

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 2, 2003

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Highway 32

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the responsibility of the Department of Transportation

and Government Services for the construction of rural highways.

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

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

These are submitted by C. Hildebrand, Deanna Thiessen, Nettie Dueck, Derek Hiebert and others.

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

* (13:35)

Co-op Program for Nursing Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Zenaida Browning, Des Paluck, Ted Stevenson and others.

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

Sales Tax Proposal

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Maria Spielvogel, E. Malbasa, W. Helgason and others.

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

* (13:40)

Walleye

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

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

A similar situation happened in Lake Erie but it was handled much more effectively. In

Lake Erie, a sound science-based management program was implemented and the stocks rebounded. As a result, production of walleye on Lake Erie for 1980 to 2001 averaged 182 percent of the historic estimated sustainable yield.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Louie Genaille, Ervin Baumung, Cory Nepinak and others.

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

Red River Floodway Expansion

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

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

The provincial government says it is "committed to ensuring that any remaining issues from 1997 are addressed and that residents are

compensated for any artificial flooding. . ." (Province of Manitoba press release, December 9, 2002).

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

To request that the provincial government consider clarifying outstanding flood-related

issues, such as the threat of artificial flooding and the public's desire for clarification with respect to the floodway operating rules.

Signed by Maxine Clifton, Robert Starr, Richard Klassen and others.

* (13:45)

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

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with section 42 of The Ombudsman Act, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the calendar year January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2002.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister charged with the administration of the Liquor Control Act): I am pleased to table the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission's Six-Month Report for the period April 1 to September 30, 2003.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister charged with the administration of the Communities Economic Development Fund Act): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Communities Economic Development Fund Annual Report for 2003 and the Quarterly Financial Statements for the Quarter ending September 30, 2003.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 9—The Manitoba Immigration Council Act

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Robinson), that Bill 9, The Manitoba Immigration Council Act; Loi sur le Conseil de l'immigration du Manitoba, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Allan: Bill 9, The Manitoba Immigration Council Act, would allow for the appointment of a 12-member commission with representation from business, labour and multicultural organizations that would help the Province in its goal

of increasing its annual level of immigration to 10 000 people and keep them here in Manitoba.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us Mr. Michael Funke of Carman and Mr. Mel Montgomery of Winnipeg. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg).

Also in the public gallery we have from Athlone School 53 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Ed Hume and Mrs. Renee McGurry. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray).

Also seated in the public gallery we have from Prairie Rose School Division 21 Grade 12 students under the direction of Mr. Trevor Boehm. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

James Driskell Case Independent Inquiry

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, after the Doer government sat on their hands for a full year as Mr. Driskell sat behind bars, and in the face of growing pressure to take action, the light has finally come on with this Premier and this Justice Minister.

Although the Premier should have taken action a year ago when the DNA results were known, we are pleased that they finally reversed their position and are now supportive of Mr. Driskell's case being reviewed and referred back to the courts. However, the fact that they have sent a letter to Ottawa does not excuse this Premier or his inaction on this matter.

Will the Premier accept his responsibility for the incompetence in the way they have handled this issue? Will he do the right thing and will he ask and bring forward an independent public inquiry?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will probably know that there was a review of the matter back in the 1990s. The former Minister of Justice asked the department to review the matter. Mr. Dangerfield provided a report then to Mr. McCrae.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that this Minister of Justice authorized the payment for and the proceeding with the hair evidence to the London labs, authorizing some \$32,000 to deal with the issues arising from the Driskell case. When those results were made available from the London lab, those results were provided to Mr. Driskell's defence counsel. So, certainly, there was initiative taken and authorization made by the Minister of Justice in this regard.

There are a number of other issues, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure the member opposite will ask further questions and I will try to respond to them in a timely way.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. The Premier just admits they had the information a year ago on the DNA and they sat on it. Then it is unacceptable. I am not sure if he is trying to distance himself from the Minister of Justice or from this case.

What we are asking for is an independent public inquiry. The Justice Minister knows full well he has the authority and the power to do so. The problem is I do not know if he has the courage. The Government can do more than write a letter. They have the opportunity to get to the bottom of what happened to ensure that it never happens again, and they can do so by simply ordering an independent public inquiry.

Rather than be satisfied with the review that was introduced which is very limited in scope and does not require sworn testimony, will the Premier show Mr. Driskell and Manitobans that

he and his Justice Minister have the ability to make this transparent, do the right thing and call for an independent public inquiry?

Mr. Doer: Well, let me correct a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition. It is not the only review that we have available to us. The issue of the material evidence that was obtained for purposes of this investigation, obtained from the files of the past and forwarded to the London lab with authorization of payment made by the Minister of Justice; that information, I am informed, was provided to the defence lawyers of Mr. Driskell, obviously very, very important new evidence dealing with a very, very important part of the original trial.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the narrow review, and it is narrow, only deals with the allegation made by the chief of police that the materials they had were made available to the Crown attorney's office at the time and that they had that report. In terms of the integrity of the justice system, it has to be very clear that there cannot be arguments between the chief of police in Winnipeg and the Prosecutions branch of the Province of Manitoba. That narrow issue will be reviewed in a narrow way to deal with the credibility of the justice system.

Mr. Driskell's lawyer today reiterated what I believe is important, that the trial or the retrial or the justice review of Mr. Driskell must go forward to deal with the questions raised by the evidence of the hair and other issues of evidence that are in question. The issue of his guilt or innocence must be dealt with, Mr. Speaker. That is the paramount concern and that still leaves open to us the issues dealing with the justice system, the systemic issues in the justice system that I guarantee to the public of Manitoba we will have a systemic review of those issues.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, what is interesting about the First Minister's response to that question is he is publicly admitting that this is going to be a very narrow review.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier, this Minister of Justice, sat on information for a year. Surely to goodness, he would have the decency to do the right thing. Rather than in his own words talk about a very narrow scope, he should do the

right thing, be transparent and call for an independent public inquiry, unless he is trying to sweep something under the rug and has something to hide. Do the right thing. Call for an independent public inquiry today. He has the ability to do so. It is the right thing to do.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I will have to reread a transcript of an interview with the defence lawyer today. As I recall the interview, he very clearly stated that the issue now before the justice system, if you will, is to deal with the issue of Mr. Driskell's guilt or innocence.

Mr. Speaker, he has already been proven guilty in a court of law. Some of the factors that have led to that conviction have been raised, including the DNA evidence this Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) took the initiative to authorize payment to deal with that. That evidence was given by the Justice Department to the defence lawyers I am informed.

* (13:55)

Mr. Speaker, the issue of the conviction must be dealt with. The minister has asked for it to be dealt with in a timely way. We are not prepared to close any door. The issue of the systemic issues in the justice system, the public has a right to review all of those issues in an independent way. Once the issues of guilt and innocence are dealt with, we are absolutely prepared to ensure the public that they have an independent review of all of the systemic circumstances leading to the conviction and leading to the subsequent decision that has not yet been made by the federal Justice ministry.

James Driskell Case Justice Minister's Involvement

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, in 1995 as the Justice critic, this Justice Minister promised to help James Driskell. He told Driskell: If I get into power, then I can do something to help you.

Rather than help James Driskell, this Justice Minister has been doing everything in his power to stop Driskell from proving that he is innocent. He even reneged on his verbal promise to have Legal Aid fund Driskell's application to prove

his innocence, yet he permits Legal Aid to pay millions to fund the defence of the Hells Angels.

Why did this Justice Minister not have the courage to move this case forward a year ago instead of leaving James Driskell in prison?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, members opposite obviously are shameless.

Mr. Speaker, this a matter that sat dormant under their watch through most of the 1990s. What is important now is how this matter is proceeding. I can say that, on coming into office, the issue of DNA evidence became very important. We ensured there was payment for that, that it was sent to the laboratory. We got that evidence back a year ago. That was provided to the Driskell team. We worked with the police to get that evidence. We worked with the police to get their internal report. We have worked cooperatively with both the federal government and AIDWYC, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the promises of this Justice Minister mean nothing. By the Justice Minister's lack of action, he never had any intention to fulfil his promise to James Driskell. Instead, he offered only false hope to a person sentenced to prison for a crime that he may not have committed. This minister lacks credibility, he is incompetent, and Manitobans do not trust him. Will this minister admit that the promise he made to James Driskell in 1995 was never meant to be kept, but instead the minister was using James Driskell for his own political purposes?

Mr. Mackintosh: I will ignore the vivid imagination of the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, following the DNA evidence being analyzed and its return here, there were continuing discussions with AIDWYC, I understand. I personally wrote to AIDWYC and I said I have given considerable thought to whether my department can trigger a review by the Minister of Justice for Canada, pursuant to the new provisions in section 696 of the Criminal Code.

Facially, it would appear that applications must be brought at the instance of the person

convicted or someone acting on his or her behalf. I would, therefore, once again urge Mr. Driskell to initiate a review under this provision. If he has not done so by July 1, 2003, I will consider writing to the Minister of Justice to ask the Government of Canada to commence a review, either at my own instance or on its own initiative. Mr. Speaker, we have been urging this review. I am glad it is underway.

Independent Inquiry

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Yesterday, the Justice Minister promised that he would look into what we can do as a province and he further promised that the Driskell case will be prioritized and moved forward on a timely basis. Will the Justice Minister break these promises or will he do what he can do, that is, call for an independent public inquiry to ensure that the Driskell case never happens again in Manitoba?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The question about an independent public inquiry is a good question, but it is the wrong time and it is the wrong House. Mr. Speaker, there are two independent reviews currently ongoing. The first is the issue of disclosure being looked at by a former judge. Right now, what is critical is the federal process that yesterday we asked to be prioritized and moved along on a timely basis.

* (14:00)

I know Mr. Driskell and representatives on his behalf want to ensure that this federal process moves along and moves along expeditiously. It may end up in the Court of Appeal. There may be an opinion sought from the Court of Appeal, maybe a verdict, maybe a verdict from the courts. That is job one, Mr. Speaker. Whether there should be a public review should follow on that.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like

to ask the minister if he is prepared to table the letter which he quoted from in his first response to the member from Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I would like to table that letter.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, this should take care of the matter.

James Driskell Case Justice Minister's Involvement

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): The Minister of Justice in this House, in 1997 as the Justice critic then, said that the reputation of Justice is affected by allegations of injustice and that it is the minister's responsibility to respond.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Justice still believe it is the responsibility of his ministry, of this provincial level of government to respond to injustice, or has he filed that statement with the broken promise of help that he made to James Driskell?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I know Mr. Driskell seeks a remedy to his conviction. Whether there should be a public inquiry into what took place on systemic issues is certainly a live issue, Mr. Speaker, but job one is dealing with the matter of the conviction under 696 of the Criminal Code. Surely the member opposite is not suggesting that there be a public inquiry to interfere with any ongoing criminal matters.

Independent Inquiry

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Driskell seeks a remedy, but Manitobans seek the truth. Our courts are backlogged with child pornography cases that dragged on for half a decade. Criminal organization trials take months just to get started in Manitoba. Now the Justice Minister is up to his old tricks of delay and deflect.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice stated in this very House in 1994 that when we hear the

words "justice delayed is justice denied," it is justice denied for everyone. Will he now stand up to the commitments and the words that he said in the past and bring justice to all Manitobans by calling for a public inquiry?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I can hardly take seriously a political party that stands up in this House and urges the Justice Minister to direct prosecutions at a bail hearing. In modern Canadian history I do not think a political party has been calling on a government anywhere, as they have, for political partisan interference in a matter before the courts.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, there are criminal proceedings that may well follow from the section 696 review of the federal government. They must take its course, and then the issue of public review will still be a live issue.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, that non-answer makes it clear that this minister refuses to take leadership and to do his job for Manitobans. It is also a far cry from the now apparent rhetoric which this minister yielded when he was in opposition. In 1995, the current Minister of Justice stood in this House and said while demanding a public inquiry into a case of domestic violence, that sitting on information for eight months was unacceptable and that the time was up to call an inquiry.

This minister has now sat on information for more than a year. Will he now stand up and instead of being shamed into action, listen to his own words and call for a public inquiry on behalf of all Manitobans?

Mr. Mackintosh: It is this Government that looked into these matters and made sure there was a DNA analysis, made sure it was disclosed, worked co-operatively with AIDWYC, has urged a federal review to be pursued by the Driskell team, has said that we would do what we could if the Driskell team did not pursue the federal review. It is this Government that is urging a fast-tracking of that federal review process and it is also this Government that will not upset what Mr. Driskell has been seeking and that is a referral back to the courts of Manitoba and further criminal processes.

I am disappointed in the members opposite for suggesting that the Government interfere with criminal proceedings, Mr. Speaker. Let us just quote from Mr. Driskell's counsel when he talks about what is needed. Mr. Lockyer says square one is let us deal with Mr. Driskell's case and finish it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I go to the next question, I would like to ask the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very, very difficult to hear the questions and the answers. We also have the viewing public and also guests in the Chamber. I am sure they wish to hear the questions and the answers also. That is probably why they are here. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Health Care System Emergency Room Services

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, despite the insensitive callous comments of the Health Minister yesterday, other Manitobans including Chief Medical Examiner Doctor Balachandra recognize the seriousness of what happened to Dorothy Madden and are concerned about what went wrong. Doctor Balachandra has stated publicly that the six hours Mrs. Madden waited in the emergency room was unacceptable and is demanding improvements be made to how our emergency rooms deal with patients.

Can the Minister of Health explain what steps are being taken to address this?

Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Minister of Health): I think the first thing is to express the same kind of concern that any of us would feel when anyone died, whether the death was avoidable or unavoidable. There is always a great amount of sadness and there is always grief. There is also grief for the medical system when it loses a patient whether it is avoidable or unavoidable. I know members opposite who have been in that profession know that, and I think we should be treating this subject with a great deal more dignity and a lot less blame than we have to date.

Mr. Speaker, I think the great difference that is in place in all of our hospitals today that was

not in place when 12 babies died earlier in the 1990s is that when there is a critical incident, there is a process for dealing with that incident or recognizing it at the hospital level.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, Doctor Balachandra has clearly stated his concern that there may be other patients having heart attacks who are waiting too long for care and is asking that hospitals put specific procedures in place for when ERs become overcrowded.

Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) tell us when those specific procedures will be put in place? Can he indicate if he is aware of any other patients having heart attacks who have waited too long for care?

Mr. Sale: The hospital in question, St. Boniface Hospital, immediately launched the appropriate review, which is following a protocol the hospital has where there are unexplained or deaths which were not anticipated given the apparent condition of the patient. That process has been under way for some time. Recommendations have been made and the hospital is striving to improve its ability to detect conditions which, I think as the member opposite knows as a nurse, sometimes heart attacks are what are called silent heart attacks and it is very difficult sometimes for either the patient or the family or the medical profession to immediately recognize what the cause of apparent distress has been, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this was not very silent. She had several episodes of actual real pain.

*(14:10)

Dorothy Madden Inquest

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): There are absolutely no excuses for a patient to go to an emergency room with chest pain, be triaged as urgent and then not be seen by a doctor for six hours. This is unacceptable and rather than make excuses and attempt to deflect blame, the Minister of Health should be taking immediate action to find out what happened so he can take real steps to prevent it from happening again.

Will the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) commit today to calling an inquest into the death of Dorothy Madden? Will he do his job and stand up for patients?

Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear on this. I believe it is not acceptable to our Government, it is not acceptable to members opposite, it is not acceptable to Doctor Balachandra, and frankly I do not believe it is acceptable to anyone in St. Boniface Hospital, that someone should sit for six hours and not be seen by a physician, even though at the time they might deny having any chest pain or any symptoms that were suggestive of a very serious condition. It is still unacceptable and we are very clear about that. We do not accept the idea that someone should present in hospital with a score that rates them as urgent and not be seen for six hours. That is why Doctor Balachandra is investigating this situation, and it is why I believe it is his call as to what ought to be done in terms of any further review that he may indicate. He, also, as you know—

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

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

Mr. Speaker, there does need to be an inquest into Dorothy Madden's death to determine what went wrong, where the deficiencies were and identify what changes need to be made to help prevent a similar incident from occurring ever again.

