

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stu	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	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.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	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.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the mace in the crook of his arm and followed by the clerks of the Legislative Assembly, entered the Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms returned to the main entrance of the Chamber and shouldered the mace. The clerks took post on the west side of the Chamber, stood and awaited the arrival of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): I am pleased to advise the Assembly that I have received from the Chief Electoral Officer the lists of names of members elected to serve in the Thirty-Ninth Legislature, and I am tabling those lists.

The Premier and the military and civil aides accompanied His Honour to the Chamber in the following order:

The honorary aides-de-camp on the right;

The officer escort on the left;

The Premier;

The Lieutenant-Governor.

At the main entrance, the military and civil aides halted and turned inwards to allow the Lieutenant-Governor and the Premier to proceed through the north doors, where His Honour was met by the mace.

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Blake Dunn): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

The Lieutenant-Governor then, preceded by the mace carried shoulder high and followed on his left by the military aide and on his right by the civil aide, proceeded along the west side of the Chamber to the throne. The Premier proceeded along the east side and stood on the floor on the east side of the Chamber.

The military aide took up his position on the east side of the throne and the civil aide took up his position on the west side of the throne.

The Lieutenant-Governor seated himself on the throne; the Sergeant-at-Arms made obeisance with the mace and retired to the east side of the Chamber.

Hon. John Harvard (Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba): Please be seated.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am directed by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor to inform you that he will not declare the causes of calling this Legislature until a Speaker has been elected in accordance with the law.

The Sergeant-at-Arms made obeisance with the mace.

Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant-Governor accompanied by the honorary aides-de-camp, officer escort and the Premier exited the Chamber.

The Premier returned. The Sergeant-at-Arms placed the mace under the table and the clerks took their chairs at the table.

Madam Clerk: Please be seated.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, in order for the business of the Legislature to proceed, a Speaker must first be elected. All members-elect were provided with packages regarding the election process for Speaker and for submission of names of candidates. It is my duty to advise you that only one candidate, George Hickes, the Member for Point Douglas, has submitted his name as the candidate for the election of a Speaker.

In accordance with rule 8(2), I am very pleased to advise you that, as there is only one candidate, that candidate George Hickes is declared elected as Speaker of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable members of the Thirty-Ninth Legislative Assembly:

I wish to thank the members for the high honour the House has conferred on me. I leave the floor of this Chamber to take the Speaker's Chair. I leave behind all political and partisan feelings, and I intend to carry out the important duties of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly with impartiality and to the best of my ability.

The Sergeant-at-Arms with the mace returned to the north door.

The Premier left the Chamber to meet the Lieutenant-Governor.

The Speaker took post on the east side and the clerks took post on the west side of the Chamber.

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Blake Dunn): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

* (13:40)

The Lieutenant-Governor accompanied by the honorary aides-de-camp, officer escort and the Premier, entered the Chamber, preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and proceeded to and was seated on the throne.

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as its Speaker. On behalf of the Assembly, it is my duty to claim all the Assembly's traditional rights and privileges, especially the privilege of freedom of speech in debate and access to Your Honour when required. I ask you to give the most favourable consideration to the Assembly's proceedings.

Mr. Chomiak: His Honour is confident the Assembly's proceedings will be conducted with wisdom and prudence, Mr. Speaker. In addition, His Honour grants the Assembly's claim to its traditional rights and privileges. His Honour will now declare the causes of calling this Legislative Assembly.

The Sergeant-at-Arms made obeisance with the mace and retired to the side of the Chamber.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon. John Harvard (Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba): Please be seated.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature, I welcome you to the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.

Je vous souhaite la bienvenue à la première session de la trente-neuvième Législature de la Province du Manitoba.

Congratulations and best wishes to all new members of the Legislative Assembly, and to those who are returning to this House. Your constituents and the people of Manitoba have entrusted you with important responsibilities: to serve the public interest, to provide vision and leadership, and to make decisions in this Chamber that will shape the future of Manitoba and improve the lives of our citizens.

All candidates who put their names forward in the general election deserve to be recognized for the

leadership they have shown and their commitment to the democratic process.

Among those elected there is a diversity which reflects the face of Manitoba. It is particularly gratifying to see the number of women taking their seats in this Chamber. Our Legislature now has the largest proportion of women of any Legislature in Canada.

