

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

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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.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	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.
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, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, 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.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
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MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
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SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 21—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immobilizers and Air Bags)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for Manitoba Public Insurance, that Bill 21, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immobilizers and Air Bags), be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It's been moved by the honourable Minister for Infrastructure Transportation, seconded by the honourable Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 21, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immobilizers and Air Bags), be now read a first time.

Mr. Ashton: There are two portions to this bill. One is—there's a provision that will be put in place to protect against tampering with air bags, an important safety system. Mr. Speaker, there's also a provision to prevent tampering with anti-theft devices, which have saved Manitobans, through the MPI initiative, \$60 million in the last five year in terms of prevented auto theft. So I strongly recommend it to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

PETITIONS

Waste-Water Ejector Systems

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they want to be assured that the provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009, the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba Conservation official stated in the October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, and I quote: "Have we done a specific study? No." End quote.

The regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that a review can take place to ensure that they are based on sound science.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition on waste-water ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And this petition is signed by A. McPherson, S. Pringle, B. Farder and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

PTH 15–Twinning

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

Injuries resulting from collisions on PTH 15 continue to rise and have doubled from 2007 to 2008.

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation stated that preliminary analysis of the current and future traffic demands indicate that local twinning will be required.

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and therefore does not fulfil the current nor future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate twinning of the PTH 15 floodway bridge for the safety of the citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by S. Siewert, L. Steiner, J. Coe and many, many other Manitobans.

Ophthalmology Services–Swan River

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Swan Valley region has a high population of seniors and a very high incidence of diabetes. Every year, hundreds of patients from the Swan Valley region must travel to distant communities for cataract surgery and additional pre-operative and post-operative appointments.

These patients, many of whom are sent as far away as Saskatchewan, need to travel with an escort who must take time off work to drive the patient to his or her appointments without any compensation. Patients who cannot endure this expense and hardship are unable to have the necessary treatment.

The community has located an ophthalmologist who would like to practise in Swan River. The local Lions Club has provided funds for the necessary equipment, and the Swan River Valley hospital has space to accommodate this service.

The Minister of Health has told the Town of Swan River that it has insufficient infrastructure and patient volumes to support a cataract surgery program; however, residents of the region strongly disagree.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider rethinking her refusal to allow an ophthalmologist to practise in Swan River and to consider working with the community to provide this service without further delay.

And this is signed by A. Kern, E. Richenhaller, E.P. Richenhaller and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:40)

Education Funding

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition.

Historically, the Province of Manitoba has received funding for education by the assessment of property that generates taxes. This unfair tax is only applied to selected property owners in certain areas and confines, including but not limited to commercial property owners.

Property-based school tax is becoming an ever-increasing burden without acknowledging the commercial property owner's income or the ability to pay.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth consider removing education funding by school tax or education levies from all

property in Manitoba, including commercial properties.

To request that the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth consider finding a more equitable method of funding education, such as general revenue following the consultation–constitutional funding of education by the Province of Manitoba.

And this petition has been signed by D. Moodoo, D. Benoit and J. Hanson and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Walk-in medical clinics provide a valuable health-care service.

The closure of the Westbrook Medical Clinic has left both Weston and Brooklands without a community-based medical clinic.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider how important it is to have a medical clinic located in the Weston-Brooklands area.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by H. Syka, D. Genaille and A. Berg and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

Mount Agassiz Ski Area

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz Ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operations of the Mount Agassiz Ski area were very important to the local economy, not only creating jobs, but also generating sales of goods and services in area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for core provincial

government services and infrastructure which benefit all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened and Parks Canada is committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance of that viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

And to request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by M. Wollmann Sr., W. Hofer, J. Wollmann and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Whiteshell Provincial Park–Lagoons

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial parks were established to protect our natural resources and the environment for future generations.

In July 2009, the lagoons in the vicinity of Dorothy Lake and Otter Falls in the Whiteshell Provincial Park overflowed, creating concerns that untreated sewage made its way into the Winnipeg River system and ultimately into Lake Winnipeg.