Will the minister do the right thing and order an inquest into the death of Mrs. Madden? If he truly believes what he was just saying, will he go the next step, the right step and order an inquest?

Mr. Sale: As members of the House and Manitobans know, the Chief Medical Examiner, Doctor Balachandra, has already commented that, in his view based on the autopsy results, this was not a preventable death given the degree of injury that had occurred earlier to this person's heart.

The practice in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, is that the call for inquest is made by those who

have the technical and medical knowledge as to whether an inquest is likely to provide useful information or recommendations, which is the purpose of an inquest, and that is something which I believe is the appropriate purview of Doctor Balachandra, and if he, of course, suggests that will happen, it will happen.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) ignored my warnings about the problems in cardiac surgery. He ignored my suggestion at that time to call an independent review of the program, and he never started that process until after 11 patients had died.

I would ask the Minister of Health: Will he do the right thing this time and call for an inquest into the death of Dorothy Madden? Let us get to the bottom of this before any more patients die waiting for care in our emergency rooms.

Mr. Sale: I think, all members will remember that last year we had a very thorough review by an outside cardiac specialist who worked with our specialists, with our nurses' teams, with our hospitals, made very sound recommendations in regard to the management of cardiac care in Manitoba.

The Koshal report has been acted on and is being acted on. We have announced the centralization of the program in one hospital.

Mr. Speaker, no health care system is perfect, and any avoidable death is one avoidable death too many. It appears in the case that has been discussed, the sad truth is that this person's death was unavoidable. We can learn, however, from the care that was given that we can improve that care, and every day we go to work determined to improve the care of Manitobans in our health care system.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, all patients have the right to be seen in a timely manner and have care in a timely manner.

After Herman Rogalsky died waiting for care, our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) was quoted in the *Winnipeg Free Press* saying, and I quote: I do not see myself as an advocate for the

system here, I see myself as advocating on behalf of the family against the system. If I do not, and there are problems, I might not see them.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that this Minister of Health needs to call an inquest today because if he does not see the problems, he is not going to be able to fix them. Will the Minister of Health be an advocate for patients today, do the right thing and call an inquest into the death of Dorothy Madden?

Mr. Sale: Our Government has been an advocate for patients ever since we formed government. We have tripled the number of nurses in training. We have increased the number of doctors in training. We have increased the number of technician training opportunities after they were shut down, sadly, by the previous government, Mr. Speaker.

We have increased the specialty training for emergency room and ICU nurses. Mr. Speaker, every day we see the results of having tripled the numbers of nurses. We have 90 percent of those nurses who have graduated staying in our province helping to deal with the incredible systemic shortage of nurses which was caused by the previous government's Connie Curran strategies in regard to our hospitals and health care.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is clearly Doctor Balachandra's right and if he feels it his responsibility, to call for an inquest. The members know that we depend on the medical profession and professional judgment for such inquests. That is our policy.

Sunrise School Division Funding

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): When the Government brought \$428,000 to the table to end a labour dispute in Sunrise School Division, the division was told that it would be written into the base funding for the division and remain as part of the funding that the division receives annually. In an article in the *Beausejour Review*, Ken Bell, the superintendent for Sunrise School Division stated, and I quote: Our understanding at the time, it was made clear to the division that the money was to be supplied by a base funding allocation.

My question for the Minister of Education: Why has the Government reneged on its promise to commit the \$428,000 into the base funding of Sunrise School Division?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, the commitment was provided within the funding formula budget, as we have said repeatedly. It was approved through the normal government processes. These allocations of funds will take place over the next three years, including \$112,000 this year.

The bottom line was we had students who were not going to school. We had student aides who were not there to help children with special needs. We did what we had to do to get the children back to school.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, it is evident from comments made by the superintendent of Sunrise School Division, Mr. Ken Bell, who was at the negotiating table, that the \$428,000 that was offered by this Government to settle the labour dispute was to be part of the base funding of the school division.

Mr. Speaker, why did this Government promise just prior to an election campaign that the money would be built into the base funding and one month after the election renege on their deal?

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, the situation in Sunrise is a very unique situation with respect to the disparity in the wages. We provided the necessary funds to harmonize those wages.

This is part of the amalgamation process. Amalgamation is doing what it was intended to do: streamlining operations, creating new efficiencies, rationalizing the programs within the school divisions, putting more resources back in the classroom where they belong.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Tuxedo.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Please, one member at a time question and one member at a time answer.

Please. The honourable Member for Tuxedo has the floor.

* (14:20)

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Government has repeatedly refused to answer questions surrounding the scandal that took place in Sunrise School Division last spring. I would like to at this point in time table a letter for the House.

Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the Premier from the Sunrise School Division dated September 26, which I just tabled for the House, it was made very clear by the school division, and I quote: That this money, the \$428,000, was to be supplied through a base budget allocation. Both the Government and the mediator acknowledged the need for the base budget approach. We must point out that this agreement has been breached at this time.

Can the Premier explain why his Government reneged on a deal put forward by his own political appointee, Mr. Schreyer, to offer the \$428,000 into base budget funding to end a labour dispute?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The member opposite practises selective information. I recall a letter thanking the provincial government, the person the member opposite insults in her comments, Mr. Speaker, thanking him for his assistance with the mediator. That was I think public in April of the same year.

There are issues that have been raised by the school division to the Province on the three-year funding and the base budget. I expect that those matters will be resolved when the next Budget is tabled in the Legislature.

James Driskell Case Review

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I was pleased to hear the Premier's determination to have a thorough, independent and systemic review of the systemic problems within the justice system.

I would ask the Premier whether he can today provide details of the timing and the nature of this review.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba have a right and we have a responsibility to deal with the systemic issues that are involved. If I recall correctly, today, in listening to an interview, the lawyer for Mr. Driskell stated: Square one is let us deal with Mr. Driskell's case and finish it. We agree. Then let us deal with the other issues in terms of the public good.

We will follow that sequence, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we want to deal with Mr. Driskell. Secondly, I think that all of us have a responsibility to ensure that the justice system right back to 1991, or the first time that the charges were laid, has operated in a way that is worthy of a justice system that has integrity for the public of Manitoba. We will make sure that happens.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for being ready to call this review, but I would ask the Premier as well what measures will be taken to ensure that the review is both thorough and independent.

Will the reference, for example, to a fully independent review of systemic problems, will this review be led by someone from outside the province to ensure it is truly independent?

Mr. Doer: We will have the same kind of integrity in any kind of review as we did with Justice Cory when he dealt with the issues of Sophonow.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, I think there were issues almost simultaneous or concurrent to the timing of some of the issues raised here that were before Justice. The Minister of Justice, I believe, after the issue of Mr. Sophonow's guilt or innocence was dealt with, had an inquiry about how those issues were dealt with in terms of the federal government, the police forces, the Department of Justice at the time, the judiciary at the time.

I think the findings that took place from former Justice Cory, I believe his title was, had credibility, and we would want to ensure this has equal credibility.

Immigration Consultants Registry

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): My question is for the Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Today the minister makes reference to Bill 9, The Manitoba Immigration Council Act, and I will hold my very strong reservations on that particular bill for another time.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, there are some very real and serious issues of immigrants, individual family members who are trying to get immigrants to come to our province who virtually on a daily basis are being exploited. They are being exploited in good part from immigration consultants.

What I am asking for the Government to do, Mr. Speaker, is something a little bit more proactive, to do something that would in fact protect the interests of would-be immigrants by allowing for an establishment of an immigrant registry within her department. I truly believe that it would go far in actually doing something positive. Would the minister concur with that?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I am very pleased to talk about the Government's progress in regard to immigration in the province. I am quite sure the member realizes that we have the most successful immigration program in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Council on Immigration is being established. It was recommended from the Premier's Advisory Council, and we will continue to work with the community in regard to how we can best serve immigrants who are coming to the country.

Ethanol Industry Development

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Yesterday, the Canadian Renewable Fuels Association, along with the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and the Keystone Agricultural Producers, held a joint press conference in support of the newly introduced ethanol bill. All three groups agreed that the advancement of the ethanol industry would be of great economic benefit to Manitobans and more especially to rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology please inform the House of the Government's plan to proceed with the development of the ethanol industry in

Manitoba and what economic benefit that may provide to Manitobans?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, with the bill going into committee tonight it is not appropriate for me to prejudge its passage, but I do want to say that I believe this is one of those happy occasions in which farmers, rural municipalities, chambers of commerce, farm producing organizations such as Keystone, members of the Opposition and members of the Government have one mind on the opportunity before Manitobans in regard to the development of this new industry. It provides a place for farmers' crops, provides a cleaner fuel, it reduces smog, it reduces particulate emissions, runs cleaner in your engine.

Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity for economic development in rural Manitoba, which I think we all welcome. I am delighted at the cooperation that we have had from all sectors in moving this bill forward. Thank you.

Sunrise School Division Funding

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, the letter written to the Premier of September 26 clearly points out that this Government has been caught in a lie. The Government denied in this House, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) denied in this House, that the funding for Sunrise School Division was promised in base funding. The letter clearly states that this funding was indeed promised as base funding. Can the Premier, whom this letter was written to, today tell the House whether or not he will now ensure that this funding is calculated in the base funding for Sunrise School Division?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the letter in April contradicted almost every question that was asked in September dealing with the issues of, quote, why the individual was chosen. I might point out, the personal attacks on the individual who was appointed by members opposite to chair the occupational health committee of redeployment with the nurses and management in health care, appointed by former minister Don Orchard, and then members opposite take political shots at him. I find that behaviour disgraceful.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the issue, as I reported in my previous question, the issue of the budget base and the issues that arise from it, we certainly will deal with in the next Budget.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to share with this Assembly the success of two Manitoban musicians at the Aboriginal Music Awards.

Mr. Speaker, the fifth annual Canadian Aboriginal Awards Ceremony and celebration took place in Toronto last weekend. As part of the Canadian Aboriginal Festival, the Friday night gala launched the celebration and a pow-wow at the SkyDome ran throughout the weekend.

Many Manitoba artists were nominated for awards, an honour in and of itself. Mr. Speaker, local nominees include Kimberley Dawn, Burnt, Burnt band members Maggie Ross and Dave Boulanger, White Fish Bay Singers, Edward Gamblin, Eagle and Hawk, Mitch Daigneault and Ray St. Germaine.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate two Manitoba nominees in particular who were successful in their respective categories. Winnipeg rock band Burnt received the award for best rock album, while band members Maggie Ross and Dave Boulanger also shared the best album design award for their CD, Project 1: The Avenue.

Country singer Kimberley Dawn, also of Winnipeg, won the Galaxie rising stars award, receiving a grant and a chance to have her music played on 45 different Galaxie music channels.

The purpose of the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards is to acknowledge and honour the

keepers, teachers, promoters, creators and performers of Aboriginal music; to continue to develop and promote the diversity of all Aboriginal music; to celebrate the excellence of Aboriginal music and to recognize the unique vision of Aboriginal musicians and encourage this rich cultural voice.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize the success of these fine Manitoba musicians, not only because they received awards, but because of their contribution to the arts and cultural communities of our province and our country. Celebrating the talents of diverse cultural communities is imperative to developing and maintaining a healthy multicultural society.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I convey congratulations on behalf of all of us.

* (14:30)

Dakota Lancers

Ms. Theresa Oswald (Seine River): It is my pleasure to rise today to speak about the outstanding achievement of the students at my alma mater, Dakota Collegiate. Last evening, the members of both of our city girls and varsity boys volleyball teams captured the AAAA provincial championship titles.

Mr. Speaker, this is truly a spectacular event that has only been achieved a few times in our province's history. It was truly a blockbuster evening. The Dakota Lancers varsity girls team, ranked second going into the finals, battled hard against the excellent Oak Park Raiders to win the match in five games. The varsity boys, also ranked second, defeated a stellar squad from Mennonite Brethren in four games.

Aside from the incredible display of athleticism in both matches, Mr. Speaker, what was truly worthy of note was the passionate display of fan support from parents and students alike. These people cheered at deafening levels from 5:30 until after 11 at night.

I am delighted to congratulate Mr. Dominic Buccini, one of the coaches of the varsity girls' team and a former teacher of mine, for leading his team to victory. This was the first provincial championship victory for Mr. Buccini in 20

years at Dakota, which is especially sweet, given his plans to retire later this year. The boys' coach, Mr. Phil Hudson, is also to be congratulated for this great win and for the true institution he has become for volleyball in Manitoba. Other members of the coaching staffs of these champions include John Hykawy, Rob Sveinson, Fraser McLeod and Kris Funk.

I also wish to extend particular congratulations, Mr. Speaker, to all the players and managers for their hard work and dedication to the sport. My heart soars for some of my former students, including Scott Adamson, Sara Harrington and Andrew Town, who was selected as provincial MVP.

I can say with sincerity that I understand the joy and pride these students must be feeling today, as it was 20 years ago, nearly to the day—that cannot be right—that I played on a provincial varsity championship team at Dakota. This tradition has been strong and I feel as proud today as I did then.

Paul Champagne

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I rise today to congratulate La Salle resident Paul Champagne on his efforts to support diabetes research. On December 14, Paul Champagne, along with five other North West Company colleagues, will join Team Diabetes Canada and participate in the International Honolulu Marathon.

The Honolulu Marathon is the world's fourth largest. This event will be Champagne's third marathon. Last year the North West Company raised over \$89,000 for the Canadian Diabetes Association, with \$70,000 of that coming from marathon participants. This year their goal is to raise \$110,000. Champagne is hoping to raise \$10,000 of that himself. The funds raised will be used in diabetes research, prevention and education and to support those currently living with the disease.

As captain of this team, Champagne will be proudly carrying his company's flag and providing leadership to teammates from Igloolik, Nunavut; Chisasibi, Québec; and God's Lake Narrows. With their participation, Champagne and his team members are taking on this important

task of raising awareness about the diabetes crisis in Canada. More than half of our country's population, some 16.5 million Canadians, are currently considered to be at risk for developing diabetes.

Manitobans such as Paul Champagne and his fellow runners, Mr. Speaker, are an excellent example of true generosity and sacrifice. These efforts in support of the Canadian Diabetes Association demonstrate the dedication and commitment of Manitobans to their fellow citizens. Working towards a diabetes-free Canada is a noble cause worthy of our congratulations and support.

On behalf of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish Team Diabetes Canada much success as they complete their training and participate in the International Honolulu Marathon in the next few weeks. Thank you.

Volunteerism

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have a great tradition of volunteerism. It is one of the leading provinces in volunteer participation. Our volunteers enrich our society with people helping each other.

I have been amazed at the dedication of many people in Radisson who have the spirit of co-operation and civic responsibility. At this busy time of year, it is inspiring to see so many volunteers, teachers, community club executives, coaches, parents and staff working to make these community events affordable and accessible to all the families in their area.

It seems to me that Santa must enjoy visiting the children of Radisson. Just last week, the MLA for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) and I saw him at Winakwa Community Centre's event "Lunch with Santa." I hear that next week we can find him at Park City West Community Centre. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank organizers at both Winakwa and Park City West for their marvelous work in offering these exciting events.

As well, I wish to recognize the many other volunteers who are busy preparing our children for their traditional holiday concerts and activities in our local schools and places of worship.

Their efforts directly improve the quality of their own lives and the lives of their neighbours and, indeed, future generations of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and my colleagues of this House to join me in extending our best wishes for the holidays and the coming year to those volunteers in Radisson and across Manitoba who make our communities so much better. Thank you.

Minto School

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I am pleased to put a few words on record about the 75th anniversary of the Minto School which was marked at a special ceremony on October 9.

