrastructure upon which they can plan and build.

The Inwood School announcement is the latest on an impressive list of education accomplishments this Government has implemented since taking power in 1999, highlighted by a major capital upgrade of the school in Lundar, a new early years school in Gimli, over a million dollars worth of renovations to both schools in Fisher Branch, a new exterior to the earlier school in Arborg, to name only a few. These projects, 100 percent funded by the provincial government, are a sure sign that the Interlake is back on the radar screen and that this Government will make infrastructure investments where necessary.

The Inwood School has achieved phenomenal growth since 1999 with enrolment up over 40 percent to a current total of 146 students. Excellent staff and an innovative teaching approach have certainly contributed to this success, as has the positive environment within the school itself which has attracted a significant

number of schools of choice students from other jurisdictions.

In closing, I again want to thank this Government for recognizing and addressing the need in the community of Inwood and I might add across the Interlake region in general over the past four years. I congratulate the people of Inwood on their success.

### **Immunization Programs**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, this week's Budget proved once again that we have a Government in power that lacks vision and has wrong priorities as their focus.

There are many Manitoba families that were waiting with anticipation for this Budget fully expecting that immunizations for children and families in this province would be announced in the provincial Budget. We have the pediatric association of Canada and Manitoba certainly supporting vaccinations for pneumococcus, meningitis and chicken pox to be covered under Pharmacare.

Presently in this province we have a two-tiered system, a system where those families that can afford to pay for those vaccines get their children inoculated or vaccinated. Families that cannot afford to pay anywhere from \$85 to up over \$300 or \$400, maybe up to \$600, for these vaccinations, cannot protect their children.

I have had calls, I have had letters, I have had e-mails from many of my constituents who have concerns and have indicated very clearly that this is an issue that should be addressed by our provincial government. I would quote from a couple of letters that I have received, Mr. Speaker, and it says, I quote: The NDP government is taking the things needed to raise healthy children and putting money into sports, which they appreciate does not do anything for the children.

Vaccinations, Mr. Speaker, are not a perk. They are a right of every child, not just the wealthy or upper-income families. So I would like to indicate today my disappointment that vaccinations for children and families that

cannot afford to pay for them were absent, and this Budget was silent on that issue.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Resumed debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the Government and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) and the debate remains open.

**Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa):** It is a pleasure and a privilege to be able to speak on a budget, a budget that was brought down by this Government a few days ago.

I will start by saying that the Budget is probably the most significant thing that happens in this Legislature and the most significant thing that is done by government. The Throne Speech tends to get a lot of pomp and ceremony with some vague promises and directions that the Government is going to go, but it is the budget document which outlines the policies of the Government. It outlines the direction of the Government. It outlines what the Government is going to fund. So it is a privilege to be able to speak on a budget and recognizing this is maybe my last chance to speak to a provincial budget. It is the fifteenth Budget that I have been able to speak to over the years that I have been here in the Legislature.

\* (11:00)

As my colleague from River East had indicated earlier, a budget should contain some vision and direction that a government is going to go in with their policies in the coming year. I think I, as most Manitobans and most people who studied the Budget, found this Budget very much lacking in terms of a vision of the province. It was very much a status-quo budget intended not to offend anybody, intended to sprinkle a little money over a whole variety of areas without really setting any new direction or

policy. For that reason, I would indicate that there is a lack of direction and a lack of vision, that this Government intends to coast into an election based on their record. I think most Manitobans understand that.

I would also like to start by thanking the members of the Department of Finance, those people from the deputy minister on down who are there to watch very closely over the markets, to understand how changes in financial policy affect the Government, how changes in the stock market, in the ratings that are given by ratings agencies affect the province. I know there are many, many professional members of the Manitoba Civil Service who work for the Department of Finance, as I indicate from the deputy minister on down, and I have tremendous respect for the work they do. They are truly servants of the Government and of the Legislature. They do their work to the best of their ability which I think is immense. Irrespective of what government is in place, it is their job to bring forward the actual facts about the finances of the Province, and they do a tremendous job.

I would also like to mention the members of Treasury Board. These are the hardworking people who look at the expenditure side of government, and it is an unbelievable amount of time that the staff at Treasury Board put in, as well as Treasury Board ministers who ultimately make the decisions. But, again, we have a very professional Treasury Board staff who look at each and every expenditure of government, not only in the preparation of the Budget but in the actualization of the Budget throughout the year.

Again, we are fortunate in Manitoba to have tremendous stability in the Treasury Board, that the same names and faces that have been there for years are still there, perhaps wishing sometimes to have a change, but I salute those members of Treasury Board who have brought together that information on the expenditure side, have worked with deputy ministers and departments to finalize a budget. Again, I think we are very fortunate in Manitoba to have those people in place.

I would like next to go to the whole area of revenue. Looking through the statements of

revenue prior to this Government coming into place, the 1999—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It is very difficult to hear the honourable member who has the floor. If members wish to have a conversation, you can use the loge or out in the hallway. The honourable Member for Minnedosa has the floor, and I think we should give him that respect. Thank you.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am sure we all respect the rulings that you make from day to day, and I thank you for that.

I wanted to talk about the revenue side of government and to establish that there has been tons of new money coming into this Government. I look at the budget document, the revenue document of 1999. In the estimates of revenue for '98-99, the revenue at that time was \$5.9 billion. That is as the '98-99 Budget came to a close. As I look at the Budget revenue document for the current year, the Government is anticipating a revenue estimate of \$7.3 billion. It means over the course of four years there has been an increase of approximately \$1.4 billion. That is a tremendous amount of new revenue. I would daresay that no government in the history of Manitoba has ever experienced a revenue growth of that magnitude, \$1.4 billion from the close of the '98-99 Budget to the current projections. I might even say that the projections over the last few years have been low. So, when the Government projects that they are going to have \$7.3 billion in revenue, they may be, in fact, lowballing that number because there are certain variables.

I would say that, due to the momentum in the economy that was generated in the late 1990s, after we came out of the recession of the early nineties, that momentum has carried on, and the federal government transfers have been increased, so that this Government again is looking at revenue of \$7.3 billion. No government in the history of Manitoba has had the opportunity to steward that amount of money ever before in history. It is incumbent on this Government to make wise decisions as they

move forward. Some of those decisions we are going to be critical of.

With \$1.4 billion of new revenue, virtually all of it dedicated to new expenditures, they have missed an opportunity. This new revenue should have been a time of great opportunity. Manitoba should have done over the last four years what other provincial governments have done, that is not only to attack the debt but also to greatly lower taxes. That opportunity was there and that opportunity has been lost in their rush to spend this money. Again, so much more of this should have been dedicated to tax reduction. I think this is my main criticism of the Government and this Budget, that this opportunity is lost. They could have drastically reduced taxes and made Manitoba competitive, competitive with the rest of Canada, certainly the rest of western Canada.