In addition, emergency discharges had to be undertaken at lagoons in the Whiteshell Provincial Park four times in 2005, once in 2007 and once in April of 2009.

Concerned stakeholders in the Whiteshell Provincial Park have repeatedly asked this provincial government to develop plans to address the shortcomings with the park's lagoons and to ensure the environment is protected, but the plans have not materialized.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider acknowledging that more timely action should have been taken to address the shortcomings with the lagoons in the Whiteshell Provincial Park in order to protect the environment.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately developing short- and long-term strategies to address the shortcomings with lagoons in the Whiteshell Provincial Park and to consider implementing them as soon as possible.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by R. Gorham, L. Martin, F. Martin and many, many others.

TABLEING OF REPORTS

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I'd like to table the Manitoba Health Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 2010-2011 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Table the Estimate supplement for the Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): I would like to table the Manitoba Water Stewardship's 2010-2011 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Budget Government Priorities

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, CIBC earlier today announced an increase in their lending rates for mortgage borrowers on the back—following an announcement by RBC of rising interest rates. The Bank of Canada has already signalled that they'll be increasing rates after the end of the second quarter this year. And so as interest rates are going up we have an NDP Premier and caucus that are launching a borrowing spree of historic proportions creating a sinkhole of debt and no plan to get out of it.

I want to ask the NDP leader: Why are he and his NDP colleagues supporting a budget that betrays our children and grandchildren by piling on the debt?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, every government in Canada, regardless of their political

stripe, has agreed to work on stimulating the economy until it fully recovers, and that certainly takes us through the year 2010 and into 2011. We are all doing it in a responsible way because in the last decade we reduced our debt as a proportion of the economy. We fully—we funded our pension liability in Manitoba. The pension liability in Manitoba, the employers' portion, had not been paid in over 40 years. In this budget, and in the last budget, pensions for public servants and teachers are paid fully on an annual basis. That's what we're doing in Manitoba to reduce the debt.

And it is also the case of within this budget, with our five-year moving forward program, we will pay down the debt at a higher level than we did in the last five years; over \$600 billion of the debt will be paid down in the next five years, just to start the conversation.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the federal government is winding down their stimulus program, which had the desired effect. The Canadian economy is projected to grow by more than 3 percent this year, which is why the federal government is winding down their stimulus program just as they're getting ramped up here in NDP Manitoba, and so the debt is rising as interest rates go up, and they're taking us further into the sinkhole of debt at a time when interest rates are rising.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, this budget increases costs on Manitoba families. It increases taxes and fees for camping, for cars, for electricity, for water, medication for seniors and food. Instead of a chicken in every pot this NDP government is putting a tax on every chicken.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this Premier: Why is this NDP leader and his caucus voting for a budget that increases the cost of food, medicine, water and electricity for Manitoba families?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we have committed to keeping Manitobans in the top three for affordability, and we publish data to that effect. But he doesn't have to believe us. All he has to do is move to the government of Saskatchewan's budget where they ranked Manitoba and Manitoba families No. 1 for affordability in the country at all income levels. And the member opposite, he seems to think that it's okay when they're in government to spend 13 and a half cents on the debt, and that's fine, but when we spend 6 cents on the dollar in debt, he thinks it's a problem. Could he square those facts with his rhetoric? I think not.

* (13:50)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, in addition to piling on the debt as interest rates go up, in addition to increasing the cost of food, medicine, water and electricity for Manitoba families, this budget cuts services to Manitobans who need them. There's cuts for schools. There are cuts to adult education. There are cuts to addiction services for Manitobans who need them. There's even cuts in this budget to services for children with hearing impairments.

I want to ask this NDP leader and his caucus: Why are they voting today for a budget that cuts services to the Manitobans who need them?