Mr. Speaker, the first Minto School opened in August 1900 in the village of Minto, but the school was destroyed in a fire on March 9, 1928. The replacement school built for a mere \$14,000 opened for approximately 90 students on October 9, 1928.

Minto operated as a separate school district for much of its history, not joining the Turtle Mountain School Division until 1959. Once featuring a high school component, today the school is home to 37 students taking classes from kindergarten to Grade Eight.

The 75th anniversary celebrations organized by the Minto Parent Advisory Council featured a tea, a cake decorated with a picture of the school and its students and activities for the children, including a traditional fish pond. Students had the opportunity to do research into the history of the school which was also on display in colourful form.

The staff and the students at the Minto School are a close-knit group. As principal Fran Jackson noted and I quote: "For our students, it is like one big family. There are squabbles in families but everything works out."

Throughout the years, Minto and area residents have made a considerable investment in keeping the Minto School open. They recognize the importance it plays in keeping their community healthy and they have fought many battles and raised many dollars on its behalf.

I would like to congratulate all those involved for organizing the events marking the 75th anniversary of the Minto School, a facility I know holds a special place in the hearts of area residents and all those who passed through the doors while receiving their education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Seventh Day of Debate)

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

Standing in the name of the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet who has nine minutes remaining.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to continue the debate. I acknowledge the contributions made to the town of Lac du Bonnet by Rod Demoline, who was elected as the mayor of the town in 2002 after serving his community for many years as councillor. In mid-2003 he passed away after being stricken with cancer.

Rod was a very community-minded person who often placed his community in front of other personal priorities. The town of Lac du Bonnet was indeed fortunate to have an individual supporting and promoting their community. I knew Rod personally and professionally, and I can say that I have known very few other individuals who have demonstrated both a dedicated commitment to his family and to his community as has Rod Demoline.

Mr. Speaker, I was privileged this year to attend the Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in Lac du Bonnet in November, and it brought tears to my eyes when I heard that Adele Demoline, Rod's spouse, had in fact donated the Christmas tree from their yard for the ceremony. How fitting and how appropriate. Obviously, community spirit and dedication to one's community were

transferred to Adele and their daughter, Wendy McMaster. Community spirit and community dedication were obviously family traits which the entire town of Lac du Bonnet should acknowledge and be grateful for.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to put a few words on the record with regard to the Throne Speech. This is the fifth Throne Speech that I have had the honour to speak to during my career here in the Manitoba Legislature, and I have to say that each and every time I have risen in this Chamber to speak to the Throne Speech, I have been humbled knowing what a privilege it is to represent the people of Brandon East and humbled to know what a privilege it is to be elected by Manitobans to represent the best interests of the people in this province in this Chamber.

*(14:40)

Mr. Speaker, this fifth Throne Speech that I am speaking to today is my first speech not in the position of a Cabinet minister. I would like to take the opportunity in that light to thank my colleagues, my friends, my family, my constituents, and indeed citizens from throughout Manitoba who have extended their best wishes to me on regaining my health after what has been a very difficult summer and autumn in terms of respiratory illness.

I was afflicted earlier this summer with a virus that has left me quite without breath many times over the last number of months, and I feel very fortunate to be able to rise here today with some wind in my lungs to put these words on the record. It has been very, very gratifying, and I am most grateful for the expressions and good will that I have received from throughout the province, and I would be remiss if I did not mention that.

Mr. Speaker, a Throne Speech is an occasion for Government members to celebrate their vision for the year ahead and to reflect on the work that they have done in the years past. It is

very much a privilege to be part of a government, to be part of a team, to be part of a group of hardworking women and men who are members of the Government in Manitoba today that care so deeply for the province, for the northern part of the province of Manitoba, for the southern part of the province of Manitoba, for rural Manitoba, for urban Manitoba, for east and for west, of all ethnicities and all community groups. I feel so privileged and so proud to be part of a team that represents every region of this province and represents the ethnic and cultural diversity of this province. It is a tremendous privilege for me to be part of this group of men and women.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend some new members in this House. On my side, on the Government's side of the House, my very dear friend, Theresa Oswald from Seine River, sorry, the member from Seine River, joins us; the member from Gimli joins us; the Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) joins us; the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) joins us; the Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) joins us; and the new Member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) joins us on this side of the House. I should also say, and this is perhaps the crowning pride and glory of this past election, is the new Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross), who joins us over here.

In a second mandate, Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, increased the representatives of our party in this House. It demonstrates in a very profound way that Manitobans believe and support a government that believes in and supports Manitoba, all regions of the province. So I am very, very proud to be part of this Government, proud to be part of a team of women and men who are dedicated to this province and work to the best of their abilities each and every day on behalf of the people of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this fifth Throne Speech that I am privileged to speak to highlights some major new initiatives and begins to put flesh to a vision of Manitoba hitherto unseen in this province. We have an increased and enhanced priority for water resources, for proactive health care, for energy, areas that are for Manitoba's future of critical importance. I am very pleased that the Premier (Mr. Doer) has recognized and taken action on these areas of vital importance to the future growth and prosperity of our province.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

This Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, really does not just define the year ahead. This will define the second mandate of our Government and position us well for the third mandate, and as I reflect on the recent victory of the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan, perhaps even a fourth mandate. I know that all of us in this House have the energy and the vitality and the determination to continue to build on the accomplishments of our first mandate and to build on those accomplishments as we move forward into the first decade of the 21st century, and dare I say, the second decade of the 21st century looking forward yet.

Energy, water resources, proactive health care, healthy living, education, the bedrock of our economic development strategy, what we believe in fundamentally as a government in creating highly educated Manitobans for high-skilled, high-income job opportunities and economic development opportunities for communities into the future. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech is, as I said, not only important to define the year ahead but to define the years ahead as we move forward through our second mandate, and as I suggest, into mandates beyond this one.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech is also an opportunity for members to reflect a little on their home constituencies as well as the provincial milieu as a whole. When I reflect on Brandon, I can say without hesitation that Brandon thrives under New Democratic governments. During the Schreyer years, when my predecessor, Len Evans, who was privileged to hold a number of portfolios in the Schreyer government, the Brandon city limits were expanded to increase the industrial tax base and create opportunities for initiatives that have been undertaken in more recent years like the Maple Leaf meat packing plant in Brandon, Simplot Canada in Brandon. Some of the economic power of Brandon that we see today was created by Len Evans and Ed Schreyer during their time in this Chamber. The Keystone Centre, is something that the City of Brandon, as they are known to do from time to time, was not really interested in at the time. The Keystone Centre, which has become a bedrock of western Manitoba and a

bedrock of the agricultural economy in western Manitoba, a bedrock of the community and the cultural milieu of western Manitoba, was created in 1970 by Len Evans and the Ed Schreyer government again.

Moving into the later Schreyer years and the early Pawley years when Mr. Evans continued to represent Brandon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we saw virtually every single senior citizens complex in the city of Brandon today being built. There are quite a number. Ten of them, approximately, exist in my home constituency of Brandon East, which encompasses the downtown area where there was a great concentration of seniors housing as well as most of the area east of 18th Street where the vast majority of seniors housing and public housing in the city of Brandon exists, in Brandon East. It was all developed during the Pawley and Schreyer mandates.

More recently, and this is, I guess, the gist of my remarks about this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over a quarter of a billion dollars of provincial investment has been directed to the city of Brandon since we came to office in 1999. The Brandon Regional Health Centre redevelopment which was promised seven times over 11 years by members opposite came to fruition in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 with a \$60-million commitment by this Government to ensure that western Manitoba would have a state-of-the-art, world-class health care facility for all of the 200 000 citizens of western Manitoba. It took a New Democratic government. It took members from Brandon East and Brandon West to make that a reality, and I am very, very proud of that accomplishment. I think that accomplishment, not only in terms of the health care excellence provided to western Manitoba, it also speaks to the integrity of this Government: A promise made is a promise kept.

When we as New Democratic members, Mr. Deputy Speaker, committed to build health care excellence in western Manitoba, that commitment, that promise was made a reality when we were returning to office after the 11 dark years of the 1990s.

* (14:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only health care excellence is being developed. It is a return of

credibility to government. It is a return to integrity in government. It is a return of hope and optimism and confidence in the future that was returned to government and returned to this Chamber when the New Democratic Party was elected in 1999 in both Brandon East and Brandon West. The Brandon Regional Health Centre not only was a symbol for the creation of health care excellence for western Manitobans, it was a very real and tangible symbol of a return to hope, a return to optimism and a return to confidence in building western Manitoba that returned to this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the largest investment in Brandon to date has been the conversion of the Brandon generating station to natural gas from coal, responding to our new technologies, responding to our commitment to environmental protection and to the Kyoto accord; \$180 million was invested in Brandon East in the creation of a new Brandon generating station for the creation of clean electrical resources for western Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, education is something very near and dear to all of our hearts on this side of the House. During my time as Minister of Education I was very, very proud to be able to announce a number of major capital projects throughout the province, at the University of Manitoba, \$50 million; University of Winnipeg, \$14 million; Red River College, \$40 million, but in Brandon, my proudest announcements are always in my home community of Brandon, the grand opening of the Health Studies Building and Aboriginal counselling centre in Brandon.

I was at the grand opening earlier this year, a \$5-million project on the campus of Brandon University, a very proud moment for me as the MLA for Brandon East and a very welcome addition to the campus at Brandon University, again, speaking to our commitment to health care and education. This facility will provide young rural Manitobans with an opportunity to study in the health care field in rural Manitoba, at Brandon on the campus of Brandon University.

There were also a number of school enhancements made during my time as minister in Brandon. Linden Lanes School, my own alma

mater Neelin High School, J. R. Reid School, all have seen capital projects take place during our time in this government since 1969.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, highways in Brandon, highways in the region, the continued work on the eastern access in Brandon is under way. Highway 10 south of Brandon has seen a major reconstruction, Braecrest Drive, the intersection which is sloped down the North Hill of Brandon at Braecrest has been improved.

Something that is particularly important to me is that western Manitoba is finally twinning the Trans-Canada Highway to the Saskatchewan border. When I was a child, my father was a civil servant, a worker with the highways department, worked for the highways department all his life after his discharge from the Canadian Armed Forces after World War II, first as a seasonal employee, and retired from the highways department before his death some 14 years ago.

My father spoke to me all through my childhood, through the Schreyer years into my adolescence and teen years in the Pawley years, about twinning the Trans-Canada Highway, twinning it from the Ontario border to the Saskatchewan border. He would be very proud today as I am proud today to know that a New Democratic government will see that twinning completed in the years to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway, long, long envisioned by civil servants in the highways department, long part of my own household through my father, that twinning will be completed during this mandate. We have committed resources ever since we have been in office to that project. *[interjection]* My colleague from Transcona says \$37 million most recently for that twinning.

It is a very strong commitment and demonstrates a strong commitment, again, to the economic development opportunities in western Manitoba and our commitment to maximizing those economic development opportunities for western Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only do we have major health care commitments that are being fulfilled in Brandon and western Manitoba,

major educational commitments being made and fulfilled in western Manitoba, major transportation infrastructure commitments being made and fulfilled in western Manitoba, we also have major and important urban renewal projects being committed to and undertaken in western Manitoba.

Before I came to this Chamber, I was a city councillor in Brandon for three terms and sat on the board and the executive of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, as a municipal official, as an elected representative from western Manitoba to those provincial organizations. One of my greatest challenges during my time as a municipal official was the fact that there was no urban renewal initiative available to urban areas outside of the city of Winnipeg.

Members opposite, while they elect great numbers of MLAs from western Manitoba, never saw fit to expand those projects that are so important to the core area of the city of Winnipeg, the neighbourhood renewal projects that are so important to the neighbourhoods of Winnipeg, to expand those programs into areas outside of the city of Winnipeg. So we had this odd situation where a government was sustained by members from—the previous government I speak of—western Manitoba and rural Manitoba and areas outside of Winnipeg, but they did not really bring home the bacon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to their home constituencies.

Again, it took a New Democratic government to expand urban renewal initiatives to the city of Brandon and the city of Thompson, so that citizens outside of this city could benefit from urban renewal initiatives that provide for playgrounds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that provide for housing renewal, that provide for green space renewal, that provide for community economic development and community capacity building.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very proud again to be part of a government that believes that parks, playgrounds, green space, riverbank projects in my home city of Brandon, the Assiniboine River Corridor are supported. Since we have been in office, we have supported the riverbank project in Brandon, the 8th Street

Bridge and Parker Boulevard lighting for the riverbank project, the Assiniboine riverbank project, \$45,000, the Eleanor Kidd Gardens, part of the riverbank botanical gardens that are great not only as a community resource but as a tourism resource for Brandon, supporting the construction of a performance stage and botanical garden at the Eleanor Kidd Gardens to the tune of \$30,000, upgrading at Stanley Park in the downtown core of the city of Brandon, at Rideau Park in the east end part of Brandon, tens of thousands of dollars for the installation of water parks, safety lighting and nostalgia lighting to make the parks safe in the evening as community gathering places in the evening and in the daytime, new handicap accessible play structures at Rideau Park in the east end, that New Era School in the core area of Brandon, new handicap accessible play structures to meet Canadian standards. In the north end of the city of Brandon, the most disadvantaged areas of our community, the core area, the north end, the east end—in the north end, we again created new play structures, replacing structures that were over 50 years old.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of neighbourhood capacity building and neighbourhood community building, we have supported board governance structuring for the Neighborhood Renewal Corporation in Brandon. We sponsored a downtown daycare needs survey which this past year during my time in office as Minister of Family Services and Housing, I was very privileged to open two brand-new daycares in Brandon's core area, one at the Brandon Friendship Centre and one at the Brandon family YMCA, to meet the needs of citizens and young families in providing child care for our future for the children of Brandon.

* (15:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we supported neighbourhood renewal, neighbourhood capacity building, daycare expansion, child care expansion, neighbourhood communications, providing the public opportunities to participate in Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation planning activities. We have a vision for neighbourhood renewal and neighbourhood development that respects the advice of the grassroots, respects the advice of people who actually live in the

neighbourhoods. It is a novel concept, I know, not to depend on higher authorities which is often the way government resources are directed, oftentimes at the peril of the neighbourhood. Again, I speak to my time as a city councillor. We had more projects rammed down our throats from city hall that were actually counter-productive to the neighbourhood and to the community of Rosser ward in the core area of the city of Brandon.

This Government believes in respecting and taking the advice of people in communities first. Nobody is better equipped to create and develop a vision for their community than the people who actually live in the community itself. This Government believes that strongly. Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very proud to be part of a government that supports my neighbours, that supports communities, that supports people who live in distressed neighbourhoods in helping them build the sort of community that they want to build for themselves and live in for themselves and not undermine, in fact, which often happened during my time as a city councillor, not undermine the wishes and the views of people who live in neighbourhoods.

Just as I conclude my remarks I want to touch upon one more thing which is very important in terms of our Government. That is the development of housing. Not a stick of affordable housing was created for 11 years in my home community of Brandon, in Winnipeg, throughout the province of Manitoba. Since 1999 there have been over 500 units developed and renovated and built in the city of Brandon, over 500 units in four years versus 0 in 11 years. Again, that housing has been developed with the direction of the community and a loan, I might add.

The province of Manitoba has been working hand in hand with the Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation and planning district and the community in assuring that affordable housing is a priority in Brandon, developed in Brandon. I am very proud to be part, again, of a government that believes so strongly in building communities throughout the province, but most especially in my home constituency of Brandon East.

So once again, I would like to thank my constituents, the people of Brandon East, for the

privilege that they have given me to represent them in this Chamber. It is indeed an honour to represent Brandon East. Moreover, it is indeed an honour to continue the tradition of New Democratic Party representation in Brandon East and to be part of a government that believes in the future of our province. Thank you.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to stand in my place once again and respond to the Throne Speech, speak a bit to the amendments that were put forward by this side of the House, but first and foremost say welcome back to all of those that were re-elected to the Legislature and welcome to all of the new faces that we see.