Often, when we talk about comparisons to other jurisdictions, I think, in the Manitoba context, comparisons to the Maritimes are often quite meaningless, not only because of distance but because of a different culture, a different economy and a different part of the world. But certainly we have to look at jurisdictions nearby like British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario. All of them, in recent budgets, have made substantial reductions in taxes. The opportunity for Manitoba was there. With \$1.4 billion of new revenue over that four-year period, they had an opportunity to do that.

I was taken by an article in the *Globe* the other day, earlier this week. I will just refer to it in part. It indicates low taxes fuel Alberta's economic prosperity, not just oil and gas. I think that members opposite should really have a look at that because I think, as my colleague from Lakeside has indicated, this has been lost on this Government. There could have been a much more balanced approach. I know that the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) often uses that term, that we have taken a balanced approach, but in fact, it has not been balanced. With \$1.4 billion of new revenue, a great deal of those resources could have been used to tax reduction. In fact, the Government would have seen that money come back. That is what Alberta has done. Again, this article, and I would recommend it to members opposite on fiscal management, that low taxes really help to fuel



that economy in Alberta, not just the fact that they have oil and gas. I repeat, this has been an opportunity that has been lost.

\* (11:10)

I would point out to the Government that there are significant risks on the horizon. I think there is a risk that the federal government may not be able to keep up with transfer payments as they now see them. That risk is there for a number of reasons. I am sure that we all hope and pray that we are going to see the end of this SARS epidemic, and it is not going to have an effect on individual people, loss of life, or on the economy.

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

But the fact of the matter is we do not know what direction that is going to go. In fact, recently, the city of Toronto has been taking extraordinary steps to try and reason with the public, not only the public of Toronto but the public of Canada and the United States and, in fact, the world, as the World Health Organization has warned people about travelling to Toronto.

This is going to have an immense effect on the economy of Canada because Ontario in many ways is the engine that drives that economy. There is a major risk here about what might happen to transfer payments if, in fact, this situation continues any longer. In the media today, we see tourism, for instance, being affected. The Blue Jays are considering cancelling ball games and playing out of town while this situation is going on. *[interjection]* The minister of higher education should understand that the Canadian economy and the Ontario economy have the biggest impact on transfer payments, and we have to be very, very alert to know that this could affect our revenue stream, and I am telling you that is one of the risks.

The other risk that I would like to mention is the federal government's relationship with the United States, that the federal government has blundered its way through relationships with the United States and this war in Iraq. The Prime Minister who has said even recently that the

Canadian position has been clear on Iraq, well, this Prime Minister cannot make a clear statement on anything. In fact, it has been very confusing, and this is going to have an impact on our relationship with our biggest trading partner.

It does not take much to slow down the border, and we are already hearing examples of people who are being affected by the American attitude towards Canada, an attitude I think well-deserved because of the relationship with the Prime Minister and his lack of reining in ministers and members of Parliament and staff members who have referred to the President of the United States as a moron, who have used unflattering terms to describe Americans. Is it any wonder that Manitobans have faced some difficulties in two American cities nearby who have military bases in Grand Forks and, in fact, in Minot, where cars have been vandalized and people have not been accommodated in the way they once were?

So I am telling you that there are risks to the revenue stream in Canada. We are seeing that there is trade action being taken. There are Canadians who have been trying to return to jobs in the United States. A son of a colleague of mine was denied entry the other day, where he was doing some work in Los Angeles. The American government and the American ambassador made it very clear there is unhappiness with the Government of Canada. So I am telling you that there is a risk to our economy and, hopefully, this can be repaired. Hopefully, we can get through the SARS situation, and, hopefully, we can repair relationships with our greatest trading partner, where so much of our trading takes place, but there is a risk to our revenue.

I point out that in the Revenue Estimates, there are significant increases in revenue. For instance, the corporation income tax which was estimated at \$146 million last year is estimated at \$270 million this year, and I really question whether that corporate income tax is going to be there, whether that revenue is going to be there and whether this Government is going to have to either dramatically reduce expenditures in year or find other sources of revenue. I also point out that the federal transfers which were estimated at \$2.3 billion last year are up to \$2.5 billion this

year, again a substantial, substantial increase, and I think if anything gives the Department of Finance and the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) nightmares. It is just wondering what those federal transfers are going to come in at.

If, in fact, these risks turn out to be real and there is impact on the economy of Canada because of the SARS scare and because of the very negative relationship with the United States government, there is a danger that those revenue targets may not be met. We are already seeing challenges of various types at the American border on trade issues. We are seeing people being challenged. We are seeing a slowdown at the border. There will be a slowdown in the economy, and this could lead to a lack of production or reduced production and, in fact, layoffs.

I would like to move next to the issue of taxes. The Finance Minister is a very honest man, and he is quoted in the *Free Press* as saying that in most cases the cuts and rebates have been 100 percent offset by increases in taxes set by school boards starved for provincial funding to meet increased costs. That is the reality of most of the tax cuts that have taken place, that there is some tinkering with the Education Support Levy, that there is some tinkering with other taxes, but the fact that the school divisions are in dire need of more funding means that the Special Levy is being used to backfill for what school divisions need. Again, there has been a tremendous opportunity lost here in reducing taxes.

I would like to, perhaps, look at an interprovincial comparison of taxes. There have been documents put out where we have looked at the taxes across Canada and of our nearest neighbour of Saskatchewan whom we are very similar to, who have seen the need to lower taxes, not only personal income taxes, but also the sales tax has been reduced to 6 percent in Saskatchewan. For two spouses earning \$50,000 each, the provincial tax in Manitoba is \$9,900 while in Saskatchewan it is \$8,700, again a dramatic difference of \$1,200, money that would normally be put back into the economy by those citizens, and those expenditures would help the economy to regenerate jobs and create more taxpayers out there.

A single person earning a \$60,000 salary in Manitoba, that person pays \$6,600. In Saskatchewan, they pay \$700 less, \$5,900. So there is a tax gap that exists between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and if you look at other jurisdictions like Alberta, B.C. and Ontario, that tax gap is even wider there. So, again, we have a real missed opportunity to move on taxes.

I will get back to some of the school funding a little later on. There have been very, very modest changes in taxes in Manitoba, just enough for the Minister of Finance to say he is doing something, very, very modest changes, these lower taxes that would spur growth and productivity in the country. Most jurisdictions have moved to make a move on bracket creep. Manitoba has not. So as people make more money, they pay more taxes. The tax reductions we have seen in the Budget are gobbled up by the bracket creep that continues. Again, the Government had an opportunity to deal with this. They have failed to do so.