Mr. Selinger: The first question is the member is concerned about the debt. The second question, the member seems to think that there's reductions in services. Let me give him some facts. School funding went up 2.9 percent this year—2.9 percent. Funding for universities went up about 4.3 percent this year. Members opposite are going to vote against those increases in funding. The budget for children and families has gone up this year. We've expanded the number of day-care spots in this budget, in this year, and we're going to work on a pension plan for day-care workers.

We are doing things that create more opportunities for Manitobans: 29,000 additional jobs will be created with our stimulus program, new schools, new hospitals, better roads, better sewage treatment, better water treatment. All of those things the members opposite will vote against.

And I guarantee, before the end of question period today, there'll be a question on why can't we spend more on something specific to one of their constituencies.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, we understand well, as do Manitobans, the reckless spending: \$640 million wasted on a west-side bipole line. Wasteful project after wasteful project, they spend more while they cut front-line services. It's mismanagement and reckless spending at its worst.

Now, we know, Mr. Speaker, that costs are going up for Manitoba families. The debt is going up at a rate that is unsustainable, and they're cutting front-line programs. But there are 19 winners in this

budget, that's the 19 members of the NDP Cabinet who are introducing amendments to protect their salaries as he increases the size of Cabinet.

Will he admit today, Mr. Speaker, that this budget is good for 19 Manitobans, the 19 members of the NDP Cabinet?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this is a budget that grows the Manitoba economy. This is a budget that preserves front-line services in health, in education, in family services, in justice and in infrastructure.

The members opposite would balance the budget this year on the backs of Manitobans just like they did in the '90s—just like they did in the '90s when they cut funding to schools, when they cut funding to universities, when they cut funding to children and families, when they put civil servants on furlough without a choice. Those are the things that members opposite would do. They would lay off public servants. They would privatize services. They would lay off a thousand nurses. They would drive doctors out of the province of Manitoba.

All of the opposite is happening in this budget: more nurses, more doctors, more services to children and families, and the lowest cost of living in the country. And the members opposite will vote against it.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I know he still hasn't gotten over the three election losses in the 1990s. I know he's having trouble coming to terms with the fact that they didn't win. They didn't win until they made a Conservative their leader. Their last leader wanted to run for the Conservatives, but he couldn't get a safe nomination. The NDP was the second choice. He was their second choice. But, now, he's in the United States promoting conservative policies for a Conservative government, and we wish him well.

Mr. Speaker, they need to get over the 1990s and focus on the future, focus on this budget as a budget that increases the costs for families, increases the debt, cuts services to front-line services. But the one thing it does grow is the size of the NDP Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, will he come out of the ivory tower? Will he leave the Palace of Versailles and get in touch with real Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we have less deputy ministers than when the members opposite were in government. We do. We have a less—we have less assistant deputy ministers than when the members

opposite were in government, and we have 36 politicians on this side of the House that work every day to stay in touch with Manitobans, to understand their priorities, to understand their concerns and to translate them into meaningful policy and program initiatives that will grow and strengthen this province.

That's the—that's what the members opposite can't handle. They're out of touch. They would rather have more senior officials and less politicians. We're the opposite. We want people that are in touch with Manitobans every single day, and that's what we are going to do.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the strong applause for his more-politicians platform is indicative—it's indicative of how out of touch this NDP government has become after 11 years in power. They've completely lost touch with the values that they say they used to stand for. It's the more-politician party, it's the more-debt party, it's the more-dependency party.

Will he admit that after 11 years in power they've completely lost it, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: The member seems to—the member doesn't understand this House. He seems to think there's more politicians. There's more New Democrats, there's less Conservatives. And that's what we want to do.

We want to provide Manitobans with the representation they deserve: people that will stay in touch with them, people that will act on their concerns, which is to protect front-line services in health, which is to educate more Manitobans at the K to 12 level, at the community college level and at the university level, and to do it in a responsible way so that we don't have to go back to the '90s where we put people out on the street, when we drove people out of the province and we dramatically increased the debt.