Although I do not have any hard data, I would say that the average age in the Manitoba Legislature has decreased considerably with the new members that have been elected. I want to congratulate those on the government side that were elected for the first time, congratulate those on our side of the House, especially the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), who were all elected as new members of the Legislature in the Progressive Conservative caucus.

I also would like to welcome back the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I want to indicate to him personally and publicly that I have always enjoyed his contributions in the past and welcome him back and know that he will contribute as significantly over this term, over the next four years. So congratulations to all of those that are back.

I want to welcome the pages and wish them a very interesting time and hope that they learn and enjoy the workings of the Legislature and their duties in helping us as members of the Legislature.

I would like to welcome, of course, the table officers back and the interns that were chosen to work with both caucuses in the Legislature and hope that they have a very productive year.

I would like to thank once again the people in River East constituency that elected me for the sixth time. I have to say that I am very proud

to be able to represent the people in the great constituency of River East.

I do want to indicate, too, that I know many members on the New Democratic side of the House got a lot of first-hand experience during the election campaign, knocking on doors in our River East constituency. I might say that many Cabinet ministers and I know many backbenchers on the New Democratic side spent many, many hours and days knocking on doors, introducing themselves to the great constituents of River East. We may as a result, since they got to know the community so well, we may see more New Democrats moving into the River East constituency. We already have the Premier (Mr. Doer) living there. The Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) lives in the great constituency of River East. There may be others that got such a positive impression of the spirit in River East that we may see more members of the New Democratic Party choose River East as their home.

I would welcome them because I have said many, many times in the Legislature that I represent all of those who live in the community. I would hope that the Premier appreciates the hard work, the time, the energy and the effort that I put in, in representing him and the many others who live in our community.

I believe the residents of River East expressed their confidence and support for me again because of the hard work I have attempted to do on their behalf over the years. I think that goes a long way to indicating to all members, and maybe some good advice to those who have been newly elected, that not only do we have duties to perform here in the Legislature, whether it be in government or in opposition, and we have our roles to play, but our main focus and most of our energy must be placed on representing those who elected us. Those are people within our constituency.

I might say that hard work does pay off but it also speaks to the quality and the character of those who live in the community and the suggestions, the ideas and the advice they have given me over the years on the needs that our community has had and how I have in many ways tried to work very hard on their behalf to

implement some of the things and to fight for some of the things our community has requested.

We, since 1986, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been very much a growing community with many young families that have needed recreational opportunities in our community. I have worked really hard to try to ensure that our community club, Gateway community club, has grown, has developed and has met the needs of the families who are growing and living and need the recreational opportunities within our community.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I worked hard and I think we can be very proud of the recreational opportunities that exist at Gateway Recreation Centre, and that I know many of my constituents and those who visit to come and play in a competitive nature in my community have come to understand and appreciate.

* (15:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take great pride in getting the two lanes of the Perimeter Highway completed. You know there were eight kilometers of the Perimeter Highway that has been in existence for decades that were never completed. I take great pride in working really hard. It took me a while to convince our government of the day even that it was a priority, but I was able to do that and have been very proud of that accomplishment. I know that it has benefited many in my community.

Unfortunately there have been a couple of accidents, fatal accidents, on that stretch of the Perimeter Highway and it is now time for government to take the next bold step and commit to funding to complete the four lanes of that Perimeter Highway, plus the cloverleaf at the corner of the Perimeter and Lagimodière Boulevard needs to be completed.

I have talked to my constituent the Premier (Mr. Doer), and I think that we both have a common goal in mind because we live in the same community and know that the residents in that community deserve to have their voices heard once again. I am hoping that we can in very much a bipartisan way work for the benefit

of the residents in River East and in the northeast quadrant of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the accomplishments that I am extremely proud of is the seniors health and wellness resource team that was started when we were in government and is the only one program of its kind throughout the province, something that I take great pride in working very hard along with my community to develop. This is one instance where we have seen a public-private partnership that has worked where we had a need identified in our community. I have several senior citizens apartment blocks in my community. They were indicating that they would like to see services closer to home, right where they lived. As a result of that, we had the owner of several of those apartment blocks come forward and say: If only we could have a nurse or some sort of support for our seniors in our apartment block. I would be prepared to fund the renovations, to build the offices, to provide the furniture if we could get a nurse who could come in on an ongoing basis and serve the needs of some of those residents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the kind of public-private partnership we talk about in the health care system that works. When the private sector is prepared to put up the funding for the bricks and mortar and government is prepared to provide the services and the professionals, that is the kind of thing that works. I have to tell you, it has been extremely successful.

I am thrilled that it is working so well. I do not know whether the Government is looking at expanding those kinds of programs into other communities. Maybe, just maybe, I hope that by mentioning it and mentioning that there is a public-private partnership, we do not see a government that takes exception to that and tries to close it down. I would hope that they would look at that example, that they would learn from that example and that they would move forward and look at other communities that might want to duplicate that kind of support service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a nurse and an occupational therapist have been hired as the seniors health resource team. They have offices in five different apartment blocks along Henderson Highway. They hold regular clinics in those

offices. They have individual consultations with seniors. They do teaching. They have developed programs. They have support services for those who are caring for their loved ones who are incapacitated, who need help. They bring those individuals together and they provide support to each other.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are a dynamic duo and I want to indicate that they have now connected with the Good Neighbours Senior Centre down Henderson Highway. If a constituent of mine calls who lives in a residence, who is elderly and is having difficulty coping, all I have to do is pick up the phone and call the nurse from the seniors health resource team. They will make a call. They will make a visit into the community to see whether they can help in any way get the support or the service that those individuals need.

I am thrilled that it is working so well. I do not know whether the Government is looking at expanding those kinds of programs into other communities. Maybe, just maybe, I hope that by mentioning it and mentioning that there is a public-private partnership, we do not see a government that takes exception to that and tries to close it down. I would hope that they would look at that example, that they would learn from that example and that they would move forward and look at other communities that might want to duplicate that kind of support service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a community hospital in Concordia Hospital that has grown. I know that when we were in government there were lots of things that happened, and I am pleased to say that under the present administration, Concordia continues to expand and to grow. I have a very personal, special place in my heart for Concordia Hospital.

I worked there as a nurse for several years before I got into political office. I continue to support Concordia Hospital through serving on the Concordia Hospital Foundation. I am very pleased to be able to lend my support and try to garner support from others within the community to raise funds to develop extra-special programs that Concordia needs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hip and knee replacement program has been announced and has

begun to move to Concordia Hospital. I want to thank the Government for promoting and approving that initiative. I want to make my commitment today to work with the Government to try to ensure that our community and our community hospital thrives and grows. It is not something that becomes a partisan political issue. It is important for all of us to be working together to ensure that our health facilities are there to meet the needs of the population.

Another program in our community that really has developed and grown is the congregate meal program. Again, when I talked about public-private partnership, I know that there are many congregate meal programs that are run by support services for seniors within government. There is some funding provided to hire the cook to provide the meals.

Again, I do want to say that because of the entrepreneurial nature of our community, we again have a landlord that pays the full support for the cook in his apartment blocks to provide the congregate meal program. There again is a public-private partnership which provides support to seniors where they live. I want to thank the many, many volunteers in our seniors community that work on a regular basis to ensure that those programs are successful.

I am pleased again to have the opportunity to represent our River East community. As I went door to door during the election campaign, I talked to the many hardworking men and women that make up our constituency that indicated very clearly to me that they were taxed enough, that in fact they would not mind a little bit more of their money being left in their pockets so that they could choose how to spend it rather than having government and the heavy hand of government determine where their disposable income would go.

One of the things that really piqued their interest, of course, was our commitment to remove the education tax off the property taxes. I guess one of the challenges for us was to sell that as doable, especially with the commitment to remove it within a year. I think as we move forward you will see our party come forward with a very workable plan. It was 2 percent of the

provincial budget. I think that it would be very doable to find the money.

* (15:20)

If in fact we had had a crystal ball during the election campaign and had realized that there was going to be \$141 million in additional revenue come to the province in the way of transfer payments from the federal government, that would have almost met the need, or the requirement. We were over halfway there in getting the money that we needed in order to remove the education tax completely from the property tax.

I want to speak a bit about the new deal that was proposed by the mayor and the City of Winnipeg, because I think it all fits into some of the direction that we talked about taking during the election campaign and why we will continue to press this Government to remove education tax completely from property tax.

We saw the mayor come out with a proposal that was looking at \$120 million more to support programs in infrastructure in the city of Winnipeg. We had the provincial government, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Mihychuk) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) saying, well, we are just going to let the process take place and we are going to listen to what Manitobans have to say but we will be at the table. We will have an open mind, but we were not elected to raise taxes. We heard the Province also say, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said we do not have bagfuls of money. They pretty well ruled out the Province giving the City of Winnipeg any more money.

Well, it only stands to reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if the Province is not going to give the City any more money and the City is asking for \$120 million more, who is going to pay? It is going to be the taxpayers who are going to have to dig deeper into their pockets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is unacceptable. As I talked to the people in River East constituency, I found out very clearly that they had no appetite for increased taxes. They took the Premier at his word when he ran and said that he was not going to raise taxes. Then to have him

sit back and say, well, we are not going to say anything. We are going to wait until the City comes to us with a formal proposal. He is going to let the mayor go back to the drawing board after the public consultations and come back in the spring and ask for a sales tax increase.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had to have the Premier come out and state very clearly—I think he was being very unfair to the mayor by not indicating right up front that there would no increase in sales tax. That was why we organized and worked on a petition that ensured that the Premier had to stand up, stand in his place, take a stand and indicate that there would be no sales tax increase. That would have had to be—*[interjection]* I hear the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), and I do know that there were some in his constituency that signed the petition too.

Manitobans spoke loudly and clearly. The city of Winnipeg does not want to be taxed more. This Government and this Premier have to stand up, and they have to indicate to Winnipeggers, to Manitobans, that enough is enough. We may have to look at the way we are spending your hard-earned tax dollars, but we are not going to ask you to dig deeper into your pockets to pay any more.

I would hope that all members on the other side of the House listen very clearly to the comments that were made as public forums were held and how Winnipeggers spoke when they were asked. I would hope that all of those across the way who have any slight inkling to support tax increases and user fee increases in next year's budget will have listened very carefully to where Winnipeggers have come from and that they would give Winnipeggers and Manitobans a say before they raise any taxes.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few comments on the Throne Speech, I do want to indicate that we will be watching very carefully. Yes, the Government has increased the numbers on the government side of the House in this past election. There will be those who will be watching much more carefully over this term.

This Government cannot now sit back and continue to blame governments of the past. They cannot continue to be a do-nothing government.

They are going to have to be accountable for the decisions that they make, and Manitobans will hold them accountable.

Manitobans spoke in this past election and elected a New Democratic government, but no government should become arrogant to the point where they believe that they are going to govern forever. We do know that in Manitoba politics most governments are two-term governments. Manitobans, in the second term of any government, expect and will hold accountable the government of the day for the decisions that are made. The Government will have to now stop blaming past governments for everything that is wrong.

They have been in government now for four years. There is an expectation that they will, they should and will be held accountable for decisions that are made. So I would caution the Premier and his ministers and even those backbenchers that from time to time take some delight in being very arrogant about their role in government that the time will come when the political landscape in this Chamber will change. I would encourage them to do the right thing for the right reasons for the taxpayers and for the people of Manitoba that elected them.

So I am pleased to have the opportunity to stand in my place. I also would like to indicate that I do not see a lot of vision. I do not see a lot of positive direction in this Throne Speech. I believe that many of the promises that were made back in 1999 by this Government have not been followed through on. There have been many, many broken promises. We will see over the next number of months and years how well this Government manages to be accountable to those that elected them and chose them to sit on the governing side of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak today and want to indicate that I will not be supporting the Throne Speech. I will be supporting our amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I listened very closely to what the Member for River East had to say about the Government and governments in general, and so on. I thought it was rather interesting the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid)

pointed out to me that she had talked about increased spending in one part of her speech, she wants to twin the highways, and then the next paragraph in her speech she is talking about cutting taxes. This gets back to Abe Kovnats' famous saying back in 1986-87. Abe Kovnats used to say that in opposition you could have it both ways. You could promise all sorts of spending one day and turn around and call for tax cuts the next day and you can get away with it, right? That is the hallmark of opposition politics in this province. In fact, I think every province is like that.

* (15:30)

I wanted to say that we have had a very good economy for the last dozen years. Generally in a good economy people are fairly happy. When they are fairly happy I do not think they are paying a lot of attention to what the Government is doing. So the Government can have all sorts of very good initiatives, which we do, outlined in the Throne Speech, and it does not seem to get the coverage, does not seem to get the notice that probably the initiatives deserve, but there are a lot of good initiatives that this Government is taking. I do not think we have gotten the full credit for what we have done at this point. Perhaps that will change.

Actually, the hallmark of this Government since 1999 is that it has been a builder government. I can tell you I remember the dark days of Sterling Lyon. In 1980-81, I was one of the fundraisers for the NDP and I went to Toronto and other places to approach companies for donations. I can tell you the people who were making the donations were happy as can be to be getting rid of a Conservative government that cut down, shut down all the construction projects.

You could not find an architect in Manitoba. You could not find an engineer in Manitoba who wanted to give a cent to re-elect the Sterling Lyon government. They would tell me we are not Conservatives, but we are not stupid either. We know when the Conservatives are in power here nothing is happening. Nothing is being built. Architects are out of work. Engineers are out of work. So we want you people back in power because at least you are going to build things. You are going to construct things.

What has happened? In the last four years we have an arena under construction. They could not do it. The Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), trying to build an arena here under the previous Conservative government, could not get it done. Now he is so jealous that we have got it done; he does not like, he is not a fan of the arena anymore. Now he has gone off to talk about VLTs, how we are going to remove VLTs from the province.

This government did not accomplish a lot, beyond getting the budget under control, the deficit question under control, which, by the way, the Saskatchewan NDP were the first in the country to do it. So Filmon was not the first at all. He was probably the second or the third, but at least he did what was necessary for the time to bring a budget deficit which, under Clayton Manness' final year or two as Finance Minister, hit \$800 million, probably a record deficit in the history of the province, done under a Conservative regime.

They did take steps to get the deficit under control, but while they did that they did not do any of the building we are doing right now. There was no talk about building of floodway under the Conservatives. As a matter of fact, when we had a flood, the premier said people should not be building houses around a flood plain. That was his response.

There is construction going on downtown in unprecedented numbers, 34, 36 buildings being built. There is a new Hydro building on the drawing boards. None of this was being touted and talked about under the Tory regime.

As a matter of fact all that happened during the Tory regime was that they would cut back the spending in education between the elections. They cut back the health care spending between the elections. Then the year before the election they would come out with all of these great drawings for all these buildings they were going to build. Right? When the election was over, they would put it all on the shelf. They cancelled all of the programs. That is how they operated when they were in government, just do enough to win the election and continue on. Well, that approach worked for a couple of times, but then of course it did not work in the final analysis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen a very optimistic Throne Speech. I think it is a reflection of an optimistic people in this province at this point. We have seen unprecedented growth in the economy since the slowdown of the 1991-92 period. We have seen other governments run huge deficits. I give you the example of Ontario, and there are other provinces that are running huge deficits. What has been happening in Manitoba? We are running a surplus budget in Manitoba since we have been elected.

In fact Manitoba has had a handle on the deficits ever since the big deficit of Clayton Manness. I give the previous government credit for doing what was necessary at the time and we have simply continued what they had done.

Now what they expected would happen when we won in 1999, what they were hoping we would do is simply dismantle the balanced budget legislation and go back to our free-spending ways of the 1980s, but we surprised them. They are very unhappy people over there at this point. Not only did we not scrap the balanced budget legislation, but we actually improved it, and that really cheesed them off even more. They are not very happy about that, I can tell you.