I would like to next talk about the rainy day fund and the use of Manitoba Hydro. I probably do not have as great a problem with the Government using the rainy day fund as a number of people. This is revenue that has been set aside for this use, but with an increase in revenue that we have seen of upwards of \$7.4 billion over a four-year period, there can be little argument that there would be a need to use that rainy day fund. It is there for the Government to use.

What I do take strenuous objection with is the use of Manitoba Hydro. The Crown corporation should not be subsidizing the general purpose expenditures of government. I think that this Government is on a very slippery slope as we see Hydro debt increasing. Hydro debt today is more than the general provincial debt. I think the time will come, you can paper this over and you can hide this for a while, but the time will come when that debt has to be recognized. It is going to put that Crown corporation in a very, very serious position. The corporation is signalling that in future years there are going to have to be some dramatic increases in rates.

I know the Government is prone to say that rates have not been changed and that is true, but with the kind of debt you are loading on

Manitoba Hydro changes in rates will be inevitable in the future.

\* (11:20)

I would ask that the Government seriously think about taking the Manitoba Hydro situation before the Public Utilities Board. The Public Utilities Board is certainly the agency that should be looking at the future Hydro developments. They should be looking at the rates. They are the group that is empowered to look at rates and expenditures. In fact, it was not until we came to government in 1988 that we indicated that Crown corporations would have to go before Public Utilities Board to have their rates scrutinized and their expenditures scrutinized. They are the body who can hire the expert witnesses. They are the body before which members of the public can go. I would urge the Government to take Manitoba Hydro's not only rates but future rates and future development before the Public Utilities Board. Certainly, the Clean Environment Commission has a place. They have a mandate to look at the environment, but the financial side of it has to be reviewed and it should be reviewed by the Public Utilities Board.

The Government often talks about paying down debt. They have but they must. The rates and the debt repayment is in legislation. Unless that legislation is changed, debt has to be repaid. We passed the balanced budget legislation in 1995-96. It indicated that balanced budgets were a necessity. They were the law of the land. All of us in this House have spoken favourably of it, but it also states that there must be a debt repayment and not only a debt repayment but it is specified how much that debt repayment is. The Government need not crow a lot about making debt payments. It is the law of the land. It is something they are obligated to do.

I would like to come back to school funding. This is probably the greatest annoyance in the public as far as taxes go. We have seen over the last few years as the funding for education has been announced the school divisions are paying a larger and larger percentage. There was a time when I think most Manitobans agreed central government should pay 80 percent. Through the Pawley years that started to erode, through our

Government it eroded further, but it is continuing to erode, that the Government no longer pays 80 percent. They no longer pay 70 percent. They no longer pay 60 percent. It is down to about 57 percent. The beasts that are school divisions have to be fed, and they are being fed by the local taxpayer through the ESL and through the special levy. I can tell you there is a revolt coming in some fashion amongst property taxpayers, particularly because the majority of them no longer have children in school. This is the biggest tax issue that is facing Manitobans.

This has been added to by this Government in the fact that they forced amalgamation of school divisions. I have some sympathy for the new Minister of Education (Mr. Lemieux) who has to pick up the pieces of a forced school board amalgamation that school divisions did not want, and that the \$50 per student for three years is a paltry amount to pay for this amalgamation.

I know the Minister of Education was asked the other day how much money has been put in by this Government to fix the problems with the nearby school division of Sunrise where there was a strike because of the difference in wages between Transcona-Springfield employees and Agassiz employees and I think the Minister of Education has an obligation to answer that question. This is public money that has been used to solve a situation. The Government intervened in a strike. They intervened in a collective bargaining situation and I would expect that the Minister of Education will have to come forward with that information. It is not good enough for him to say, well, wait until Estimates. This is not a question where he needs detailed answers from his staff. He does not have to be holding the hand of his deputy minister at the time. He knows exactly how much money has been paid by the central government to fix a problem and it is incumbent upon him to come forward with that information. As an honourable minister, I am sure he will in the near future as the question gets asked.

The fact of the matter is Sunrise is just the tip of the iceberg. That is what the trustees' association are saying in their most recent publication. I first saw this publication a few years ago when the Premier (Mr. Doer) was

quoted on the front page as saying there will be no forced amalgamations; it is not the Manitoba way. That certainly was a promise that was broken.

Now this Government has gone into the amalgamation process saying, and the previous minister saying there would be a savings of \$10 million. Every day we are hearing about new costs of amalgamation. The St. Boniface-St. Vital School Division is looking at an additional \$2 million this year to solve that problem. Fort Garry and Charleswood divisions, probably \$1 million to \$2 million, even smaller school divisions in the Westman area like Antler River and Souris Valley are experiencing those costs as they keep superintendents on to have a transition, as they keep two offices open, as there are extra costs. There is no savings at all. This was, I think, highlighted in the most recent bulletin that came out from MAST indicating that besides inflation going up and inflationary costs, which are not covered by new government revenue, there is the excessive costs of amalgamation that are going to continue to be there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just as I finish up, I would like to refer to some of the third parties that have spoken about the Budget, many of them not very flattering and all of them indicating that tax relief was necessary and of course they were disappointed in this Budget, that the Manitoba director of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was very negative towards this Budget, indicating again what I had said earlier that the Government has done a little but really not very much of anything. Norm Cameron, a well-respected professor at the University of Manitoba, indicates there is nothing dramatic here for the economy, it is really pretty dull and, again, as a budget document, as a vision statement of this Government, that is probably the way they intended it and it is the way it is being accepted and read by people.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), in referring to his own Budget and making excuses for not reducing taxes, indicates most provinces this year are not reducing taxes very much at all. Well, the fact of the matter is most provinces reduced their taxes over the last three years when Manitoba did not reduce taxes to any degree at

all, so it is no wonder they are not making those changes, but that is not an excuse for Manitoba to have a stand-pat Budget on the tax side.

Graham Starmer from the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce: Very little imagination in the Budget. The tax relief and the incentives are just not there.

So these are third parties who are objective, who watch government, who have an interest in government, and they simply do not have the confidence in this Government or this Budget. It simply does not do the trick for them.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker—you are indicating my time is up—I have no difficulty voting against this Budget. I think as a statement of policy for the Government, it is very much lacking, and the Government could have done much better. I know the Minister of Industry and Trade (Ms. Mihychuk) knows the importance of taxes. She is probably one of the ones over there who understands how lower taxes could have really benefited this economy.

I certainly will be voting against this Budget. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (11:30)

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Deputy Speaker—[interjection] Come on, do not use all my time by clapping. That is what happened the other night.

I want to start off my budget debate by saying that I recognize this is likely my last speech in this Chamber, so I will be making a number of thank yous, as well, and comments about my entire almost 13 years as a member of this Legislature.