Our debt is less, our services are better and we're finding ways to move Manitoba forward, whether it's clean energy, whether it's wind power, whether it's schools or hospitals and even a stadium, Mr. Speaker. And they will vote against every one of those initiatives.

Garden Valley School Division Facility Project Status

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): One year ago, March 28th, 2009, there was a big news release: new

schools to be built in Garden Valley School Division, eyed to open up 2012. Yesterday, the Minister of Education made another announcement, breaking the original promise to thousands of students and families.

Can the minister explain why she has broken that promise?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I don't know what the members are yelling about. The honourable minister hasn't even started to give an answer. And if other members are firing questions back and forth or trying to give answers, we still have lots of time in question period. Just be a little patient, okay?

The honourable minister has the floor.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I am proud to be part of a government that has made historic funding in our public education system, Mr. Speaker, and I am also proud to be part of a government that made the most historic funding in a capital budget in the history of this province.

We have been working—we've been working with the Garden Valley School Division, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the opening of their new high school. We've been working with them for the last six weeks in regards to the opening of that new school, and I'm pleased to tell the House that the size of the school that is going to be built from the original—

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Speaker, I heard from a constituent of mine who informed me that students were dehydrating themselves to the point where they were fainting in classrooms because the washrooms are not easily accessible. This is unacceptable.

I bet the washrooms in the new football stadium will have a better design and will have adequate spaces. You have \$115 million to spend there, you have \$640 million for Bipole III, but we do not have the money for our students' education.

Where is this government's priority?

Ms. Allan: I'm pleased to inform the MLA that's responsible for the area in Garden Valley—I told him a couple of days ago that there was going to be a public meeting in Winkler, and it's unfortunate he was unable to be there last night, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:00)

But if he had been there last night, Mr. Speaker, he would have learned that there is an expanded commitment in the new high school in—there's an expanded commitment to the new high school—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Can we have some order, please? Please, can we have some order? The honourable minister is trying to answer a serious question that has been raised by the honourable member for Pembina, and he's listening very patiently to try and get the answer. Let's have some co-operation here, okay? Please, some decorum in the House.

The honourable minister continue, please.

Ms. Allan: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm pleased to inform members that the new commitment to the new high school in Winkler is going to have 2,400 square feet. It is going to have a dedicated choral space for the new school. Mr. Speaker, this is something that the people and the teachers and the—

Mr. Dyck: We've had some of these announcements before where you either postpone or do another study, or whatever.

So anyway, Mr. Speaker, this fall four classrooms were set up in the hallways of Garden Valley Collegiate. Students had classes in a hallway because there was no other space for them in the school.

Now, is this what the government feels is a good environment for students to learn in? In fact, Mr. Speaker, this is a violation of the safety code in the province. Where are your priorities?

Ms. Allan: Well, it's unfortunate, once again, that the MLA couldn't be at the meeting last night, but if he would like, he could come to my office. I have in my office the schematic drawings that we had for the new high school at the public meeting last night, and they're actually schematic drawings—*[interjection]* They're actually schematic drawings of the new high school that will be built in Winkler. And we're very, very proud of the school that's going to be built there, and so is the Garden Valley school trustees who we've worked with for the last six weeks.

And I hope you're going to support the budget when we vote on it today.

Balanced Budget Legislation Ministerial Salary Reductions

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, it's unconscionable that at a time when this government is cutting back vital services for Manitobans in the areas of adult education, addictions, children with hearing impairment and now our children's education—as my colleague from Pembina has just brought forward this issue as well—at the same time as all of these cutbacks for essential services, this NDP government is planning to introduce legislation to protect their own salaries.

Mr. Speaker, how can they honestly justify such a move that clearly looks after their own interests over those vulnerable citizens that rely on these essential services each and every day in this province?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that we are cutting. She didn't listen to the budget very well when she knows that we've said the majority of the money that we are increasing in this budget is going towards health care, to front-line services, services for children, protection of people, for education, for training.