Your government is honoured to have received a strong and clear mandate to move Manitoba forward. The new mandate will focus on the following priorities:

Moving forward in health care, with further increases in the training and recruitment of health professionals and added measures to shorten wait times. Community health options and prevention programs will be expanded. Investments in health facilities will continue to be made in every part of the province, with a special focus on emergency rooms, dialysis treatment, and care for the elderly.

Moving forward with a cleaner, healthier environment, while continuing to seize the opportunities of the emerging green economy. Initiatives will be introduced to further strengthen the protection of our waterways, forests, and air quality. In addition, Manitoba will build on our leadership position in environmentally sustainable technologies and the production of clean energy.

Moving forward with education and training opportunities for young people here at home. Post-secondary education will be kept affordable for Manitoba students, and for northern and rural residents, new programs will be provided closer to home. Your government will work with employers and educators to expand apprenticeship training and ensure that our provincial skills strategy remains responsive to the growth sectors in our economy.

Moving forward by making our communities safer by hiring more police, prosecutors and firefighters, by adding community Lighthouses and other options for youth recreation and by working with the federal government to introduce tougher consequences for those who break the law.

Moving forward by preserving affordability, ensuring that Manitoba remains one of the most affordable places to own a home or operate a business, to study, to work and to raise a family. Personal income and business taxes will be further reduced, and homeowners will benefit from increased property tax credits and a multiyear plan to

fund 80 percent of school costs from provincial revenues. An increase in the Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit will provide further relief to companies dealing with the impacts of a rapidly rising dollar.

Moving forward by keeping Manitoba Hydro owned by and for the citizens of Manitoba. Manitobans will continue to benefit from the lowest electricity rates in North America as well as the economic opportunities resulting from new hydro facilities and wind turbines.

And moving forward with our building agenda to establish a foundation for future growth in each region of our province, all Manitoban communities will benefit from an historic \$4-billion investment in road construction and upgrades.

In the north, construction of the Wuskwatim dam is underway. The Conawapa project has started and a major expansion of the University College of the North is set to begin in Thompson, The Pas and over a dozen Aboriginal communities.

The settlement of treaty land entitlements is an economic necessity for First Nations. Manitoba will continue to provide lands for transfer to the federal government and will support a long-overdue major acceleration of TLE claims through a more decisive settlement process.

In rural Manitoba, new capital investments are being made to expand the production of smart foods and smart fuels. Research in nutraceuticals and functional foods is triggering investment in food-processing plants and the development of new consumer markets. Ethanol, biodiesel and wind power production are providing a major supplement to the agricultural economy.

In Winnipeg and Brandon, major college and university additions will be launched in the coming year overlapping with the completion of Manitoba Hydro's downtown headquarters, the new James Richardson airport terminal and the floodway expansion project.

Many of the initiatives underway to achieve these commitments were already presented to this Chamber in the 2006 Speech from the Throne which was debated and passed by members in November and in the 2007-2008 budget which was debated and passed in April.

A motion to reintroduce the budget will follow the vote on the Throne Speech allowing the work of the Legislature to continue.

Today is the anniversary of D-Day, the assault on the beaches of Normandy in 1944 that began the liberation of western Europe. This anniversary is an opportunity to remember those citizens of Manitoba and Canada who fought to preserve our liberties and to pay tribute to the men and women who serve our country today.

* (13:50)

In closing, I want to thank our guests and, in particular, the families and friends of our newly-elected members for joining us today for the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba. I also wish to thank our Speaker and all members of the Legislature for the hard work that lies ahead.

As you proceed to carry out the responsibilities the people of Manitoba have entrusted to you, I trust that divine providence will guide your deliberations in the best interests of all of our citizens. Thank you.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor rose from the throne and retired from the Chamber followed by the honorary aides-de-camp, the officer escort and the Premier.

Prior to their exiting the Chamber the lyrics of "God Save the Queen" and "O Canada" were sung.

The Speaker proceeded to the throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms approached the Speaker, made obeisance with the mace, then placed the mace on the table.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please, be seated.

The honourable First Minister—

An Honourable Member: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. In terms of due process, I look to you as the Speaker and seek your advice as to whether or not it is proper procedure and tradition of this Chamber to circulate the Throne Speech before it has been actually completed.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for his point of order. I'll take that under advisement and I'll consult with the authorities and I'll come back with a ruling to the House.