I want to start off by thanking the members in this Chamber, particularly my colleagues on this side of the House. It has been a wild ride sometimes, and I really appreciate all of the work that you do on behalf of Manitoba. It has been a privilege to be a part of this caucus over the last 13 years.

I want to say that I particularly appreciate my being elected chair of caucus last September

and being able to work in that role over the last number of months. It really meant a lot to me to be able to utilize the skills that I have in facilitating. I enjoyed that very much.

I also want to say that being an MLA and a woman and a mother has been very challenging. I know that all the women in this House face challenges that are unique to being a woman and being elected. I want to recommend reading Marilyn Waring's book called *Three Masquerades: Essays on Equality Work and Human Rights*, just to say that I read that a number of years ago, and I realize that the choices that I am making now and I made when I left Radisson are about putting my family first. I made that choice recognizing that we only get one time at life, and my daughter being at that time about three or four, I did want to have a chance to spend more time with her before she is going into school.

I want to recognize the other women who are leaving our caucus. Two are at retirement age and two of us are not quite, and I think that all of us have made our contributions. I particularly want to recognize the MLA for Wolseley, Jean Friesen, whom I have learned a lot from, and we will sorely miss her.

I want to also recognize my partner Glen Koroluk, who has, I think, become more of a feminist by being a stay-at-home dad. He talks about how he realizes now what women have put up with and gone through for the last thousands of years by being confined to taking care of children and doing housework and cooking and cleaning. He is a far better cook than I am, and I am fortunate to eat his meals almost every night of the week.

I really appreciate that, but I also want to recognize the work that he does in the community as a volunteer and a very poorly-paid environmental activist. I am very proud of the work that he does in trying to ensure that this Government has some green consciousness and that businesses in this province recognize that they cannot eat up the wilderness without consequences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank my family, first of all my birth parents, Rose and Angelo Cerilli, who were both Italian immi-

grants, and recognize that when I was six years old my father died and my mother had a breakdown. My five brothers and sisters and I were taken by my godfather, Al Cerilli and his wife, Alma. They moved us all to Winnipeg. Their love has been a godsend to our family, my brothers and sisters and me. They are very proud that they now have eleven grandchildren; they could not have children themselves. The story of our family is indeed a story that is unique and is a story of family and of courage and of togetherness. I want to recognize the support that I have gotten from my family over the years.

I also want to recognize the support that I have gotten from my many activist friends and friends in the community, particularly since we have moved to Wolseley. It takes a village to raise a child and our child is being raised by the village of Wolseley now. It has been tremendous to be part of that over the last number of months. I tried to change my mind, I tried to run for that nomination because I think the support we have there now would enable us to combine career and family in a way that we were struggling with previously. Partially, I think we were struggling because I lost my mom two years ago, Glen lost his mom last year; she had cancer. I think the decisions we make are often because of accumulation of factors in our lives, and that we walk down a path and we make decisions as we go.

I want to also recognize, of course, the constituents of Radisson who accepted me and voted for me for three elections. I am going to talk more about what we have accomplished together in that time, but I just want to put on the record that when I first ran in 1990 I lost the nomination in Broadway by one vote and I decided within 24 hours to be on the streets and canvassing in Radisson. Ever since then, I made a commitment to move there, to buy a house and live there. For almost 10 years, with my colleague here, Daryl Reid, I did my best to represent that constituency and I did what my party needed me to do. In 1990 I ran there. It has been a tremendous experience and a tremendous part of my life.

I want to talk a little bit about what I think I have tried to learn to do as an MLA. It is about speaking truth to power. I think what our party

and our movement have been about, back to the CCF, is speaking truth to corporate power, speaking community truth to corporate power, and listening when that community speaks to us.

I think politics is not a spectator sport, that everyone in the community has a voice that deserves to be heard, no matter if they are a Cabinet minister, a backbencher, if they are community activists, if they are party activists or just a citizen, or if they are staff people. I have always believed that if we can have that kind of inclusion through political parties and government that we will create a more inclusive society.

I talk a lot about how inclusiveness without conformity is a theme in my life and I think it is part of what the NDP is about, that we want to create inclusion for Aboriginal people, for people of colour and new Canadians, for lesbians, gay and bisexual people, for people of low income and people with disabilities, anyone who is usually on the outside.

I think the economic analysis that we have and that I have has been greatly influenced, on my part, by my involvement with the peace, environment and disarmament movements over the years. I believe that we must convert our economy to one of more sustainable economic development and fair trade. I understand the way to peace is through social justice and all governments and economies investing, not in military, but in health, in education and housing, recreation, the arts and culture, environment protection and rescue, infrastructure and social services like child care and supports for seniors.

I see the NDP as the vehicle for this economic conversion, supported by organized labour. Closing the gap between those who have a lot and those who do not have very much by providing universal public services is the way to go. Governments in co-operation with the community is the only direction for us to succeed. That is why I think programs like Neighbourhoods Alive! and Healthy Child are so important. They do governments in a new way, and public services do transfer wealth and create a more equitable sharing of resources. This has to be supported by fair taxation. Our political party and our Government is inspired by this

vision. We have a popular government right now and the next election is going to be about sharing this vision for a civil society so we can continue building Manitoba.

The accumulation of my life experiences working in sport with youth, working with ethno-cultural and youth and recreation organizations, working in the provincial government running what was essentially an affirmative action program, and my two years at Tech Voc where I witnessed the racism, the poverty that are the realities of the life of children in the core. The kids in that school over those two years cracked me wide open. It is because of them that I, as an MLA, work to create things like this pamphlet *Your Rights, Your Job* because I recognize that even when young people do get jobs, the reality that they face when they work is one of not having their rights told to them, not having their rights respected, not being informed of when they are entitled to overtime pay or holiday pay, not understanding they have the right to refuse dangerous work and not having the right to say to a boss that is harassing them: It is against the law.

I am really hoping and I am encouraged by Manitoba Federation of Labour and the Government in continuing work like that. It is going to make sure that young people know what their rights are in the workplace.

\* (11:40)

I want to talk now about some of the things that the Government is doing that I am most proud of. I want to start off by talking about our economic strategy and how it is different from the Conservatives' economic strategy. It includes mainly two things: a high emphasis on education at all levels, and, including in our economic strategy, bringing 9000 additional newcomers to Manitoba. I want to say that these have to be a mix of classifications for immigrants, refugees, family, business and entrepreneurs. Refugees are particularly important because we have to deal ethically with developing countries that cannot afford to lose their well-educated professionals.

When I talk to people in the community about immigration, they talk about how we must have new Manitobans working in fields that are

sustainable, that are life-sustaining industries and environmentally friendly. Integrating this type of green-thinking across all government departments is also the kind of thinking that I have developed in my years here as an MLA. I have tried to apply that in the constituency work that I do.