The member opposite says that she's looking for an excuse to vote against this budget, so she talks about all of the things that are cut, and, at the same time, one of her colleagues is asking for more money to be sent.

Mr. Speaker, we looked at this, the challenges that we had, and we decided that we did not want to do what the Conservatives did in the '90s, and we put forward a five-year plan, and it's spelled out very clearly, and I'd ask her to read it.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance looked at her own budget numbers, she would see that the majority of the increase in expenditures are going toward servicing the debt. They're not going towards essential services for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago the NDP government brought in legislation to amend the balanced budget law. At that time the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said, and I quote: If you don't balance the budget you will take a penalty as prescribed in the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Minister of Finance expects to pass a budget today that projects deficits

for the next four years, will she stand by her Premier's comments and take the penalty as prescribed by law, or is it her plan to change the legislation to protect the salary of she and the other Cabinet ministers in her caucus?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, this budget is intended to protect Manitoba front-line services. This budget—it was put—we have the majority of money going into front-line services such as education, training, health care, policing and support to families. That is what this budget is about.

And I would hope the member opposite would think a little bit as she says some of the things that she is saying and think about what Manitobans are saying, because I can tell her I've been across the province listening to people and what they said is we want our front-line services protected and we want our jobs protected so we can get through this, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're doing this. That's why we're investing in stimulus, so people have jobs and our economy will grow.

Mrs. Stefanson: The only services that this budget protects is those of the front-bench services, Mr. Speaker. It does nothing to protect front-line services in our province.

At a time when (a) Manitobans are expected to pay more for services out of their own pockets for things like hydro, water, camping, eggs, poultry, Mr. Speaker, (b) this government is cutting essential services to Manitobans as has been outlined already, why is this NDP government more concerned with protecting their own pocketbooks rather than protecting vulnerable Manitobans?

Will the Minister of Finance stand by her Premier's words of less than two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and announce today that Cabinet ministers keep the 20 percent penalty as part of the new legislation she plans to introduce in the coming days in this session?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish the member opposite would read and listen to what we had said previously. We had said that this year our Cabinet ministers were taking a reduction even though the budget is balanced under balanced budget legislation. We recognized the pressures that Manitobans are under and we made a decision that we would take a reduction and we've asked members opposite to agree with us that MLAs salaries should be frozen. I hope that they would agree with that and they are going to vote against that. This budget will

require that MLAs all take a freeze in their salary. I guess the members opposite don't like that but—because they are going to vote against it—but I tell you, we are going to continue to listen to Manitobans and we are going to continue to spend money on front-line services, continue to invest in—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III West-Side Location

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): This budget is all about lining the pockets of Cabinet ministers than providing the kinds of front-line services that are needed in this province.

Mr. Speaker, residents in the northeast part of the city of Winnipeg—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Residents in northeast Winnipeg are absolutely disgusted with this NDP government's decision to politically interfere with Manitoba Hydro and direct them to build a bipole line down the west side of the province of Manitoba that will cost \$640 million more, Mr. Speaker, than the east side, which is shorter, and certainly, more environmentally friendly and safer.

Will this government today reverse the reckless spending decision that they've made on Bipole III and run it down the east side of the province?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): This decision was made in 2007. I believe in that year the Conservatives tried to make it an election issue and they lost. Mr. Speaker, that decision was made some time ago. The consultations are—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. I sound like a broken record every day here. Let's have some respect for the dignity of this House please, okay. Members don't have to agree with the questions and the answers that are coming back and forth, but the member has the right to say what they feel and what they're portraying when they have the floor. Let's just show some respect to one another please.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.
[interjection] I mean the honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members have tried to play a lot of rhetoric with this Bipole III line. They've said that they could build hospitals instead of building Bipole III.

*(14:10)

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are willing to roll the dice and risk the sales, \$20 billion in sales over 20 years. They're willing to put that at risk just to play a little bit of politics.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But that kind of answer just shows how out of touch this government is with the priorities of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers and Manitoba Hydro ratepayers are appalled at the \$640 million that this government is wanting to waste on a west-side bipole line.