* * *

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), that Bonnie Korzeniowski, member for the electoral division of St. James, be Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House and Deputy Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Doer: I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk), that Rob Altemeyer, member for the electoral division of Wolseley, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Doer: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Marilyn Brick, member for the electoral district of St. Norbert, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 1—An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Robinson), that Bill 1, An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office; Loi sur la prestation des serments d'entrée en fonction, be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Doer: I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh), that

a Special Committee consisting of the Honourable Mr. Ashton, Ms. Brick, Honourable Mr. Chomiak, Messrs. Dewar, Goertzen, Maguire and Dyck be appointed to prepare the proportional membership representation to compose the standing committees provided under subrule 83(1).

Motion agreed to.

* * *

* (14:00)

Mr. Doer: I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that the Speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be taken into consideration today.

Motion agreed to.

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

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

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise today to speak for the first time in this Chamber, a Chamber that I have respected for many, many years and can remember being in grade 6 and sitting up there and watching everything that was going down and hoping someday to be here.

I want to begin by thanking the constituents of Fort Rouge for entrusting me to represent them in this House. I also want to thank all the volunteers who worked very hard on my campaign. I think all of us would agree it's a very humbling experience to have people give of themselves, of their time, of their skills, of their money to us to get us here.

I also want to thank the staff of the Legislature and the Clerk's office who have been tremendously helpful to the new members of the House in helping us learn everything from where the bathrooms are to how much we can spend on pens and paper. I felt very cared for in the last few days being here. I know that all the staff of the Legislature and the Clerk's office are here to help all of us.

I also want to take a moment to thank all of the political staff on all sides of the House. I was proud to be one of those people once upon a time. I think

they probably get even less respect than politicians, but all of us in this Chamber know that we couldn't do our jobs without their skill and talent and intelligence. So I want to thank them as well.

I want to congratulate all members of the House here today on their election and re-election. I'm very pleased to be part of a historic number of women. It's always been my belief that this Chamber should look like all of us in the province, and today we're closer to that.

I also want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker. I know that we're going to thrive under your leadership. I know that I'm going to pay very close attention every time you ask for order, and I'll do my best to obey by that.

I also want to congratulate all of the candidates who ran, some of whom I know are here today in the gallery. Ten years ago this month, I ran for the first time in Brandon-Souris in the federal election and lost. I have learned since then that winning is definitely better, but losing is probably more instructive. I would say that all candidates who ran this time, there are great lessons to be learned. The only failure is not making the attempt. I'm sure we're going to see many of them take another try at it.

I'm very pleased to represent the constituency of Fort Rouge. As I was walking through the constituency over the last six months, I was impressed by the diversity of people who live there. I have many seniors who've moved to the area after selling their homes and now rent or live in condominiums; many students who are, for the first time, living on their own and going to school; young families; many new Canadians. I have pockets of great wealth in my constituency as well as pockets of great poverty.

Fort Rouge is really a gathering place, not just for people in this city, but for the province. I know when I first started coming to Winnipeg on my own, Osborne Village was a frequent destination for me. It remains so today.

I also am pleased to have The Forks in my area, which is an historic meeting place for this province, Corydon Avenue, as well as the downtown, and I'm pleased to say that we're all in the constituency of Fort Rouge right now. I'm probably going to spend more time than anyone in my constituency, so I am looking forward to that.

I'm looking forward to working with many of the organizations that I had the chance to speak with

during the election campaign, all of the BIZ associations, cultural organizations like the Gas Station Theatre, where there's a very committed group of volunteers on the board who are passionate about making theatre and art accessible to the neighbourhood organizations like the Osborne Village Resource Centre, which I shared a building with during the campaign, who are dedicated every day to helping people gain access to the job market and participate in the economy.

I'm also looking forward to working with the boards of non-profit housing organizations like 64 Nassau and Villa Cabrini. These are places that have been innovative in their quest to provide independent living for seniors and a real sense of community.

The best piece of advice I ever got the first time I ran was that you always need to be prepared to tell people why you want this job. So I want to share a little bit of that with you now. For me, it's really my mother and my grandmother that fostered my interest in politics: my grandmother in politics, my mother in the NDP.

When I was a young child—I was born with a disability. I have a leg that's a little shorter than the other, less fingers than probably most of you, and one day I was getting special shoes fitted—I wear a lift to help me walk evenly—in the process of getting the shoes fitted, it occurred to me that these things cost money. So I asked my mother, you know, how do we pay for this, because I also knew early on that money was not something that was in plentiful supply at my house. My mother, at that point, told me not to worry about it because we lived in a province where people cared about each other, where the government, the NDP government, had made sure that my shoes were paid for by everybody in the province, not just my family. That made a deep impression on me as a child about the power of government to do good in people's lives, to change people's lives.