First of all, when I was canvassing in that 1990 election, and it was 30 degrees, the smell of creosote in the west Transcona area was overwhelming. It took nine years in working with community to get the former Domtar site turned into what it is today, the Fort Whyte Bioreserve. It is a testament to the community in Transcona, the work that they did when that site was left and abandoned by Domtar. The former Premier of this province, Gary Filmon, was the Environment Minister and there was an agreement that that site would be cleaned up after the houses were built. That was in 1981 and it took 25 years for that to actually happen. I am very pleased now that families have access to a green space in Transcona that is large enough for people to go for a run or ride their bike and take their dog for a walk.

It was a similar analysis that led many of us to protect 21 acres of tall grass prairie off Regent Avenue. That was also about telling the City of Winnipeg that we have to stop urban sprawl and building highways while the infrastructure in older names is crumbling. It did not meet the transportation needs of Transcona, getting cars and people east and west, and not north and south. It was about finishing the development in the area around Harbour View South and Kildonan Estates, north of Regent Avenue. It has been the market that has dictated in this city where housing is developed, rather than good urban planning. That is why we have the problems in the city that we do today of urban sprawl and core-area decline. The City has to start constructing our transportation infrastructure on the basis not just about moving people in rush hour traffic but also looking at what is going to make our communities sustainable and what is going to meet the needs of local communities.

So I am really pleased now at what is happening in Transcona, that there is going to be a greenway connecting the tall grass prairie site,

the rotary prairie, and the former Domtar site, the Fort Whyte Bioreserve. It is going to create six kilometres of green space in Transcona, and I look forward to working with the new MLA, if they want my help, in order to make that a reality.

We did accomplish a lot in Radisson over the years. Previously, the boundaries of Radisson included south Transcona, and I worked for a number of years with the local residents there and the City to resolve the problem of overland flooding. We, the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and I and our member, Bill Blaikie, also worked to ensure that Husky Oil did not construct an asphalt plant too close to the homes in the new subdivisions near Grassie Boulevard.

We also worked at things like ensuring the school division did not charge market rents for child care centres in schools. I remember sitting at a school board meeting one time and saying, this is a school division. It is not a strip mall. I think that they got the message. We are in the process of developing the second housing project in Transcona on Madeline and Regent, and I want to recognize the residents that are part of the Transcona Council for Seniors in that work. I also want to recognize the work that is being done to create the Transcona Health Access Centre and put in downtown Transcona, the area that Darryl Reid represents, the services and family services and health care that are going to meet the needs of that community.

Windsor Park was added to Radisson in the last election, and one of the issues that I took a hand in was the Rothsay rendering plant. That is the plant that deals with the carcass waste from the livestock, particularly the hog industry. The smell from that industry permeates the east end of the city. But not anymore. It has been improved because I recommended to the then-Minister of Conservation, Oscar Lathlin, that the Clean Environment Commission conduct a mediation on Rothsay rendering and that led to having scrubber filtration systems involved to clear the air. This has meant that, on most days, the odour of the livestock industry is not hanging over east end of Winnipeg.

I have also written to the now-Minister of Conservation (Mr. Ashton) because I am

concerned about the rendering capacity in this province. I am concerned that if we are to expand our capacity to produce and slaughter hogs in Manitoba, to supply the expansion of the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon, the rendering capacity has to be expanded in rural Manitoba, and it does not make any sense to transport animal waste all the way to Winnipeg for it to be rendered.

One of the big environment issues right now in Transcona is New Flyer Industries, and I am very proud to have learned just the other day that our Government is going to stand tall and enforce what is in The Environment Act. I will tell you what that is. What is in The Environment Act oversees a licence for New Flyer Industries that requires them to be part of a community liaison committee. This is a committee that does what I hope our Government will continue to do: bring Environment Department officials, a company that has a pollution problem, and local residents face to face to oversee the implementation of that licence.

Now, the company has not liked being part of that committee. I sat on that committee as well. They want to get off the committee, but through the political pressure, the department is doing the right thing in enforcing the licence to keep the company face to face with the residents that breathe the paint fumes from the plant every day. The MLA for Transcona and I have our constituency office a block away from that plant, and I can tell you that on a south-wind day, the fumes from that plant make it impossible to play outside, to go for a walk. I am very pleased that our Government is going to continue to work to see that resolved.

One of the other areas that I have had the privilege of working on in this House is Housing. I think that making the connections between health and environment in quality housing are essential. I am very pleased with the work that has been done by this Government through Neighbourhoods Alive! and the housing programs. We have renovated and improved a thousand homes across the province of affordable housing. I think though that now the challenge is continuing to improve programs like Neighbourhoods Alive! so that they are more community based, so that the people in the civil

service understand the needs in the community, and that we can make them less bureaucratic so that money flows more quickly.

The programs that are there for the community groups like a new RRAP program that they can deliver and like a subsidy program for the downtown areas or the core areas where community groups decide which buildings get the subsidy is going to happen. That is what community groups told me in 1999 when I did a consultation for a forum called "We All Need a Home." That is what people living with AIDS are asking for. That is what people living with disabilities are asking for, and that is what people living with mental health problems are asking for, to meet their housing needs.

\*(11:50)

I want to tell you too that when I was living in Transcona, I lived across the street from 100 units of Manitoba Housing. Manitoba Housing at that time was using the housing development's community club as a tool shed. I worked with tenants to create a tenants association, and then we convinced Manitoba Housing to let them use the community club as a community club and build themselves a new tool shed. After they did that, working with the community and the tenants association, they ran an adult learning centre out of that community club. Dozens of tenants got their high school diploma. They ran programs in the summer and during the week for kids, the hundreds of kids that live in that housing development. They started something that I thought was an excellent idea, a homework club. They got computers in there through the Government's Community Connections program. They installed two play structures on the grounds. They planted dozens of trees. So I understand that this is the role of an MLA in your local constituency, to support local groups by being a catalyst and build their capacity to take the ball and run with it because so much about what neighbourhoods do is about ensuring safety and opportunity inclusion for children, the elderly and everyone.

I want to end by telling the story about what happened in the 1995 election in Radisson. Art Miki ran against me for the Liberals. Many of you will remember him. He almost defeated Bill



Blaikie in the federal election previously when Canadians swept the Liberals in, in order to get rid of Brian Mulroney. I am very proud of Bill Blaikie, by the way, as one of our NDP MPs. I am proud of his stand on the American invasion of Iraq. Well, we ran a good campaign in Radisson, but the real story is what the Liberals did. They used a quote from me in Hansard, and you know what that quote said? The quote said that I believe that people are willing to pay their taxes when they know that they are going for valuable public services, when they are investing in their communities to create a civil society. I believed that in '95, and I believe that now, and it is pretty obvious that the majority of people in Radisson believed it too because they voted me in again with 52 percent of the vote. I won by almost 2500 votes.