So they balanced their budget in the old days with cutbacks to health care, reductions in education spending, wrapped them up around election period. That was sort of the *modus operandi* of the government. All we have done is continue the successful prescription of tax reductions which, once again, they would not have expected us to do. They expected us to be hiking the taxes, making it easier for them to successfully make a comeback in this province. We have also managed to have reasonable spending increases in this province. As a matter of fact, very reasonable, much more so than they were able to do in the years they were there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we did something that they never did, and the Liberals will never be able to do. The Liberals never even thought of it. There is an unfunded pension liability, which was getting bigger and bigger and had been ignored by previous governments, going back a long way.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

It was this Government that could have kept ignoring the problem. But we did not. We have funded the pension liability. This unfunded liability would have been a huge millstone around the necks of our children and all future governments. But we began paying down the liability a couple of years ago now. Over a 30-year period, that liability will be taken care of and in a very painless manner. You cannot let a liability extend to the point where it practically drags you down, drags the province down and then try to pay it all off in a couple of years. It is prudent to do this over the 30-year period.

So, as I said, we have been running budget surpluses. We have been paying down the debt. We have been doing all the things that a good Tory would expect a government to do. That is why we see such unhappy faces across the way. They are extremely glum. We have seen four years now of glum, sad people sitting across from us with no real issues. They have been trying to get their feet on the ground. They have been trying to grab on to issues, but just when they are making that grasp for the branch somebody comes and chops the branch off and they end up splat on the floor or on the ground.

You know, it is kind of funny, but the fact of the matter is that we have been on top of their game plan, I guess, in a very successful way. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that these measures can only be achieved if the pie increases in size, if the economy continues to grow. If and when we hit a recession and a slowdown in the economy, something is going to have to give. This is a fact of life with any governments of any stripe in the country. It is just a matter of economics. We have been very lucky to have a dozen years now of very good growth and expenditures and it has allowed us to do all of the things that we want to and will continue doing.

* (15:40)

But at some point, if the revenues start to fall off, and this is what happened in Clayton Manness' day, this is what happened to Howard Pawley, it is very difficult to plan for a recession even though we know that they are going to

come. What we have done, what other governments have done, Saskatchewan has done it too, is we have formed the rainy day fund. That is the genesis of the rainy day fund. It is because the governments know that they will never, never put money aside for a rainy day and yet they know in their own minds the rainy day is bound to come at some point.

That is why we have a discipline built into the system so that we have a rainy day fund to take care of the problems when a recession occurs. It does not take much. It does not take much of a shift if you have your expenses locked in and you cannot change them. They are mandated by contracts and all of a sudden your revenue drops off. You are in big trouble. Before you know it you are sinking under the water and that is a real problem. That is what we have to look forward to. If the economy stays in good shape and we keep delivering good government in Manitoba, we could stay here forever, but if the economy does not perform as well as we hope it will, if a recession happens to hit, the public, who have not been paying a lot of attention to our issues, may suddenly start paying a lot of attention. At that point, it becomes very hard to square the circle.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that back in the Schreyer government, in the second term when things turned negative, when the economy turned negative, at a certain point people became very pessimistic. In fact, they were even blaming the government for the weather. You know you cannot win when you are going door to door and people have just gone beyond the actual issues in front of them. They just want a change. They want you out of there and no amount of rational dialogue is going to convince them otherwise. They have decided that that is it. Time is over. You are done. We have been through that. *[interjection]* To the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), those conditions are not here now. They probably are not going to be here in the foreseeable future, but we cannot be predicting the future with any great degree of accuracy.

When the economy is good, we have to invest in upgrading our facilities, and we have to spend substantially. I wanted to point out that this Government has spent a lot of money in the area of technology in the hospitals and in

medical facilities. We have an MRI in Brandon now which the previous government could not do. Although they promised at each election, they did not deliver on the promise. We have CT scans in Steinbach for the first time, Thompson for the first time, Selkirk for the first time. These things were never done, Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives were in power. Thompson and Selkirk would have been waiting for 50 years for this kind of facility.

We have gamma knife technology which is being implemented here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and we have centres of excellence in health care areas. To give the previous government credit, they supported and they worked on that approach. I always thought it was a very good approach to establish centres of excellence whether it be in Winnipeg, whether it be in Edmonton, wherever it is for a certain type of procedure. I want to tell you and I think it just makes sense—you just have to think of the old Henry Ford concept of building the old automobiles, there is an old joke about people wanting their son or daughter to become a brain surgeon. They would be very happy if they could become brain surgeons, but they do not want to be their first patients. There are lots of studies that show that the mortality rate is very high among doctors who are performing very small amounts of a certain procedure. So it is just common sense that you want to go and have your brain surgery performed by a doctor who is doing it all the time. If that means going to Regina or Saskatoon or Vancouver, then that is what you should do.

If gamma knife technology is going to be centered here in Manitoba, then people should feel confident that they can come here from all across the country and have their surgeries done, and the success rate will be very, very high. This is just something that makes sense. The quicker and the faster that we develop the technologies and push this concept, the better off the province is going to be.

We have Telehealth centres now being set up across the province. There is a Telehealth centre in Ashern, among other places. The goal, Mr. Speaker, is to connect ultimately the hospitals with the clinics and with the doctors' offices. When you think about it, does it not make sense

that rather than having to phone your doctor for an appointment, you should be able to just simply go on-line, look up the doctor's office, look at his or her appointment schedules, and if there is a ten o'clock appointment on Thursday, you click it and you have got an appointment. That is just common sense, but where are we in this? Each province is grappling with these issues. Alberta is trying to connect the hospitals and the doctors and the clinics, and the doctors are saying—these are doctors who make lots of money, I presume—no, we are not going to do it unless the Government pays for the computers. As long as that attitude prevails, progress is going to be slow, but there obviously has to be a way to change the clinics, the hospitals, the doctor's office and build them into a seamless web so that we can improve health care in the province.

A patient should be able to have test results stored on-line so that any hospital, clinic or doctor's office he or she visits in Manitoba, or even outside Manitoba, can access the results and give instant treatment and not take even more duplicate tests. Everybody knows that people have taken tests in Concordia Hospital one day, two or three days later gone to a different hospital and they are taking the darn things again. I mean, that is ridiculous; it should not be. The test results should be there. As a matter of fact, doctor's offices routinely lose these results. They misplace the results. If you had the results on-line, accessible to the patient, the patient from wherever they are can simply access their results and could see what their numbers are for whatever tests it is they are looking for, when they are on holidays in Florida, when they are in Vancouver, wherever they happen to be. This would make so much sense, but it is just something that is not moving along at a very fast rate. In fact, a measure like this probably could save lives if you were to study the results.

To connect the hospitals the Government has to establish uniform, consistent standards. Right now you have hospitals operating on different standards, computer platforms, so that one hospital cannot communicate with another to share the information. To do this, the Government has to facilitate dark fibre builds, which, over time, and I know the telephone system is

building the fibre builds at the moment, has to result basically in gigabyte-to-the-home service. I do not say this is going to happen in five or ten years. It might take twenty years. Obviously, small communities are going to get it last, but once you connect up the municipalities, the hospitals, the schools into the network, then it becomes easier to run the cable to the individual houses or the individual subdivisions as the case may be, so that over time all of the communities in Manitoba will be connected.

Mr. Speaker, once the fibre is in place you essentially have a road, a network linking all the facilities in most homes in Manitoba. With that comes the benefit of sharing information essentially around the world. Now, before you all go to sleep, and I know you are really interested to hear about gigabyte Ethernet to the home and other things like this, I just want to tell you that there are a lot of benefits to sharing this information within the province and around the world. The hospitals can serve patients in rural areas using Telehealth, which they are doing right now. Schools can provide training programs all over the province with less reliance on bricks and mortar. You know, the old days you built a school in every little town. Well, in the future you may not be doing that. You may be providing basically on-line training to people at much lower costs and better training in the process. You can apply this concept to the Government too. The previous government was on the verge of looking at stuff like this, but it did not go anywhere.

An Honourable Member: SmartHealth.

* (15:50)

Mr. Maloway: Yes. Municipalities, Mr. Speaker, they will be able to connect with one another and to their ratepayers; and that means offering services to the ratepayers. All levels of government should be able to provide real, transactional services on-line to the public. You see, what has happened up to now the initial goal was to get Web sites set up, but once you did that, a lot of people found that was not really that useful. The information did not get updated very often. It was not necessarily what people wanted.

People want transactional services from the Government. They want to be able to go right on-line, fill out their forms and fill out an application for student aid. That is what they want. They do not want to download a form and then put it in the post office. Right? They do not want to do that.

Here are some examples of what we have right now. I will have to be quick because we only have about eight minutes left here. Today, if you have access to a computer hook-up to the Internet, did you know you can buy Canada Savings Bonds on-line? I bet you did not know that. I bet you none of you have, but you can do that. No more driving to the bank, no more standing in line on the last day to buy your savings bonds. You can do that on-line.

If you live up North, how long does it take you to get to the bank? Maybe a hundred miles from the bank.

Some day Manitoba may have the same service here with our Hydro Bonds. It is just a matter of applying what the federal government is doing. I know that bonds are being offered in the state of Maryland, I believe it is, on-line. You can do that.

Today you can apply for EI benefits on-line, through the federal government. Now if any of us happen to lose our jobs here, you are informed. Right? You heard it, you heard it here, a little bit too early for us. Today you can apply for a job—[interjection]

Now you should know this. The Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) should know this, that she is always attacking, lately, the City of Winnipeg. Did you know the City of Winnipeg, if you check the provincial site, the federal site and the City of Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg is the only site where you can actually apply for a job on-line? That is pretty good.

So, if you ever get tired of being the MLA for River East, there it is. In the comfort of your office, you do not have to go down and get an application and fill it out. You can do it right from home on a Sunday night; you can fill out the application.

I am sure people are going to be happy with provincial and federal governments who provide services like this, the transactional services. People do not want to spend time getting information about the service. They want to complete the transaction right there and avoid the lineups.

Today one of the few Manitoba government services on-line is the Personal Property Registry. That is the registry where you can check for liens on used cars. How many times have you bought a used car or other kind of property and you had to wait till Monday to go down to the Woodsworth Building and search the title. Now for the last two or three years you can go on there with your credit card, pay your six bucks and do your search on Saturday night.

I have done a couple already and I can tell you I lead a very exciting life. Saturday night I spend checking out the liens on used cars on a Web site.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Maloway: The Opposition are not allowing me to finish. I only have six minutes here and I have a whole bunch more pages. It is the same story every time. I just run out of time.

Mr. Speaker, today over 50 percent of all student aid apps are done on-line here in Manitoba and this is going to increase. The 50% level was achieved in the first year of operating this program. Rural students are saving time and money. There are literally hundreds of government services that can be provided on-line and the public is ready to use them, if they are transactional and not just on the Web site. The structures are already in place to provide the single window entry to the government through the government portal.

In the past each department had its own Web site. This was not the way to go. So what the governments have done is they have formed their own portals, like FirstGov in the United States where the public just has to remember one thing, one entry to go in there and access your services.

Your voters do not care about government departments. They do not want to go to six or

seven departments to get housing, to get social assistance, to get other programs. They want to be able to go in through one window. They want to be able to apply for social assistance and have immediately pop up a reference to, say, housing and should be able to fill out their housing applications and therefore save them. Basically your voters will qualify probably for more services and be able to do it without running around to those five or six offices so we are not inconveniencing the voter.

I am not saying you can win an election with government on-line services but certainly if you make the voters happy and they feel you are offering them good services they are going to be much happier with you.

A person, Mr. Speaker, who applies on-line for social assistance should be automatically connected to housing, then training, and all other related services. The citizen will get better service and more service under an e-government model.

Governments should not be simply automating functions but they should be re-engineering entire processes in the higher departments with the view to providing quicker service to the public. Automating somewhat useless services in many cases is not the way to go, and we have been doing that for years in public service.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

In Manitoba, the Government has 586, and probably more by now, locations across the province where people without computers, without computer access can go in. Good Neighbours Seniors Centre, which the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) knows well, provides access to people who do not have computers. In fact, they have even training. The public are responding to private sector sites in droves, and I just want to show you, give you an example of a couple of them.

There is still a reluctance to use a credit card, but that is changing. I wanted to tell you that Manitoba has the best consumer legislation in the country. Did you know that it is possible to cancel or reverse credit card charges for goods

or services when you are doing purchases over the Internet in Manitoba? I bet you did not know that. Yet members here in the Legislature voted for this legislation just two years ago. So you can use your credit card to buy things on the Internet without fear and you will be protected and you will not be using your money. Well, it is legislation. It has been passed in the Legislature.

Madam Acting Speaker, I want to tell you that certain sites have taken off, so to speak, the airline sites like Jetsgo, WestJet, Air Canada. Why have they taken off? Because they are easy to use, they are simple, they are not flash. There is a reduction in costs associated with it, so there are less reservation agents. There are lower prices on the Internet, Web-only pricing.

What we have, for example, here in Manitoba, we have camping spots that you can register in Manitoba. You can register on-line to book camping spots, but there is a \$6 fee for use of the on-line service. That is not the way we should go. We should have a reduction for people that use the Web to book camping services in the province. You are not going to increase your traffic to the site, you are not going to increase your use of the site if you charge an excess fee.

I can tell you that about 25 percent of the people are early adopters to Internet services. In Australia they found that getting beyond the first 25 percent was difficult. How did they do it? Well, they offered reductions if you book on-line. As a matter of fact, I had a call from a civil servant in Ontario a couple of years ago asking me that question, you know, we are at 10-12-15% penetration. How do we get it up to a higher participation? So I simply told her what they did in a state in Australia, where they offered a reduction if you pay your bill on-line, and more people will use the service.

So, Madam Acting Speaker, I am having trouble hearing myself.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski): Time is up.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Madam Acting Speaker, it is my privilege and honour to rise today in the House and respond to the Throne Speech of the Second Session of the

Thirty-eighth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba. I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his re-election and had the pleasure of accompanying him on visits to two schools within my constituency. Both Minto School and Rapid City Elementary School enjoyed our visits.

The outreach program provided a great opportunity for young students to learn about the legislative process through the great hands-on exercise presented by Clerk Patricia Chaychuk. I want to thank her for taking the time in doing that. It was a great experience. Most importantly to me, the program provided a venue for youth within my constituency to see and hear what my role as their MLA is within this overwhelming process.

The Speaker has established a reputation of impartiality and fairness to all members of the Legislature. This was clearly evident after my first day in the Legislature, which also happened to be my first opportunity to put a question forward to the Government. As the Speaker approached me after the day's session, I was concerned that I had done or said something that was inappropriate to the House procedure, but, no, he was smiling.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

He congratulated me on my successful first day and then shared his thoughts on my ability to present effectively my question to the minister and the Government. So thank you.

As my colleague from Steinbach stated last week, the perspective of a new MLA is often one of fear and apprehension. Mr. Speaker, your kind gesture of encouragement will stay with me, and I thank you for that.

Behind the scenes, as they say, life as the newly elected representative has been overwhelming with process and procedures. This process has been made easier through the help and patient support shared by both the staff of the Clerk's office and Members' Allowances and I thank them wholeheartedly for that.

Caucus staff have been helpful in preparing for the everyday tasks of a new MLA and have

become a great resource in helping us become good legislators and strong critics of government. Thank you to each of you for your tireless efforts and assistance.

I would also like to welcome our new legislative pages. It is a wonderful opportunity for you to learn our democratic process first-hand, a process that I, too, am learning. I just returned from a seminar hosted by the Canadian parliamentary association on the Commonwealth parliamentary process, entitled "Strengthening Democracy and the Roles of Parliamentarians, Challenges and Solutions." I would also like to add that I had the pleasure of attending this important seminar with my fine colleague from the other side of the House, the MLA for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

The sessions focussed on the democratic process being followed within the Commonwealth and each country had the opportunity to share how they are working toward maintaining, retaining and building upon a strong democratic society. Delegates from at least eight countries participated, each sharing their personal views on the success and the challenges each face as legislators within the process.