We also at the time had a family friend who was running, and I remember riding in his car to school and seeing all the signs with his name on it in the back seat. I thought that would be rather cool to have the signs with my name on them someday. It was pretty cool, I must say. The signs are still in my garage, so I'm going to look at them at any time.

I asked him, this friend of ours who was running, so what's the job? If you win, what do you do? He said, simply, that the job of someone who's elected is

to make life better for the people that elect him. I think today the priorities that we heard in the Throne Speech are things that are going to help make the lives of my constituents better.

I want to first talk a little bit about health care since that is my background. I've worked in health care for the last 10 years in some capacity or another, most recently as the Executive Director at the Women's Health Clinic. I also want to say thank you to them for letting me come and be here. There were mixed emotions on election night for the people at the clinic, but it has been a tremendous experience for me to work there.

One thing that I learned early on in health care is that we really can't do anything to improve the system if we don't have enough people working in it. If we don't have the nurses and doctors and technologists and support staff, then we really can't move forward. It's my belief, and I think it's instructive to all of us about how the decisions we make have lasting impact. One of the biggest public policy mistakes of the last 20 years now, I guess, was the decision to cut back on the training for those people. It was a decision made across the country, and I think every day we live with the consequences of that.

I also know from working in health care that the ideas for how to innovate in the system are found in the people who are working in the front lines, and it's our job to help make those ideas become a reality. So I am very pleased that we are going to be following up on commitments to create the province's first birth centre, to bring into place a new women's hospital, which is sorely needed, and to establish Canada's first emergency room specifically for people who are struggling with mental health issues.

Working in health care, I learned also that the health care system does very little to keep people healthy. It does a not bad job of treating people who are sick, but if we want to keep people healthy, it's all the other things the government does that we have to pay attention to.

*(14:10)

In my view, poverty is probably one of the greatest threats to health and wellness. One of the best things that we can do to help to end poverty is to invest in accessible post-secondary education. When I was walking up the front steps to this building, I was reminded of a time 18 years ago when I was on those front steps, not quite as welcome in the

building as I am now, leading a rally against tuition increases that had gone up 15 or 20 percent. I was a new student and knew that every time the tuition fees went up it meant fewer of us were going to be able to afford to be there.

I am very pleased at the announcement that we made about 4,000 new apprenticeship opportunities. I don't think that's something that's gotten enough attention. I know that as we invest in colleges and universities we also need to invest in skilled trades training. There is a huge shortage in those trades and it is an option that I don't think we've given enough attention to for young people.

When I was in the constituency, I would talk to young people and I'd ask them: Are you planning to stay in Manitoba? Why are you planning to stay? Many of them agreed that they were planning to stay, and the reasons why was that they had found a good job that could address their desires, that made use of their skills, and because they knew that this was going to be an affordable place for them to buy a home and to live. I am very committed to making sure both those things stay true.

Safer communities is another thing that contributes to the health and well-being of all of us. I have worked on the issue of community safety, both in Brandon and in Winnipeg, and I have learned that it's really by engaging citizens in their neighbourhoods that we make neighbourhoods safer places to be.

When I was out there talking to people about their concerns, about crime, I always talked to them about three things that we need to do. We need to make sure that crimes are prosecuted, that there are consequences. We need to make sure that there are police in place to deal with offenders, and we need to make sure that we prevent people from turning to crime in the first place. I believe no one is born a criminal and it's up to us to do everything we can to make sure that people have the choices in their life so that they can choose positively.

Having a healthy environment is also, I think, something key to keeping people healthy. I talked to a lot of people who view Lake Winnipeg as their lake. I think everybody in Manitoba thinks of Lake Winnipeg as our lake. You have a cabin there or you camp there or you swim there during the day. It was unanimous to the people I talked to that we can't ever sacrifice the health of our waters. That has to be top in our minds as we go forward in making policy.

I also talked to a lot of people who are very worried about global warming and the effects not just on us, but the effects on the whole world. I think there is a moral imperative for us to deal with this issue because if we don't it is going to result in human catastrophes that we can't imagine.

It also makes good economic sense to deal with the environment in terms of creating new jobs, but also for low-income families who own houses and need the help to reduce their energy costs.