Well, let us make paying our taxes a political act. I am proud that my tax dollars are going to pay for a \$20-per-month increase for the lowest-income people in Manitoba, those on social assistance. They have not had an increase in 10 years. That money could go and pay for their telephone so that low-income Manitobans do not have to choose between food and having a telephone. And if those guys across the way had not sold MTS, the rates in Manitoba would not have gone up by 75 percent, and maybe people would not have to make those choices, of choosing between feeding their kids, paying the rent or having a telephone so they can find a job.

Now the Tories are going to run a campaign on tax cuts and on crime. We need to have this debate. They are going to be telling people and appealing to the worst in people, their self-interest and their fear. We have to appeal to the best in people: their compassion, their willingness to share and their sense of community. Now the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) wants to make herself the poster girl for tax cuts and privatization. She has said, the difference between the Government and us is that we believe Manitobans know how to spend their tax dollars, and they believe the Government knows best; shame on them.

The Member for Tuxedo should know that the people of Manitoba are also part of this Government. They elected this side of the House because they believe we understand how to

spend their tax dollars wisely and invest in the services that are going to create a civil society.

I am proud of a government that has invested \$26.2 million in 45 Aboriginal communities through infrastructure so they get basic sewer and water so that Aboriginal people in the North are not fleeing third world conditions to come and live in poverty in the core area of Winnipeg.

I am proud that our Government is investing \$16 million a year and has kept tuition fees frozen for four budgets so we have the second lowest tuition in the country and so that people that live out the back door of the University of Winnipeg can afford to go to that university.

I am proud that we created the Healthy Baby program so that low income moms can have food when they are pregnant and support when they have their children. These are our Government's real crime prevention programs because more police are great but more police are not going to prevent crime. The only way to prevent crime is through social development and economic equality.

I am proud that we are going to expand the floodway and create 3500 jobs and that the river will stop eating up the riverbank and trees.

I am proud we are doubling the Community Places program.

I am proud that we have invested in doubling, I think, the number of conservation districts.

I kind of wish I was going to be able to go door-to-door and defend medicare on behalf of this Government because ensuring that tax dollars are invested in public health care that is going to be there when we are sick no matter who we are, no matter where we live and no matter how much money in our pocket is what this Government and this party is all about and it is what the people of Manitoba want.

Not only that, we are going to be creating a medicare system that will keep people healthy, which is wiser and healthier than treating them when they are sick and prevention costs less

money. That is why we have to start combining prevention through environmental testing and monitoring of water, air quality and soil with people's understanding of health. It is why we have to really start increasing and promoting the prostate prevention programs, programs to prevent diabetes, heart disease and cancer. These are the political issues of the future in health care. We have to understand that investing in people's ability to have a quality of life that is healthy is what we are here to do.

I am going to do something that Muriel Smith advised me to start doing a while ago. Muriel Smith was the MLA that I supported when I was a party activist. I was the president of her constituency. She said, Marianne, why don't you read more of your poems in the House, so that is what I am going to do.

"Mother Nature is not a whore. She is not for sale. She cannot be traded like a slave. She is no foreign domestic worker to care for your children so you can make more money. She cannot be kept, not in a mud-log house, not farmed. She is not your wife. You cannot get her to do your dirty laundry, plough fields or cook your meals so you can make Repap laws, Bristol Oil and Centra Gas. She makes the real Shell oil of oysters and cod liver. She makes real gold. She wears it on her belly like jewels, in diamonds in her navel. Mother Nature, she is wild, she is free and she'll do as she damn well pleases. Naturally, damn well pleases. Her fresh water flowing, she loves her beaver in every wetland swamp. She is the seed's need to burst into a fern, grow petals and ride the wind. She can fly. She is the wind, a hurricane or a whisper, swirling and lifting clouds and air. She is fire, the fire of hell you fear, down in the earth where bodies rot in darkness damp. She sails the surf on the beach near her. She speaks in dreams, stay near the water, come out from the bushes. Watch out for the wolves. Howl at the moon. Run, jump, dancing, feel her, she says. She makes our hair grow as she makes our hearts sing, as she makes our face glow, as she makes everything, living and not."

Maybe I will write a tune to that. Gord, you can help me with that. I wrote that when I was the Environment critic prior to the last election. I am going to dedicate it to Ani Di Franco, who is

at the Folk Festival this summer. She is one of my heroes.

Thanks very much for the chance to be part of this.

\* (12:00)

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair.*

**Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I am just getting carried away with the passion of the honourable Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It reminded me of the days when she and I used to debate in this Chamber about the environment, about a place called Oak Hammock, about ducks, about birds and about geese. That is another story.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, hear the rumours circulating around this building, particularly that an election is imminent, although I would likely prefer to believe my Premier when he has on numerous public occasions stated that in his view, four years, four and a half years would be the appropriate time to call an election in Manitoba, particularly when a government is not under any particular pressure and enjoys a reasonably good standing with the people. That is what Manitobans should come to expect from their Government.

So I would still like to believe the Premier (Mr. Doer), that he speaks honestly and truthfully when he muses about when an election will be called, but in the event that I am wrong, because the Premier may be misleading me, this will likely be my last opportunity to address this august Chamber. I, too, would like to thank a whole host of people for an unbelievable 36 strong, going on 37 years of public life, half of which, by coincidence, was in government and half on the side that I am now on in opposition, beginning of course, with the electors of Rockwood-Iberville which was the seat that I originally—Interlake South, Interlake seat—that I was originally elected to and more latterly and since 1969 the great constituency of Lakeside. To them I owe a very deep sense of thanks and gratitude for having, through the ups and downs of one's political career or one's party, continued to support me and sent me to this Chamber.

I want to thank all of the people involved in the Chamber, from the table officers to the security people in the front office, at the front stairs. It has been a delight being associated with them. My experience has always been that they have shown all of us courtesy, have been helpful, and it has been an honour to be associated with them over these years. My eyes tend to blur because over the years there were, of course, many different people involved, many different chief clerks and so forth. It has always been a pleasure walking into this Chamber, walking into this building, to be civilly greeted by security people, to be helped by them if you forgot your key to your office, or for other reasons. To them I say a special thanks.

I want to also say, because it was just like yesterday, and, for me, the transition was very immediate, I won an election on June 26 and, seven days later, I walked into Room 165, the Ministry of Agriculture, to become the Minister of Agriculture. There was no change of government. There was no transition period. I was joining the Duff Roblin government in that election.