As a newly elected representative who did not necessarily enjoy a large sweep or win at this election, but I certainly will next election, I have truly appreciated the words of encouragement from my leader, my colleagues, members from the other side of the House, who have helped ease the nerves of a rookie MLA who has come to this Chamber for the very first time.

Having worked as an executive assistant to the Minister of Education in the late 1980s, it provided me with some legislative process experience. I would like to thank my colleague from Russell for the opportunity he gave me and how that has assisted me in wanting to be an MLA and to serve our province.

I am grateful for the support I received from constituents of the Minnedosa riding, and I intend to repay the faith that my constituents have shown in me by dedicating myself to work on their behalf, on behalf of all people of Manitoba.

There are many individual efforts that go into a campaign and I had a remarkable group of supportive individuals to whom I extend a special thank you. Each volunteer worked very hard showing tremendous support and encouragement. Many supporters were new to the election process and, I believe, based on their strong support, will produce impressive dividends for our party in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank those individuals who ran against me within other political parties in the Minnedosa constituency. I would like to thank Harvey Paterson, who ran for the New Democratic Party; Gordon Powell, who ran for the Liberals; and Colin Atkins, who ran for the Christian Heritage Party.

Mr. Speaker, as it is customary at this time, I would like to say a few words about the constituency of Minnedosa. I am proud to represent a constituency that has been ably represented for the past 15 years by Mr. Harold Gilleshammer. I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Gilleshammer for the same number of years and consider him a very good friend and extremely important mentor. I am proud to say that I worked as an assistant for him during the past four years and have learned a great deal about the riding and the constituents that he helped support in their need.

"The Senator," a title given to him by some of his friends, provided a very strong representative role for the constituents of Minnedosa. Mr. Gilleshammer always ensured each request for assistance received fair treatment, a service expectation that constituents appreciated but also expected, a service that I will work hard to continue for as long as I represent Minnedosa.

Prior to Mr. Gilleshammer, Mr. Blake represented our constituency for 17 years. He continues to enjoy his golf game and his fishing spots throughout the province, but ever a committed politician, Mr. Blake provided strong support during the recent election and continues to mentor this rookie MLA. Prior to Mr. Blake, the late Walter Weir, a former premier of our great province, represented the Minnedosa constituency for 14 years.

I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Weir at my parents' home in the late 1960s. I was a young child who was encouraged to behave at a coffee party that was hosted at my parents' home. I can proudly say that I have a picture of me sitting with Mr. Weir during this event, and I believe that at this point, a future politician was born.

Mr. Speaker, politics have always been a topic of interest in our family. Marion and Jack Kostiuk, my parents, have played an active role in politics for several years and have been key in the riding of Russell with the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

Prior to the boundary changes, we were a community represented within the Turtle Mountain constituency, and we enjoyed the strong representation of the current member, my colleague from Killarney. However, the late Bob Rose, who was also a resident of Souris, provided representation prior. I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Rose and would have appreciated his mentorship and support during the recent election. It was said he enjoyed the experience greatly and the debates that were hosted within the House.

One of the school board colleagues, Mr. Bill Kirkup, who is a resident of Souris, as well, and a kind friend of mine, called him a quiet man, a quiet and influential leader.

Minnedosa constituency surrounds the city of Brandon and on its eastern boundary includes CFB Shilo, Forrest, Justice, Douglas, Chater, and Wawanesa. The northern part of the constituency includes Clanwilliam and Bethany, and the western part includes communities such as Basswood, Rapid City, Rivers, Kenmay and Alexander. It then borders along provincial Highway 21, and on the other side of 21 would be my colleague from Arthur-Virden. Along the southern boundary are the communities of Minto, Elgin and Nesbitt, and the two largest centres represented are Minnedosa and Souris.

The constituency encompassed several rural municipalities and with their municipal councillors and reeves have been ably reflecting their thoughts and feelings on the grassroots of the constituency. The constituency has a diverse

economy, not unlike other rural constituencies ranging from agriculture to technology-based services and industries to small business to government services to light industry and professional services.

My family and I reside in the beautiful community of Souris which is located on both the banks of the Souris River and Plum Creek. It is popularly known as the home of the swinging bridge, which is the longest suspension bridge in Canada. My husband is employed by Manitoba Hydro, and together we have two children, Cameron, who is nine, and Mackenzie, who is eight.

The quality of life and the infrastructure to ensure residents can enjoy these benefits currently exists in many of these communities. Communities such as Alexander and Spruce Woods are currently seeking government support in water and sewer infrastructure projects. Quality water and sewer services are critical to their survival and for the opportunity of growth.

This Government must work with these communities to guard and preserve the integrity of these services. We do not wish to see them put at risk or put in jeopardy because of the lack of funds. The majority of people do not ask for a lot from government, but they do reflect strong feelings that the traditional purposes of government should be examined, that government be made more effective and more accountable.

* (16:10)

That is why we are asking this Government to take a leadership role in dealing with the concerns of Manitobans and with regard to the current provincial health care system to work at doing a comprehensive review of the regional health authorities. We have a shortage of well-qualified medical staff available to respond to the needs of the people living in the towns encompassing my constituency.

We are in a medical crisis and need leadership from this Government to commit to improving the shortages we are facing in availability of high quality medical care. The Government must find ways to attract medical staff to rural areas such as Wawanesa and Rivers

which are experiencing difficulty in attracting and retaining doctors. We need our Government to show communities such as Rivers and Wawanesa that this Government cares about the staff, the facilities and the people who utilize these facilities by working with community leaders, the IRHA and the community action groups and that a proactive and co-operative approach is taken.

Mr. Speaker, these facilities provide employment to many residents of the Minnedosa riding and in most cases are considered to be the building blocks of our community. This Government must make every effort to ensure that regional medical centres like Brandon are able to handle emergency health situations with no tragic consequences as a result of a delay caused by distance.

We need a government that will follow through on promises made. This Government has promised to better utilize rural health facilities through such services as day surgery procedures. The promise was made and no action has been taken. Waiting lists continue to grow. We can and must do better in health care. Manitoba communities, neighbours and families deserve it.

We on this side of the House believe in the values of families, the values of community, the values of co-operation, the values of neighbours, and we share each other's successes and will give each other a helping hand when we need it.

As a mother of two small children, I understand the need for and appreciate the services of quality child care. Two communities in my constituency have recently celebrated milestones in years of quality service delivery. Rivers Nursery School program just celebrated 30 years of service and the Souris co-operative day care also recently celebrated 30 years of community service.

As a past treasurer on the board of directors for the Souris centre and a parent of two children who have enjoyed the great care and social development they receive there, I understand and appreciate the importance of quality child care and the management issues they face in staffing retention and recruitment.

Communities like Minto know what they needed within their community and they worked in partnership to realize their dream. The Silver Saddle Grill was realized without the support of government dollars and without government interference.

Wawanesa, a community of approximately 400 residents, has realized a potential growth opportunity with 2PPCLI moving to CFB Shilo. In response to this community leaders have developed an impressive geothermal residential development project, a great success story, and through hard work and a vision for the future people such as the residents of Minto and Wawanesa are determined to succeed.

It is unfortunate, however, that programs, such as the Government brags about, developing strong communities, are not available for all communities in Manitoba. The Neighbourhoods Alive! program is a good program but one that is available only to select urban centres. All communities need the option of government support. Rural Manitoba is experiencing an extreme crisis within its agriculture sector and programs such as Neighbourhoods Alive! would and should be available to rural communities to assist in sustaining their economy. I feel this Government is not allowing for a fair and equitable playing field when it comes to resources available to all Manitobans.

I believe the time has come for the Government of Manitoba to take action on the way education tax is being collected on farmland and residential property. Farmers, for example, must contribute to the special school levy based on the amount of land they own. They feel, and justifiably so, that their situation does not compare in fair and equitable manners with others. That is why we support the elimination of the education tax off of farmland and residential property and we believe this Government must look at this issue of fair and equitable taxation in a more serious manner.

We all know that there is nothing more important than a solid education. Knowledge, education and the skills our children learn are fundamental to economic opportunity, personal security and responsible citizenship. I believe it is imperative legislation in that it will affect all Mani-

tobans and the choices they will have to work in partnership and co-operation with parents in the community, with parents, students and community leaders at all levels, to ensure our children adapt, grow, learn and move forward, but we can do much better for our children. We must do more and better for our children.

The continuation and development of health and education programs and facilities is a must for the people of Minnedosa constituency and all of rural and northern Manitoba. Good education and good health care must be a priority for all.

Agriculture within our country is in a major crisis. BSE, PMU downsizing, an all-time low in prices for grain, these are all issues that have put a very serious economic and social strain on our mainstay industry. As someone from a community in a riding which is based on agriculture and as someone who has lived and raised a family in rural Manitoba, I speak from personal experience and knowledge when I say that communities such as mine need the support and leadership of government.

As a new MLA, I have spoken with, cried with and have become angry along with many agriculture families over the past several months over the ineffective programs being offered and the lack of support this Government has demonstrated with relation to the many crises facing them.

This Government has not listened to the producers, the families or their supporters such as myself. This Government does not understand the issues and has therefore ignored the families, who need a strong government who can take action.

The Government has presented the much anticipated Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act. Information on this legislation was first shared with the Opposition caucus on the last day of October. This is significant legislation in that it will affect all Manitobans and the choices they will have in terms of the fuel in their vehicles. It also proposes to phase out the subsidy that currently exists for the product that is now being manufactured at the ethanol plant in Minnedosa. This means that ultimately the customer will have to

pay a higher price for ethanol in the future. The Government has also created expectations that a number of communities will eventually be home for the production of this product, in all likelihood creating some winners and losers in this scenario.

As a caucus, we have been co-operating with the Government in terms of fully understanding this legislation and communicating it to other constituents and to Manitobans in general. To this end, we look forward to the public presentations this evening. The suggestion that we have been delaying this bill is ludicrous. Very few pieces of legislation get introduced, debated and passed in a matter of days. It is right, and some dare to say the responsibility of opposition is to scrutinize each piece of legislation that comes before the House. In all cases we have seen the input from the opposition and the public presentations made for better legislation. I am surprised at members opposite, who spent many years in opposition and should understand and respect this process.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate what a great honour and privilege it has been to speak in the Chamber today. Manitobans are demanding a government that will act in their best interests, not one that has lost its direction or intent to serve all Manitobans. I am proud to be a Progressive Conservative and I look forward to serving the people of Minnedosa constituency and indeed all the people in Manitoba in the years to come.

* (16:20)

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living): Good day, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to speak in favour of the Throne Speech. I believe that it is important to be a government that governs for all, a government that cares about its people and a government that makes positive changes each and every day.

I believe that this is a government that is very progressive and moves forward for every part of Manitoba, the North, the rural, the city, not only that, seniors, young people, students, and, of course, the working people. I am proud to be part of a government that reflects the population and reflects the values of all Manitobans.

I look at some of the things we have done. In Manitoba we should be proud of the fact that the job creation averaged 6000 per year over the last four years. That is double the rates of the 1990s.

We have more people in universities. Enrolment is up 29 percent since 1999. We also continue to increase the property tax relief, keeping property taxes flat. We have increased the credit from \$150, when the members opposite were there, to now \$400 per property, which ensures that property taxes are appropriate and fair. In fact, it is interesting to note that the average growth in Canada has been 2 percent and ours, in our province, has exceeded it by 2.2 percent in 2003.

It is interesting to note that while most provinces have had difficulty balancing the budget, have had to borrow, have had difficulty all the way across, Manitoba has continued to pay down the debt. Manitoba has continued to invest in its human capital, its education and its infrastructure. We continue to balance the budget each and every year.

Other things we have done that I am very, very proud of are we have worked to make sure the working class, the average Manitoban can continue to have a good standard of living. An example of that is we followed through our 6% income tax cut in January 2004. This means that every year we have worked to keep decreasing the tax burden on Manitobans. I am proud to say this has helped improve the quality of life.

The Conference Board of Canada a couple of years ago did a study. What the study did was it compared different areas of Canada, different parts of the country, and it gauged what the quality of life was for people in different employment areas. It found that Manitoba was either first or second in quality of life for specific jobs in each and every category of life. I am proud to be part of a government that does that.

It is also a government that cares about the future. I look at some of the initiatives we have done, one on renewable energy. A few years ago when I built my new house, what happened was I went and I studied geothermal heat pumps. We were able to instal one in our house. It is nice to see that the new Minister of Energy has focussed

on building houses that are energy efficient. We are talking about having geothermal as a major initiative in this province. In fact Manitoba is a leader in it.

We also are developing clean energy alternatives like wind, ethanol and hydrogen fuel. We are a world leader. We are also working with First Nations to develop new dams, new economic activities in the North. I think with the demographics, where we have the Aboriginal population increasing, we have to continue to work with Aboriginals and First Nations to make sure they are part of a growing, prosperous economy.

Other things I am pleased with: We actually are building for the future. We are investing in education. One of the important legacies, the most important legacy we can leave is an educated, talented, high-value-added workforce. So what I look at is our new training opportunities in nursing; the new media and aerospace opportunities have high-value-added. We can compete with the world. We are doing that.

There are six new programs to support growth in bioengineering, life sciences, et cetera. The nutraceutical industry is growing by leaps and bounds. What we are doing is we are also opening up the ACCESS programs. It is interesting to note that we believe in bringing people who are economically disadvantaged, we give them a hand up, so that not only can they participate fully in our economy, in our industries, but they can become full citizens. When you break the cycle of poverty, you end up breaking the cycle of poverty forever.

It is interesting to note the professional literature on ACCESS programs. Most organizations are very supportive. I am proud to be part of the Government that did not cut the ACCESS programs, as the members opposite did, but enhances the ACCESS programs each and every year.

Other things we have done: I am pleased to see that we are spending all of the gas tax into roads, highways and infrastructure. This is really important. We also gave the City of Winnipeg about \$5 million to help with their residential roads and regional roads. This is really important

because what we are trying to do is we tax with gas tax and therefore use the gas money that we have collected to fix the roads, not only in the city of Winnipeg but in the entire province.

Another thing we have done that makes a great deal of sense is the support of small business. The business threshold for paying taxes keeps on increasing. In other words, the small business tax continues to decrease.

The small business tax rate has fallen to 5 percent from 8 percent when the members opposite were in power. That is a 3% cut in the basic small tax rate. We have also cut the corporate tax rate. It is interesting to note that it was an NDP government that cut the tax rate for corporations, the first time in 50 years. So it has been going down by about half a percent a year and what we are doing is we are dropping the corporate tax rate. It was not members opposite, the Opposition, that did that, but we did that.

In conjunction with doing that, what we have also done is we have continued to increase the minimum wage so that people can have a reasonable wage. We have increased it again by 25 cents effective April 1. What we have to do is each and every year we have increased it by 25 cents, and I think what we have to do is ensure that the people who are earning the minimum wage can live. What also happens is that, when we raise the minimum wage by 25 cents an hour, people who are just above that economically benefit because then their wage also goes up. So that becomes important.

I would also like to talk a little bit about how we do work in the economic activities. First, what we do is we work with people. We work with labour. We work with management, with small business, we work with large business. We work in partnership.

I believe that we are a government that actually does listen and listen well to all sectors of the economy. I think that the method that we deliver for hydro development ensures this, because what we are doing is we are working with them. We allow equity partnership. We also share revenue. We share job creation, and we use hydro development as an economic tool for all Manitobans.

Other new initiatives that we are doing: It is interesting, in the 1990s the central part of Winnipeg was basically deserted. What was happening was because the house values were so low—houses could be bought for \$8,000, \$10,000, \$12,000—and because the tax base was so low, then that would force increased taxes on the suburbs.