Affordable housing is something I talked to a lot of people about. The area that I live in, in Fort Rouge, is perhaps the smallest geographic constituency but certainly the most densely populated. I spoke to many, many people who enjoy living there and who told me the only reason they can live there is because there has been rent control in place for many years and encouraged us to build more affordable housing and more diverse housing, housing that can serve the needs of people with disabilities. All of us eventually need housing for people with disabilities. We either die or we become disabled. Those are the two ends in life, so it's incumbent upon us to make sure we create that housing now.

I believe fundamentally that people have the solutions to their own problems and that our role here is to link people's solutions to the power and resources of government.

I want to take a moment to thank sincerely my predecessor, Tim Sale, the former MLA for Fort Rouge. Tim has left me a legacy of compassion and commitment to social justice that I'm going to try very hard to live up to. Many of you know his achievements when he was in this House fulfilling recommendations from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry to devolve control of Child and Family Services to First Nations and Métis people, to invest in new and clean energy like wind power, to look towards innovation in health care, to push the health care system to put patients first.

I knew in what high regard Tim was held because many doors I went to people would say to me, well, you're a very nice young lady, but if you're running against Tim Sale you just forget about it. Shortly after that I made sure there was a picture of me and Tim in all of the campaign material that went out.

Finally, I just want to say a brief word about cynicism in politics, something I think we all

probably ran into in the last few weeks. I am part of a generation that has been told our entire lives that we don't care about politics or that politics doesn't matter. I know I stand here today, quite literally the fact that I am standing up is because I had help from government, because there were politicians that put programs in place to make sure that I had an equal opportunity in life, whether that program is medicare, knowing that my family could afford the best health care in the world and it didn't matter how much money they had. The only thing that mattered is that's what I needed. Or the fact that I was able to go to university because of funding that was given to people with disabilities to make sure that we could get an education and participate in the economy.

I think it's up to each of us to battle that cynicism. I think if we let the belief thrive that what we do here is inconsequential, that is the greatest threat to our democracy. I know in the coming weeks and years we're going to disagree a lot about the methods of making things better for our constituents, but I hope in that disagreement we can all remember that we do share the motivation of making life better working with people who elected us to make their lives better.

Today I'm very humbled that I have the trust of my constituents. I'm humbled by the work of those who helped me get here, and my promise is to work hard every day to earn that trust and to be worthy of this seat in this Chamber. Thank you.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Wellington): Thank you, members of this Assembly. I, too, would like to thank His Honour for the Throne Speech which articulates to this Chamber this government's key priorities and commitment to achieve peace, prosperity for all Manitobans. I would also like to express my thanks to the constituents of Wellington for electing me as their MLA. I am humbled by the trust given to me and to the party I proudly represent.

For those who assisted me during the election campaign, nearly 100 volunteers, I cannot thank them enough for the time, effort and financial contribution which enabled our campaign team to press ahead given a very limited period. What is even more heartening in this campaign is the fact that some of my volunteers and supporters are proud members and adherents of other political parties. Yes, I have many friends from all political parties and we get along very well mainly because we respect each other's political convictions. My friends value differences of ideas and ways of attaining

goals which are healthy and essential in holding a government accountable to the electorate. They hold no intent of simply being a thorn in the government's side.

I also salute my party's leadership who, when confronted with unexpected and formidable problems, displayed good judgment and readiness to confront the challenges head-on. My party is being maligned right now and Wellington riding continues to enjoy publicity generated by people whose motives are questionable. But this I say, the whole truth will eventually come out and those on the side of truth, justice, decency and integrity will prevail.

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, I feel honoured to be standing before you and the other honourable members of this House in this beautiful Chamber. I am also proud to be sitting in a Legislative Chamber where history was made with the highest percentage of women winning seats. I think this speaks very favourably about Manitoba and our appreciation of the wisdom, strength and experience women bring each and every day to their roles as leaders in families, in communities, in their workplaces, as well as in governing our province.

As for the recognition of being the first woman of colour elected in this House, I feel even more humbled by this, partly because I know that I am representing a segment of society whose voices have too often been silenced, even at times when it was our voices that needed to be heard most. I am humbled by this recognition of being the first woman of colour in this House, partly because I know that in my own contribution to the debates and decision making in this House, I will pave the way for present and future leaders, our sisters in the First Nations and Métis community, and women leaders in other visible minority communities to be elected, to be part of an active debate of this Chamber, taking full part in the governance of our province.