I will never forget the awe-inspiring experience of having a deputy minister greet you as they greet you now, being accorded the courtesy from the civil service. Allow me to say that we are singularly blessed with our public service in Manitoba. With very few exceptions, they perform an extraordinary work for all of us and the people of Manitoba. It has been my experience to have experienced that. For me, it was always a humbling experience, being a high school dropout, a modest rancher from the Interlake, to have been able to be the steward of numerous departments and to have represented the province in any number of the 64 countries and various agriculture trading missions that we sent our products to. Throughout all of that, it has certainly been an enriching and enhancing experience for me, one for which I will always be grateful, despite what political pundits or radio talk show hosts wish to heap on politicians from time to time. I do believe it is a noble calling, a noble occupation, to provide, if called upon, a service to our fellow man in what we so highly treasure, a free and open democratic society.

I am going to make a few comments about the Budget. Some of my colleagues may not appreciate it because I will be complimentary to the Government. I maintain, and it was the honourable Member for Thompson's (Mr. Ashton) remarks yesterday when he suggested that we on this side of the House were doing our best to distance ourselves from the former Filmon administration in so many ways. I believe that those are some of the comments that you made. He knows full well the very opposite is the truth. Therein lies some of our challenge. I know that the orders came down directly from the Premier to, in essence, embrace the formal, fundamental core initiatives of the former Filmon administration that has, to a large extent, accounted for their continuing popularity.

But I will begin with their respect for the balanced budget legislation. We know, and I will pay tribute to the Liberal leader who had put the right spin on it, that they are fudging it with their shenanigans with Manitoba Hydro. But, nonetheless, the Premier gave his Minister of Finance very clear marching orders on the very first day that he assumed that job. Whatever you do, we have to respect the Filmon-imposed balanced-budget legislation that they all voted against, that they all thought was political gimmickry. None of them believed in it. I excuse the present Minister of Finance because he was not there, but the entire NDP opposition had fun last Budget quoting from the quotes on how they mocked the very concept of fiscal responsibility.

This Premier, taking a page out of that relatively popular and, in my books, very strong British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, who ended that practice that brought Great Britain and the United Kingdom virtually to its knees economically—this came to be described as the English disease because of what was happening in the seesaw Labour/Conservative governments of the fifties and sixties in Britain. Conservatives would come in and pass certain laws. Labour would reverse them. Tony Blair told his exchequer, or ministers of finance as they call them in Britain: Whatever you do, Thatcher economics stay in place. Thatcher privatization stays in place. In fact, he went one further. Tony Blair privatized the internationally famous London tube system, the underground rail system.

This Premier (Mr. Doer) knew exactly what he was doing when, in essence, his game plan from day one, in fact, it was his game plan in the '99 election, to present himself in a nice conservative dark blue suit as being fiscally responsible and not to rock the boat and not to change the fundamental core initiative programs of the Filmon administration. The most important one was the balanced budget legislation. That is the biggest card that you have got going for you in this election.

People, Canadians, Manitobans do remember with horror how a one-term government brought our richest province, Ontario, virtually to its knees in the four-year experiment with the NDP government. We remember in what bad shape British Columbia was after several terms of NDP administration. That brought about a virtual revolution that saw a government reduced to two seats out of a virtual sweep by the Liberal Party. They remember all of that. So, taking heed of that, he said, whatever we do at the end of the day when we are approaching election, no matter what you have to do, we have to instruct the departments to run with 5, 6, 7% vacancies. If you have to show figures of programming and then not spend the money, if you have to, like in this very Budget—a great deal for the day-care people, but not creating a single new space, paying off some union buddies—but he knew what he was doing and that is your biggest card.

\*(12:10)

It does not stop there. In agriculture, I know you do not get highly involved, but my friend from the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) knows it. I mean, this abolishing of the single-selling desk with the Hog Producers Marketing Board was loudly condemned from all quarters. At convention times they, even still, fiddle with the idea of returning to the monopoly single-selling desk to placate some of their NFU farm supporters. Is this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), is this Government going to do anything about it? No. They will adopt the policies that the Filmon administration put in place with respect to pork, and it has doubled our hog production. Every 2000 hogs produced by farmers create six well-paid unionized jobs in the province and is a main economic factor for

the economy that we enjoy in this province of Manitoba. There is no reversing back.

On some of the health initiatives, Lord knows we all need help and health, what we have really demonstrated, the outright deceit that was practised in the last election, that six months, \$50 million can solve it. We see the figures in this Budget, and I am prepared to say that we are maybe on our way to trying to solve it. The basic infrastructure that was put in place by my colleagues, whether it was Don Orchard, Jim McCrae, Eric Stefanson, are all in place and this Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and this Government has not touched any one of them. The reason our health districts in rural Manitoba—the consolidation of services here in the municipal hospitals in the city of Winnipeg—oh, yes, they tinkered around, fired a few people or did away with a board. We should have done that as well, and we have done it, but that structure, to attack the Misericordia—is there any talk about re-establishing the Misericordia as a full-service hospital? The urgent-care facility that is now running out of there, and I have used it, my wife has used it, is an excellent facility and doing an excellent job in the health-care system. For political reasons you would like to drag it up again and talk about the nurses that were fired, and so forth.

On the environment issues, I am proud that the fundamental parks legislation that was passed by myself in a Conservative government in '93 is, in essence, in place. I am hopeful that the current minister will see to it that it is not being violated, chipped away or sold off to private interests, which it was in jeopardy of being done with respect to one of our parks.

You will forgive me, Mr. Speaker, but being a swan song, for a little bit of self-satisfaction, if I recall, members will just not believe, the honourable Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) knows it because she was the activist involved, the unbelievable noise and effort that we had in committee room 254 when I was proposing to build a modest little hacienda for some ducks and geese at a place called Oak Hammock just north of Winnipeg. You would have thought the end of the world was coming, and now, yes, we can all take pride that it is being acknowledged internationally as doing everything I said it

would do—become a major ecological, wildlife, particularly bird life, institution for education. I am very pleased.

I hope the honourable member, who has indicated that she wants to spend more time with her daughter, takes her daughter out to Oak Hammock and enjoys some of the 26 kilometres of canoe rides where they can both experience the ducks and the geese and other wildlife that her poem talks about—all the living things, a living wildlife area that provides for us human beings to enjoy if we are smart enough not to defile it and to treasure them and to set them aside for preservation and protection for future generations.