What I am pleased with is the improving of the central core did a few things. One, it really improved. We have been able to improve 2000 homes, restored or built in older neighbourhoods. What has happened is that you have improved the quality of life for all people in those neighbourhoods and people take ownership, people feel proud. They are able to own a home for the first time and that really improves the quality of life.

The other thing it does is it revitalizes all activities in the neighbourhood. It gives people a reason to not want to vacate the core. What that means is people want to live in the core. People want to own homes there. It is interesting to note that house prices have doubled in certain cases and tripled in certain areas. That helps the area and it also helps the suburbs. What you do is the tax burden is then spread further and foremost.

I am proud of what is happening in our city. I look in my own area. When I was first elected in 1999, Unicity was basically being demolished. We had 36 empty buildings in west Winnipeg. I am pleased to see that Unicity has now been completed. We have had a new seniors home being built on Sturgeon and Ness by the Lions. We have had a new seniors condo project going up right by Woodhaven and Portage. We have another complex going up by Sturgeon, and this is really important because what we are doing is revitalizing the area.

We also, for the first time, have recreation activities. We have a new YMCA being built in the old Canadian Tire. That is really wonderful because it provides good recreation for youth. We also have a new wellness centre that is being built on Centennial Pool which will provide activities and wellness activities for seniors and for families that wish to partake. So what we are doing is there is this new sense of revitalization out in Assiniboia as well as in the city. We have

a new Red River campus, which is wonderful, and it has got wonderful programs, technology programs, computer programs and innovative programs that will make our youth very, very competitive in the world.

* (16:30)

We have the new Hydro headquarters that is being contemplated and built down in the central part of the city. That is important.

What we are trying to do, and what we have done in the last four years, and what we continue to do is improve our province for all sectors. We not only work in the core, but we also work out in the suburbs. We work out in the North; and we work in rural Manitoba, like in Brandon where there are many, many activities.

I would like to also talk about some things that we do that I am very proud of as the new Minister of Healthy Living. Some of the things that we are doing that does not get a lot of questions and does not get a lot of press are things that make a huge investment now and for the future. I was pleased to be at a number of Healthy Baby initiatives. Healthy Baby looks at taking the child prenatally and what we do is we work to make sure that there is a healthy baby being born. We have nurses who go out and visit the mother and talk about education, talk about nutrition, talk about parenting.

What we do is we work out in the community before the baby has been born to prevent illness, to ensure that healthy children are born. It is wonderful because what you are doing is you are providing a nutritional supplement. You are providing nurses to do checkups before the baby is born and again afterwards. You are providing a lot of information. You are providing support.

If you look at the other aspects of the Healthy Child program, you are talking about parent-child centres, 26 parent-child centres where parents can get support, get literacy materials, work with others, deal with others and share good practice and good information. Basically, what we are trying to do and what we have done very successfully is build community.

Other programs, what you are talking about in Healthy Child is the NRNs. The neighbourhood resource councils work to build stronger communities. I know in our own area, the St. James/Assiniboia Senior Centre, a bunch of community groups, the daycares, et cetera, work together to build a strong community. Some of the things they have done is the summer literacy program where they have readers, young students who go into a number of homes in the community and work with the parents in order to read, in order to give books, in order to get the kids so that they are better prepared to enter school. That is investing in our future.

Other things that we have done and we continue to do is support information. Some of the things that I am really pleased with is a program called Teen Talk. What it is is it works with youth. It is talking about the important strategies to prevent teen pregnancies, lowering the instances of STDs and basically giving kids a better self-image. It promotes capacity and skills within youth through peer support and through presentations. It is wonderful. I have had the opportunity to look at it. What I see in this is what you are doing is providing good solid education and information for young people to make intelligent decisions.

It is not just in the city. We are not a government that suffers from Perimeteritis. These presentations and some of these programs are delivered in Morden, Shoal Lake, Duck Bay, Rorketon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, Carberry, St. James-Assiniboia, Fort Garry and throughout the entire province. That is really important because what we are trying to do is provide people with information.

You also have other programs where you are working with youth at risk. We are providing information on FAS, support and information. We just recently held a wonderful conference here, a national conference, which provided best practice so that you can provide good, solid education to young people. You can provide them with information on FAS and how to prevent it. Basically, no drinks is the safe amount, so do not drink while a woman is pregnant. It is talking about strategies on how to deal with it and how to cope with people who suffer from FAS. It was

a really wonderful conference. It is nice to note that Manitoba actually is in the lead as far as prevention of this issue.

Some other things that are interesting to note. We also have a number of other programs like the Rainbow Resource Centre where they are talking about ensuring that barriers and hate and discrimination are eliminated. What they are trying to do is talk about how it is essential to treat everyone with tolerance, respect and dignity. You have other ones. Solvent abuse and prevention programs throughout the system. You also have a number of regional health authorities that go out and do Baby First activities. You have parenting and family support initiatives. You have daycares, many, many daycares that are being supported through these initiatives which are providing support to parents. I am very pleased to be the Minister responsible for the Healthy Child Manitoba.

Other initiatives that I am responsible for are seniors, and special attention is going to be given to living healthy and aging in dignity and in respect. Some of the things I know that we have to deal with are the risk factors in preventing chronic diseases. Some of those are smoking, obesity, inactivity, lack of community and isolation. What we have to do is we have to continue to work as a community to ensure that those risk factors are addressed. I am pleased to see that I will be responsible to try to keep people well rather than treating illness. We have to improve the healthy behaviours and supports.

It was interesting to hear the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) talking about some of the supports that we do provide, the seniors' wellness centre because what we are talking about is providing supports and building community. That program is one of those programs that we want to emulate throughout the province where seniors are given emotional support, they provide activities and they stay healthy longer.

I look now at some of the things that we have to work on. One is the smoking issue. What we have to do is ensure that people—Helen Crowe is an example—where she died because she was working as a waitress for many, many years in an area where people smoked. She died

of lung cancer. Workers Compensation has basically said that this is not appropriate, that it forces a person to have to work in a smoke area, and so we have to take action. We do not want people to succumb to cancer because they have to work in an area where smoking is allowed.

Obesity. Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns I have on obesity is we have to ensure that students, young people, develop a lifelong skill of keeping healthy. Participaction was right. When you stay active, if you stay active for 30 minutes three times a week, you will have less chance of getting diabetes, less chance of getting chronic heart disease, less problems with hip and knee, and even if you stay flexible and active, osteoporosis, et cetera, will be decreased. You can delay or avoid many chronic diseases if you look at the risk factors and try to alleviate them. Inactivity is not acceptable. What we have to do is work with all sorts of community partners, with schools, with community clubs, with seniors organizations. What we have to do is get people fit. Once we get them fit, they will stay healthier.

The other thing is community activities. It is interesting to note and be involved with the St. James Senior Centre. It is a wonderful organization run by Merv Jones and Karen Pirnie and a wonderful board of directors, wonderful staff. They do everything. I truly mean that. They create a sense of community. They have golf tournaments. They have crib tournaments. They have speaking. They have circles. They do all sorts of fitness. They have gym equipment there.

* (16:40)

What they do is they are a true sense of community. People get up everyday and go and partake in all the wonderful events they do. I think it is important to note that this keeps people healthy and strong. We must ensure that those programs are supported. I know the previous government started, but we will continue to expand them. We will continue to enhance them, because it is not good enough just to have a program in River East. It is not good enough just to have a program in south Winnipeg, Tuxedo. What we need is programs for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we also have to do is work in the North to ensure that people have access to proper food, nutrition. We have to work throughout the province so that people have the proper supports to make sure that they stay healthy and stay in place. The Seniors Directorate is basically wanting people to stay and age healthy. Healthy aging is a challenge, but it is also a challenge that we as Manitobans, we as a good, solid government are up to.

What we want to do is allow people to stay in their homes as long as possible, provide the appropriate support so that they can stay there, avoid the risk factors. So what we want to do is make sure that we avoid risk factors and help people do that and also look at people so that everyone is valued, so that we do not just provide the services in River East or something like that. What we want to do is provide the services not only in River East but across the entire province so that everyone has the support services.

I look at the finances in our Government. It is interesting, because there is a huge difference between our Government and the former government. What we have done is we continue to focus on developing new initiatives such as aerospace, the computer industry, we are looking at biotech, we are looking at all the areas that have huge growth that we can actually have a niche market and we can compete across the world.

I think it is important that we focus on that. What we try to do is we make sure that the tuition is small enough so that people can actually get into these programs. I am pleased to be part of a government that started off with a \$5-million bursary and then worked it up so that there is now \$11 million in bursaries, which means it is not just the rich that can afford to go, but all people can afford to go to university and college. I think that is really critical.

I think it is important to look at programs like Health Links, where what we do is we provide a system where everyone regardless of where you are in the province can phone up and get good advice, medical advice over the phone about your conditions. That does two things. It stops the pressure on the emergency rooms and

also provides assistance for everyone in the whole province to get good, professional advice and good, timely advice, I might add.

I think what else you do is you focus on improving the health system in general. I look at it this way, and I say, hey, we have invested heavily in good diagnostic equipment. It is nice to see that we have an MRI in Brandon going in very shortly. We have a new one in the Health Sciences Centre. We have more CAT scans. We have a number of new pieces of equipment.

When we came into power in 1999, most of our equipment was down because of repairs. Pieces were not being used, equipment could not be used because appropriate pieces, you could not fix them. It is interesting to note that now we have more operating time. We are conducting far more evaluations and tests, and we are conducting earlier tests, more and more.

It is interesting to note that even though we are conducting more tests, even though we are conducting faster tests, people are sent to their specialists and they get responded to faster than before, what happens is that what we are trying to do is improve the system even more. With the federal government, who have provided some of the money, what we are going to continue to do is buy better and new diagnostic equipment so that people get more timely access to health care.

It is interesting to note that we need to invest in health care. You pay them appropriately, and people will stay. People left in droves. When we were just getting into power, a lot of the nursing graduating class, even when it was smaller, would leave because our salaries were not competitive. We were not treating people well.

We are doing a number of things. One, we are getting more and more full-time positions. No. 2, what we are doing is we are paying people appropriately so they are not leaving for other jurisdictions. We are also increasing the number of nurses that we actually produce. We have multiplied the number of nurses by about three times, and so we have more graduates.

It is interesting to note that once you create better working conditions, once you create the philosophy that you are working together and

you do not blame others for mistakes, what you are trying to do is work together with all professionals to get a better system. When you are working with them, you are creating a better environment, and they stay; they stay far more than they used to.

Mr. Speaker, we also have more doctors. It is interesting to note that we are gaining doctors from provinces that had Tory governments. They are coming here because they believe there is more of a future. There is more of a future because what we are trying to do is invest in health care so people get timely, good health access.

I think what we have to do is continue to work so that where we move in the future is the following. We need to work so that we keep people healthier longer. We focus on illness prevention, not dealing with illnesses. We work in conjunction, in partnership, with many areas and all stakeholders.

Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair

I laughed at one of the questions from across, they said, well, how big is your department.

I think I would have failed if we had one specific partner or one specific Department of Health. I think what we have to do and, Manitobans, what we have to do is say, okay, education has a huge part in health care. So you want to get all kids involved in health care and keeping healthy and making it a lifelong commitment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you look at Family Services. Family Services means you have to have decent housing. If people live in decent housing, it makes a huge difference than if they lived in decrepit housing with mould, et cetera. So what you want to have is make sure you have decent housing. You want to make sure that families have appropriate support in Family Services, so that they stay healthier.

As far as Northern Affairs, you want to make sure that there is appropriate food and supplements that are affordable.

You want to make sure in other departments that you actually work together so that every-

body works together to make it a healthier society.

So I hope to be a Healthy Living Minister where what you want to do is work all together with all departments, with all Manitobans, with all organizations so that we actually move forward in a healthy living agenda, rather than continuing to go down the road of treating illness.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I do appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding the Throne Speech. *[interjection]* Quite frankly, if the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants to debate VLTs, he has a perfect opportunity to do so by allowing the bill to come to the floor; or, rather than that, if he wants to debate them, he should just name the place and the time and I would be glad to be there.

We will move on with remarks to the Throne Speech. I would like to congratulate the Speaker on being re-elected. Sometimes I would wonder why he would want the job of trying to manage this sometimes unruly House but I do appreciate his courage and I want to assure him that we are all listening to him and doing our best to follow the procedures that he outlines.

I would like to welcome back the clerks and the pages and all the other support staff that are involved with the running of the Legislature. They provide a tremendous service to us, one that we could not do without. We could not survive in this House, with all the work done behind the scenes, and we do appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome all the members back who were re-elected in the spring election and also a special welcome to all the new members who are joining us in the House after being elected for the first time.

I will say that I did not hear all their speeches but I have managed to read most of them in Hansard, the ones that I did not hear. It is always a pleasure to hear from new members and hear what motivated them to get involved in politics. We do not always agree on how issues should be dealt with, but I think we do, at the end of the

day, hopefully, have respect for one another and treat each other with respect.

Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate some of the remarks they have put on the record, the one exception of course being the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer). I would just say to him that in the future if he wants to preach tolerance to this House perhaps he should put it in practise a little bit.

* (16:50)

At the same time I would like to just clarify for the new member from Fort Garry, I want to make it perfectly clear to her that it is no issue for me where she lives, that is up to the people of Fort Garry to decide, and they have. I congratulate her for being elected, but I would remind her that, regardless of where she lives, she needs to have a thorough understanding of the boundaries of her constituency.

When she puts in Hansard that the boundary for her constituency is Waverley, I would just like to remind her that it is only the portion of Waverley from Wilkes Avenue to Bishop Grandin. In fact, south of that, which is a considerable stretch of Waverley, falls in the constituency of Fort Whyte. I would just want to clarify that for Hansard. Maybe the member from Fort Garry was somehow indicating that in the next election she wanted to take over that territory south of Bishop Grandin. If she does, I just want to tell her I appreciate her courage. I would welcome her to seek the nomination for the NDP party in Fort Whyte, and we will have at it in the next election. I just wanted to clarify that for the record.

With regard to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, once again, I think we have some hollow words from a shallow government that has no new ideas, has no real concept of how to run the province or manage the province. We have seen consistently since they have taken over government in 1999 that the province of Manitoba has been on a steady and ever-increasing decline. I think that it is unfortunate, and our job as opposition is to, of course, point this out to the members opposite where they are being less than honest with the people of

Manitoba, where they have been less than truthful in the past.

I think it is unfortunate that the starting theme for this Government is to try and convince the people of Manitoba that they have solved the crisis in health care. I will go back to '99 and remember that famous promise from the Premier (Mr. Doer) that he was going to solve hallway medicine in six months and \$15 million, a promise which I remind everybody across the way that no less an authority than the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) stood up some months later and said was a foolish and irresponsible promise, one that we could never keep.

Mind you, that never daunted the Premier who continues to try to convince people that somehow he and his Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) have managed to turn the health care system around and fix it. I would only suggest to them that if that is the case, perhaps they would want to, each and every one of them, make a phone call to Mrs. Madden's family, because again here we are, four and a half years later, and we have found another patient who has unfortunately died before she was able to get attention. It is not a slight on the nurses and doctors. That is not why these issues are raised in the House. They are raised because the Government's policy, the Minister of Health's (Mr. Chomiak) policies have failed. We saw that in spades when we witnessed the number of people who had died in the cardiac surgery fiasco. Eleven people dead because they could not get access to care.

Herman Rogalsky, Mrs. Madden and others, people have died because they could not get access to care. It is not only the people who have died, it is the thousands and thousands of people out there, many of them seniors, who I hear from, who simply cannot get access to the system, who cannot get to see a doctor, who cannot get treatment when they go to the hospital, who are left in hallways. Members on this side get these calls on a regular and, in fact, almost daily basis from constituents who simply cannot get access to care. This, in spite of a tremendous increase in funding from the provincial government. In fact, they have received, although they still complain about not getting enough money from the federal government,

they have got over a billion dollars a year increase in transfer payments since 1999. A billion dollars a year. They promised to fix the system with \$15 million. Is it going to take \$15 billion? Probably, because all this Government is focussed on, they have not focussed on getting better care to patients, is building the bureaucracy, and after all, that is what these centralist, bureaucratic builders have been up to for years and years and years.