Will the government today, Mr. Speaker, stand up with Manitobans who don't want Cabinet ministers' pockets lined with their tax dollars? They want the right decisions made when it comes to putting the bipole line down the east side of province. Will they do it today?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I say, members opposite are willing to roll the dice and put at risk all of our export sales with—on this issue. But I can tell the member opposite it is those export sales that will pay for the line, not Manitoba ratepayers.

And, according to the Hydro CEO, Bob Brennan, he has said, we'll probably come down at the end of the day to say export customers will probably pay for all of it. That's what he said at committee. Members opposite have asked this question before, Mr. Speaker.

We are not willing to risk the sales, Mr. Speaker. We're working with U.S. customers. We're working with people in Saskatchewan. Members opposite don't like the idea that we're working with Saskatchewan to look at the potential of increasing sales there. We will continue to work and we will ensure that there is a line so that we can meet our reliability and the sales of our customers.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the only people that are rolling the dice are this NDP government. When they're taking taxpayers' dollars, Manitoba Hydro ratepayers' dollars and lining their own pockets, ensuring that their pockets are filled with taxpayers' money, when—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I'm asking all honourable members here. It works both ways here. I'm asking for a co-operation of all honourable members, please. We need to be able to hear the questions and the answers.

The honourable member for River East has the floor.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious the truth hurts. How can this NDP government justify this reckless spending decision when they're budgeting for five years of deficit spending and unprecedented debt for future generations, when they're cutting services to children that have hearing impairments, when they're cutting services to addictions, when they're cutting services to schools and post-secondary education?

How can they justify lining their pockets when they're making cuts to vulnerable front-line services?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite should do a little research before she puts that kind of information on the record. If she would read the budget, if she would look at our five-year plan, she would see that it is not our intent to cut services. It was our intent to protect front-line services, make the majority of the new money invest—that we have in this budget into those programs.

We deal with these issues much different than the opposition. When they had the power to make the decisions, they cut services. They funded schools at minus 2, minus 2, at zero. They laid off people—nurses, Mr. Speaker. They cut the number of doctors that would be trained, and now they want to be holier and thou and pretend that they really care about people.

I will stand by my record, and they have to stand by their record of the '90s.

Pension Benefits Amendment Act Implementation

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): In 2005, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act was passed. The legislation required changes to the Manitoba pension regulations. It took five years for the government to get around to looking at the changes. The government released a press release again on March 26th of this year, patting themselves on the back for taking steps to implement the legislation in 2005. This was five long years after the legislation passed.

Can the Minister of Labour tell Manitobans why it took five years to start implementing their promised pension reform?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm pleased to be able to talk about pensions, an issue that is so important to many Manitobans, important to their dignity as they age, their income as they age.

We did bring forward the largest overhaul of The Pension Benefits Act in 35 years, and pensions are a very important issue, and so we did take time to look at those changes carefully and bring them into effect.

But we did other things during that time also, Mr. Speaker. We brought in, in December of 2008, a regulation to help those pension plans that were dealing with the market downturn so that they would have more time to deal with solvency issues, so that plans would not be cast into crisis because of a sudden downturn in the market. And with those changes that we have put into place, we are going to see young workers able to collect pension benefits a lot more quickly than they have been able to, but we're also going to be able to see experienced workers stay in the work force, continue to work and contribute to our society. Thank you.

Mr. Dyck: Five long years—the stadium in five years—anyway, this government has a warped sense of priorities. They enact legislation at a whim to satisfy their own spending addiction, and yet it took five years to start implementing pension reform to protect Manitoba seniors. This same government is planning to make changes to the balanced budget legislation to protect the salaries of Cabinet ministers over the course of a few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Labour explain why her government treats protecting her salary more important than looking out for pensioners?

Ms. Howard: I'm pleased to talk some more about pensions. I think that it's a very important issue for all members of this House to be aware of and to be—to help their constituents become aware of, because it's something that's going to impact everybody.