In that respect, I am very proud of the fact that I passed legislation that enabled us to set aside sensitive areas as ecological reserves. I passed, not the activists, not the people that wanted all the signs, I passed the legislation with respect to endangered species legislation. In fact, I must confess—the tobacco-nazi police are not around, on my door—I am still addicted to it. I formally designated my office as an ecological reserve for the protection of endangered species, me being the endangered species. I do not know whether that would get past the tobacco police, but I justify my use of tobacco in that sense.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of telephones, and they like to raise that every time, one of the best decisions made by the government was the sale of MTS, and they know it. Oh, the first year, I can remember them saying that, when we come back to office, we will nationalize it again. Is there any thought? If you really believe that it was such a bad move, then at least be honest. If you think that was ideologically driven, while we were selling MTS, we were nationalizing the gas company, Centra Gas. We made business decisions that were good. *[interjection]* Were you opposed?

Mr. Speaker, I might say, in the early years of the Pawley government, when they proposed legislation in this Chamber to nationalize Centra Gas, I supported it. I broke ranks with my party. I supported it because I happened to believe that an energy utility and the way we are currently structured is best served in the public hands, and I will support that. My record is clear on that.

Again, you see all of these initiatives that were among the core programs of the Filmon administration, this administration has embraced, and that is making it tougher for us, quite frankly. That, to a large extent, is why your continued popularity is running where it is and makes it much tougher for us to fight you and to defeat you, but we will. One telling comment that I picked up on the way home from budget day, and it was just a small comment by one of the labour leaders of this province, I believe it was Paul Moist, CUPE president, on CBC. He was mildly critical of the Government. That is maybe saying too much, but he was kind of surprised at the modest income tax reduction. He said that did not figure on their scale of priorities. Reducing taxes was not something that this labour leader, who speaks for thousands of people, middle-income-earning people who would benefit from it, and I will tell you why, because in their concept public employees do not really have to worry that much about what level of taxes they pay. They just hold the government of the day ransom every once in a while, withhold essential services, and negotiate higher salaries. That is not available to the private sector, who have to deal in the real world, who have to be competitive with countries around the world, who have to be competitive—*[interjection]*

This was the reaction of Paul Moist, leader of CUPE, who said a tax reduction was not a priority issue. This Government knows, they do listen occasionally to what they hear from this side of the House. They like to repeat and repeat to us how they reduced or have done away with the corporate tax. That is just against all the dogma of the NDP, who coined the phrase "the corporate welfare bums" and all the rest of it. But they want to show themselves, as Tony Blair has successfully shown himself in Britain, to do these things, and that is going to be a challenge for us, Mr. Speaker.

\* (12:20)

**An Honourable Member:** Running out of time.

**Mr. Enns:** I am running out of time, but it is this wholesale embrace of some of the very fundamental programs that were introduced by the Filmon administration that is maintaining

their current position of popularity. But their hearts are not in it, and Manitobans will rue the day when they have to pay the price and pay the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken of some of the successes that I have enjoyed in my public life, my political life. I do also want to acknowledge a singular failure, and I am bothered by that because we are in the process—it was announced in this Budget—of spending upwards of \$700 million for the expansion of our floodway. I know it is late in the day and I am not going to change any minds, but I am deeply troubled by the expenditure of that kind of money, and the manner and way we are spending it. Far better, in my humble judgment, and I stand to be accused for not having accomplished it. I tried in the Lyon administration. I tried in the Filmon administration, but, as ministers know, you do not always get your way.

What are we doing with this \$700 million? We are making sure that fresh clean water gets out of this province in a hurry, in three or four weeks, when we should be building hundreds of small reservoirs. We should be talking about water storage on the Pembina, on the Souris, and we should be talking about another major water storage on the Assiniboine in and around near the town of Holland. I am not a particular fan of those who are calling the alarm bells that we are into a very serious global warming situation. If there is, and we may well be, Mr. Speaker, it is even more important that we drought-proof our agro section of southern Manitoba. Even more important that we are fundamentally shifting our nature of crop production into higher-yielding crops, more productive cost-wise, but which need water: potatoes, lentils, alfalfas, and forages, and so forth. The Minister of Agriculture knows this. We could support two or three more potato processing plants in this province. So I regret that I have been unable to, and I challenge the administration and those who follow me in that the creation of water storage in southern agro Manitoba is absolutely essential for our future well-being, and I regret that that is not being done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to raise another subject matter, and I raise it with some trepidation because, as most of you will be aware, in the last

few days the media has been full of it. I think some of us have received some additional literature about it—about what, in my opinion, could be a very interesting and very exciting and worthwhile proposal, and that coming from the Asper Foundation for their Asper museum proposal. A museum dedicated to all of us, and to future generations, to be a constant reminder of the capability and capacity for man's inhumanity towards his fellow man is a worthy adventure, a worthy project to undertake.

I am concerned, and I express the concerns that some Canadians have expressed, that if very significant and substantial sums of public money are to be invested in this proposal, and it is my understanding from the proposal that that is, indeed, the case, upwards to 50 percent of the capital—Canadian, Manitoba, and Winnipeg taxpayers—more importantly, the ongoing operational costs of this facility, then it behooves the movers and shakers of this proposal to be extremely sensitive that it, indeed, be inclusive.

We are all, because of the material available, acutely aware of the unbelievable horror that particularly the Jewish community suffered during the years of Nazi Germany, but it does not end there. I myself am a first-generation Canadian. My father lost ten immediate members of his family to another tragedy that was imposed—I was going to say Communism, but that is not correct. Communism, in itself, is relatively benign. It is by the dictators, the brutal people like Joseph Stalin who subverted the precepts of Communism. By conservative estimates, and my family members are among them, upwards of 14 million people lost their lives in that holocaust.

I keep in my office a reminder, a picture, a chronological order of the four premiers that I have served, but there is another picture there that people ask me about, and it happens to be my mother's youngest brother, whom I never knew. He was shot by the KGB in 1934 in Keneges [*phonetic*], it was then called, for political activity. When things got a little more open and a little more progressive under the Gorbachev years, the family actually got an apology, saying that the uncle should not have been shot, but those were the times when not too many questions were being asked.

Mr. Speaker, if you roll in, in even more recent history, the unbelievable horror that took place with the world, and the United Nations, I may add, watching Rwanda where upwards of 700 000 to 800 000 estimated people were slaughtered. We look at what the Khmer Rouge did in Cambodia. Conservative estimates say that Chairman Mao's imposition of Communism in China cost the lives to upwards of 40 million people.

What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, this Legislature, you people who will come back to this Legislature, will in relatively due course, be voting several millions of dollars for this proposal. I believe that for those who are concerned about its inclusivity and the way and the manner in which the material is presented, is extremely important if it is to serve the very purpose of more harmonious race relationships

in this province, in this country. If that is, in fact, carried out, then so be it, but I am concerned, at this current moment, at some of the directions that it is taking.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for putting up with me over the years. It has been a pleasure.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30? *[Agreed]*

The time being 12:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until—*[interjection]* Before I do that, when this matter is again before the House, the debate will remain open.

The hour being 12:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 25, 2003

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