As for being elected the MLA of Wellington, this responsibility is by far my greatest honour. There's an old quote by T.S. Eliot that starts off: "In my beginning is my end," and that seems true for me in this case. The Weston community, one of the many vibrant neighbourhoods in Wellington, was where my husband, Orlando, and I began our new life in Canada. We first settled here with our family, when we immigrated to Winnipeg 25 years ago from

the Philippines. We bought a small house on Bannatyne Avenue West. My church minister, Reverend Dr. Cuthbert, knows the place; he is here now. My eldest daughter experienced her first day of school in Canada at Principal Sparling School on Sherburn Street, also in Wellington riding, where her devoted nursery teacher Mr. Marshall showed her the warmest way to wear a scarf, which she promptly taught us at home and helped us weather our first winter in Canada.

Later on, my children attended St. Edward's School on Arlington Street, as well as Cecil Rhodes School on Elgin Avenue where they were engaged in academic enrichment programs and a first-rate arts and music program. In addition to a yearly parent-teacher's meeting, as a proud parent, I remember yearly visits to the school divisional science fair at Tec-Voc school on Notre Dame and one time, at the University of Winnipeg, where my children would compete with their science projects.

It was also through a school in Wellington riding that I first had the opportunity to set foot in this magnificent building. My eldest daughter was a grade 5 student at Cecil Rhodes in 1988, when she was asked to give a keynote speech for the United Nations Day program attended by the honourable Lieutenant-Governor George Johnson. My daughter was chosen as the keynote speaker after her social studies teacher was highly impressed with an essay she wrote for one of their assignments. This was the first time my family had occasion to visit this building. What a wonderful coincidence that my daughter spoke before an audience in this building with the Speaker of the House in attendance, and now her mother has the privilege of doing the same.

As a new MLA for this riding, I am determined to learn more about its people and community organizations, to learn about what works and what isn't working in Wellington, and how we can create and further strengthen existing government partnerships in this community.

I started the learning process during the campaign where I met many residents and heard their stories and enthusiasm for their neighbourhoods, some of them even offering to be part of a beautification and cleanliness campaign that I have suggested we need to start.

While canvassing the diverse neighbourhoods of the Wellington constituency, I was struck by the determination of residents who are determined to strengthen their community's pride and sense of

community ownership. Two days after the election I attended a series of community meetings, meeting with the professionals and dedicated staff whose daily business is to care for, train and empower Wellington's many diverse communities. They expressed their community priorities like the need for more doctors, nurses and front-line staff, the pressing need for an access community health and social services centre in west Winnipeg, the need to improve access to these services for seniors and a more comprehensive mental health program that specifically addresses the needs of our youth community. Those were priorities that were indicated by our front-line staff and today I'm proud to say that this government has recognized some of these priorities in the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, three days after the election, I had the pleasure of visiting a grade 5 and 6 classroom at Dufferin School who carefully track provincial elections, and I assure you the students asked me questions as probing as those in the news media which covered the election that week.

Likewise, my first visit at Rossbrook House, a community centre which functions more like a family in order to meet the needs of our youth and children, was truly an eye opener for me, Mr. Speaker. They provide a solid example of how a community—parents, volunteers and staff—can face challenges like poverty, racism and abuse through nurturing and empowering its youth, our future community leaders. I was proud to learn of our government's existing support and partnership in this area, and today I'm prouder still that our Throne Speech includes a strong commitment for more programs and opportunities for at-risk youth in this province.

Mr. Speaker, my canvassing during the election revealed how well the key priorities of our government resonate with the constituents of Wellington. They appreciate and look forward to more improvements to health care, especially the announcement of a new women's hospital and the expansion of the home care program,

notwithstanding that what we now have is already the best care program in the country.

The majority of those who declared their immediate support for us during the campaign were women. It might just be the same in other ridings. Our policies over the years, strengthening and empowering women, might be a good reason for that.

During my day-to-day canvassing, I observed that many households had no residents at home. I took it to mean that many of those residents are out working as a result of the improved economy in Manitoba. It could very well be that some of them are working on the major infrastructure programs we now have underway, such as the airport, the completion of the floodway or the twinning of the north Perimeter Highway.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated how just a few of the priorities in today's Throne Speech will have a direct bearing on the residents of Wellington, strengthening the resolve of residents, community groups and front-line workers who are already taking the lead in revitalizing our neighbourhoods and empowering our communities.

As the MLA for Wellington, I am proud to be part of a government that truly seeks to govern for all Manitobans. It is my honour on behalf of the people of Wellington to proudly second the motion supporting the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

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