Their job, they feel, is to build up the bureaucracy because that is a way they can shield themselves from what is really going on out there. As a result, we see the bureaucracy and the WRHA growing by leaps and bounds while, at the same time, people are dying waiting for care. For this Government to claim that they have made a dent in health care is completely false, Mr. Speaker. I would implore all of them, all the members of Cabinet and all the backbenchers to work with their Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) to try and demonstrate to him that he needs to change his approach. He needs to open his mind to new alternatives in terms of how the medical system will operate if we are ever going to see any improvements in Manitoba.

I want to touch briefly on the economic situation, because, again, in the lead-in to the Throne Speech one of the issues that the government of the day brings up is their co-operation with the private sector and how they have been able to move things ahead. Well, I would simply remind the Government, and it is one of their own statistics, from October of 2002 to October in 2003 in Canada we saw the creation of 256 000 jobs; 256 000 jobs created in Canada. How many were created in Manitoba? Two hundred. So we have the rest of the country producing 256 500 jobs and Manitoba creating 200, and yet this Government and this Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) want to stand up and tell us what a wonderful job they are doing. The numbers speak for themselves. The numbers put out on the labour force: 200 out of over 250 000. It is a disgrace. That is less than they have created in the bureaucracy of government.

We also have no less of an institution than the Manitoba chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants who are saying Manitoba's

economy, not only is it lackluster, but Manitoba is uncompetitive. It is no wonder that we do not see any job creation in Manitoba, given that our personal income tax rates are virtually at every level higher than every jurisdiction that we touch. Our corporate tax rates are higher by a significant amount not only over Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C., but also Ontario. We are at 16 percent when Saskatchewan is at 10 percent. We wonder why our manufacturing sector is having trouble competing with a 75-cent dollar. Well, it is quite simple, because this Government has put too many other burdens on our manufacturing sector in order for them to survive in this type of economy. If this minister is sitting back and waiting for the Canadian dollar to fall, I would suggest that he will be waiting for a long time.

I know my time is running short before we have to vote, but I just want to again express my disappointment in the Throne Speech. I want to quickly thank the people in Fort Whyte for re-electing me to this Assembly. Again, I am humbled by the confidence they have shown in me. I would like to thank everybody that helped me out during the election, all those people that worked on the campaign, all those people that took signs and have been supportive over the years. It means a great deal to me to receive that support. I did want to mention that on the record.

Back to the Throne Speech. There are so many issues where this Government is completely missing the boat, one of the biggest of which, of course, is the Premier (Mr. Doer) renegeing on his promise to build the Kenaston underpass. This is the busiest level crossing—

An Honourable Member: Where is the M.P.?

Mr. Loewen: Well, the Minister of Finance yells where is the M.P. The M.P. is where he has been, sir, for five years, which is committed to the project, willing to see the infrastructure funds. It is the Premier of this province that has stalled the project. It is the Premier of this province that has made it impossible for this project to go ahead. He needs to take full accountability for renegeing on his promise. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Mihychuk), what is her problem? She cannot get the job done? Or is it simply that the Premier has no

intention of living up to his promise? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (17:00)

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., pursuant to Rule 45(4), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do the members wish to have the amendment read?

No? Dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I will ask once more. Do the members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end of the sentence the following words:

But this House regrets

(a) the Government's inability to fulfil the promises outlined in its Throne Speech of November 27, 2002, including the following failures: failing to build the economy, failing to enhance health care and failing to open 1000 new cottage lots and 1000 new campsites; and

(b) the Government's failure to meaningfully address the growing concerns related to organized crime, including the fact that since November 2000, Manitoba has been the scene of 37 biker-related murders and attempted murders; and

(c) the Government's failure to develop a long-term economic strategy to address anemic job growth; and

(d) the Government's failure to adequately address the BSE crisis and to provide workable

programs for producers, thereby threatening not only the stability of the livestock sector but all those other sectors in Manitoba's economy that are so reliant on its well-being; and

(e) the Government's failure to recognize and encourage the important role private-sector involvement has in growing Manitoba's economy; and

(f) the Government's failure to acknowledge that balanced budgets have only been achieved through significant raids on Manitoba Hydro and the Fiscal Stabilization Fund; and

(g) the Government's failure to initiate a review of health care regionalization; and

(h) the Government's failure to develop a long-term, economic and taxation strategy to address Manitoba's uncompetitive personal and business tax levels; and

(i) the Government's failure to provide a strategy ensuring two-thirds of all nursing positions in Manitoba are full-time by the spring of 2004 as previously committed; and

(j) the Government's failure to follow through on their commitment to ensure access to education for special needs students.

AND HAS THEREBY lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in the support of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

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

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

* (17:10)

Division

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

Yeas

Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Gerrard, Goertzen, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner, Reimer, Rocan, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Nays

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

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 20, Nays 33.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

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

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): It is my pleasure to rise in support of the Speech from the Throne, a speech that confirms our Government's commitment to citizens of all areas of Manitoba.

The Throne Speech maps our Government's steps to lay a solid foundation for the future,

ensuring that generations to come will continue to enjoy the resources this great province has to offer. Our Government's leadership in such areas as water stewardship, renewable energy development, revitalization of rural, northern and urban areas and new opportunities for youth demonstrate our commitment to ensuring vibrant communities that can meet the needs of Manitoba citizens.

I am pleased to be a member of a government that believes in a compassionate society that ensures all Manitobans have the supports they need for health and well-being. Since taking office in 1999, our Government has committed to social, economic and labour market inclusion for all citizens. We have worked to ensure that low income citizens are treated with fairness and dignity and to improve circumstances for all Manitobans.

I am honoured to serve in the capacity of Minister of Family Services and Housing. This portfolio is an important one because it is through these programs we have an opportunity to demonstrate again our commitment to helping Manitobans most in need. Our Government has taken a number of steps to improve national supports for families with children, including the restoration of the National Child Benefit. Prior to 1999, families receiving income assistance had the benefit clawed back.

Our Government believed that this practice was particularly unfair to our most vulnerable families. Over the last three budgets, we have restored this income for families by allowing federal increases to flow and by returning the benefit to these families. I am pleased that by the end of January 2004 we will have fully restored the National Child Benefit for all children.

Our Government has worked to improve income assistance benefits in other ways as well. For example, we have increased the allowance for school supplies by \$20 a child. We have enhanced the program's earnings exemptions to allow income assistance participants to keep more of the income they receive from employment and have increased exemptions for persons with disabilities.

In addition, effective January 2004, our Government will increase income assistance benefits by \$20 per month for every adult in the persons with disabilities category and for non-disabled single adults and childless couples. I am pleased to be part of a government which will further its progress in the coming year through the implementation of a one-tier system of income assistance throughout the entire province.

This initiative will provide all Manitobans with consistent benefits and uniform policies. This change will help to ensure effective service delivery throughout the province. In addition, our Building Independence initiatives have provided income assistance participants with supports such as skill-based training, job placements, wage subsidies, voice-mail services for seeking employment and partnerships with community agencies and other departments.

I am pleased to indicate that Building Independence has helped in over 22 600 contacts for low income Manitobans, including income assistance participants, in their efforts to become self-supporting through employment. Our Government has demonstrated leadership in building an inclusive society where persons with disabilities can participate in community life to their fullest capability.

We have demonstrated our commitment to the disability community with the appointment of Manitoba's first Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities in 2000. The following year, we released the strategy paper, *Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability*, which proposed measures to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities in our society.

In 2002, we established the Disabilities Issues Office, which will serve as a centre for the co-ordination of disability policy across our Government. I am pleased, again, that our Government was recognized recently for its progress in improving services for persons with disabilities.

Manitoba's support for children and families includes one of the finest child-care systems in North America. Child care is a fundamental support for families and communities. Our Government recognizes that high-quality, early child-

hood care and education has a lasting effect on a child's social, intellectual and emotional development.

Mr. Speaker, since April 2000, our Government has increased funding for child care by over 41 percent. Our Government's total budget for child care is now almost \$76 million. Our Government's increased funding to child day care acknowledges that the important work done by the family child-care providers, early child-care educators and child-care assistants in building a comprehensive child-care system throughout Manitoba addresses the needs of our families, children and communities.

Our Government's focus on improving supports for families has moved us in a new direction and a major restructuring of our Child and Family Services system. As announced in the Throne Speech, our Government recently proclaimed new legislation establishing the four Child and Family Services authorities, bringing culturally appropriate child welfare services to Aboriginal and Métis peoples regardless of where they live in Manitoba.

This initiative demonstrates a fundamental shift unprecedented in Manitoba or Canada in the way government has worked with the Aboriginal community by empowering Aboriginal peoples to develop and control the delivery of their own Child and Family Services. The implementation of the restructured system honours the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in 1991 and will ensure the development of programs and services for First Nations and Métis people that respect their values, their beliefs, their customs and their traditional communities. Our Government and the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Child Welfare Initiative, our partners, have worked effectively to resolve the difficult issues associated with past practices and to shape a more promising future for Aboriginal families and children.

Mr. Speaker, the development of safe and stable neighbourhoods is integral to maintaining healthy communities. Our Government is working with community organizations to provide them with the support they need to make deteriorating neighbourhoods safer and healthier places to live. In addition, we have been main-

taining our support for Manitoba's social housing portfolio. The very successful Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative has resulted in commitments that have or will contribute to the repair, rehabilitation or construction of more than 1500 units. Similar programs in Brandon have added more than 500 units to the supply of housing in that community. Government for all Manitobans.

* (17:20)

In addition, our Government has been working with the federal, provincial and territorial governments to find solutions to the problem of inadequate housing supply for low- to moderate-income Canadians. In September 2002, Canada and Manitoba signed the affordable housing agreement, a five-year, \$50.8 million, cost-shared initiative to increase the supply of affordable housing. Components of the affordable housing initiative include creating new affordable rental supply, increasing home ownership, ensuring that low-income Manitobans have access to new supply through income support options such as rent supplements and down-payment assistance and renovating existing supply. Earlier this year, Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg signed a memorandum of understanding in which the City committed \$17.5 million over the next five years to enhance the supply of affordable housing for low-income Manitobans in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, our Government is working to develop flexible programs that meet diverse needs across the country, including those of persons with disabilities. We have combined efforts with community organizations to build and rehabilitate housing in declining neighbourhoods in our communities. As well, we are taking steps through a Northern Development Strategy to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs associated with inadequate housing in the North.

I believe we have made significant progress in improving programs and services for Manitobans. More remains to be done. Through the commitments outlined in the Speech from the Throne, we will continue to build on our progress to date and to improve circumstances for all low-income citizens.

Now, if I could just take a few minutes to speak personally, give you a little of my own background, my grandparents on my mother's side, my grandmother was from Grantham, England. Now, Mr. Speaker, you may know Grantham, England, as being the birthplace of Margaret Thatcher. Well, I would like to announce today, in sharing the birthplace of my grandmother, that good people too can come from Grantham.

Mr. Speaker, my grandfather was the youngest of five. The only thing we know about his father is that he had a red beard, his name was Corley, and he disappeared to the Yukon to find his treasures. Unfortunately, we lost him from the family radar.

My grandparents on my father's side came from the Ukraine, we believe, in 1911. When they came to Canada, they said now we are in Canada, we will be Canadian. Unfortunately they burned the papers that they had brought with them, so we have lost a piece of their history. But what a statement, to leave the land of your birth, come to Canada and say now we are Canadian.

My grandfather saw the difficulties of having had a father who left and decided that he would be part of the solution. He set forward with being very involved in the labour union movement, became very involved in the CPR movement and, in fact, played a role in the General Strike. In fact, my whole maternal grandparenting family did in that they turned their home into a makeshift hospital. During the strike if you went into a recognized hospital, the RCMP were waiting and you would be arrested. So my grandmother and my aunts ripped up everything literally that could be made into a bandage and provided what might seem like ad hoc services to injured strikers, but actually may have prevented a few deaths.

My parents met at St. John's technical college and married shortly after leaving the technical college. My three older siblings were born in the North End, so I do feel akin to the North End. They decided it was time to move to Stockton, California, so they headed south, got as far as St. Vital, purchased an acre of land.

That is right. I will be forever grateful to them for having made that stop.

Mr. Speaker, conversation around our dinner table centred on world issues, world politics and various discussions at that level as well as local politics. My father was an active member of the firefighters union. I know our Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), in his days at City Council, would appreciate my, I guess, public confession that the buyout that the city workers have today was actually brought forward by my father. He attended an International Association of Fire Fighters convention, came back with the idea, had his own executive laugh at him, say you could never get it through, which I think was sort of a red flag to the bull. He set forth, and they were the first ones to negotiate that. So I know it is greatly appreciated by the workers today.

My father, when he was the president of the firefighters, as you know the firefighters could not strike and they would go into binding arbitration, and my mom would tell us we would have to be very quiet at that time because my father was working hard, he was in binding arbitration. I remember asking kids on the playground, my father is in binding arbitration and we have to be quiet at home. Is your father in binding arbitration? Of course, the kids would respond with no, but this is the way discussions happened in our house at 165 Woodlawn.

My family was active in the CCF and the NDP and have, in fact, run for various positions across Canada. They are very proud that I sit as the first elected NDP MLA, the first I hope of many. I am happy to report that my niece Lisa has the bug, the political bug. So I hope we can expect great things from her in the future.

An Honourable Member: Family tradition.

Ms. Melnick: Fourth generation.

I attended Minnetonka School, Dakota Collegiate, University of Manitoba, then moved on to Dalhousie University to achieve a Master's in Library and Information Science. From there I moved to St. John's, Newfoundland, where I developed the education resource centre for the

government there and then went to work on the Hibernia offshore oil project.

Mr. Speaker, I lived in Toronto for a number of years and worked for North York and then Toronto under Mayor Mel Lastman. Having worked with Mayor Lastman, I send incredible strong support to the new mayor of Toronto knowing that he will be able to do a better job.

I would consider myself a Mike Harris refugee after the removal of rent controls. I was making a salary of roughly \$48,000 and could not afford a single-bedroom apartment so decided it was time to come back to Manitoba and work hard to make the change that together we brought about on September 21, 1999.

I travelled widely as a child with my family and later as an adult on my own. I have been to almost every continent, and I can tell you two things within 10 minutes of landing at any airport. I can tell you the rate of literacy in a country and I can tell you the form of government. Where literacy is higher and where the form of government is democracy, life is better for everyone. People speak freely, openly, give their opinions, eyes meet and there is a robust engagement on issues.

I have travelled to many non-democratic countries. Through this I have learned a great, great respect for democracy. I want to say that I respect the members in the House, the members who are fortunate to make it in the House in the democracies around the world, as well as people who ran and were not fortunate. It is only through living democracy that we keep democracy, and democracy is perhaps the greatest gift we have received from our fore-parents.

I served as a trustee on Louis Riel School Division and then was fortunate to be chosen as the candidate in the last election, provincially. I would like to thank Linda Asper for the great work that she did. I would like to thank the campaign team but most of all the members and supporters of Riel for the great honour of being here.

It is an honour to be an MLA, a great honour to be minister. It was an honour to proclaim The Authorities Act. It was also an honour to proclaim the Ukrainian famine/genocide at City

Hall, on behalf of government, just this last Saturday, knowing that the genocide was brought about by a dictator named Stalin under a system that did not allow for freedom of voice or choice.

It has lead me once again back to where I started, which is respecting democracy, respecting the people involved in democracy and enjoying all the moments that I have here working with my colleagues. I even enjoy the robust dis-

cussion with members across. So thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 2, 2003

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