Some of the things that are in that—those Pension Benefit Act changes, those regulations, include things like establishing pension committees for workplaces. It'll give people who get pensions a better say in the pensions that they're receiving. It includes things to help put rules around when employers can take pension holidays. I'm proud to be

part of the government that ended the pension holiday that the provincial government had been taking for decades, the first provincial government since 1961 to fund pensions of new employees.

So it does take some time to look at issues that are complicated like pensions, but we think that we have done that and consulted well and come up with changes that are going to benefit Manitobans for generations to come.

Mr. Dyck: In 2003, there was a press release on changing The Pension Benefits Act. In 2005, there was another press release after the legislation was passed. And in 2010, there was yet another press release. The pension regulations haven't been completed or implemented as of yet.

How can Manitobans be assured that the minister is going to take real action? Can the Minister of Labour commit to getting the regulations implemented quickly, or will she be preoccupied passing legislation to protect her own salary?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do know my critic, in his past life, was a music teacher because he has great ability to stick by the music in front of him.

So I will say about The Pension Benefits Act, Mr. Speaker, that the coming-into-force date of those regulations is May 31st of this year. The pension committees will come into force in a year, on May 31st, because we have heard from employers and employees that they need time to set up those committees. They will come into force in a timely fashion.

But we're not resting on those changes. We have also asked the Pension Commission to take a look at solvency, to take a look at the issue of transferability so people can keep their pensions as they move from job to job, and my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk), has undertaken work on the Canada Pension Plan with her colleagues across the country to make sure that plan is also strong for Canadians.

Balanced Budget Legislation Ministerial Salary Reductions

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the self-proclaimed noble Minister of Finance made a statement saying that ministers are going to take a 20 percent decrease in terms of ministerial salaries. But mind you, the document that we're actually going to be voting on today clearly demonstrates that

there is no decrease. If you take a look at the Minister of Finance, as the example, from 45,000 last year, it's now going to be 46,000 years—this year.

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, so on the one hand, we have this Minister of Finance saying, we're taking the decrease, but then we have a printed document in which we are expected to vote on, and I'm asking if the Minister of Finance would recognize that this is a sloppy document at best and a document that does not deserve the support of this Manitoba Legislature.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is desperately—desperately—looking for some reason to vote against what he knows is a very good budget. He knows that.

So, now, Mr. Speaker, he's hanging in his hat on one line. He's hanging in his hat on one line that says, ministers' salaries are printed at the same level. Well, I can tell him that there's another line in the budget that shows where all salaries are reduced.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have voted against 18, I believe, provincial budgets over the last number of years. I can tell you this is, indeed, the worst budget that I've ever—ever—seen inside this Legislature, and Manitobans need to be concerned about the depth of the issues that are facing our problem. And this minister can't even print an accurate document.

My question to the Minister of Finance: Why is it that her department, this minister, does not have the ability to produce a factually correct document? Why do you have an increase in the main Estimates document saying, Madam Minister, that you're going to get a pay increase, while you have another document saying, well, we're going to take a 20 percent decrease, Mr. Speaker?

The Minister of Finance has lost her credibility on the document in question itself, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister do the right thing and make an amendment to her own budgeted printed document?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is, as I say, very desperate to find a reason to vote against what he knows is a very good budget. He knows that, in this budget, we are making significant investments to ensure that front-line services are protected. We're making investments in stimulus in conjunction with the federal government to make sure that Manitobans keep working, and we're

creating jobs, we're making sure that front-line services are protected.

We're managing government, Mr. Speaker. We've got a plan in place to restore balance and we are maintaining Manitoba as one of the more—most affordable places to live.

The member opposite should think about what he's saying and should think about what this budget will do to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. It is a good budget.

Mr. Lamoureux: *[inaudible]*—a good budget is a good budget. Just because you say it's a good budget does not make it a good budget, Madam Minister.

Quite frankly, there's ample reasons to be voting against this particular budget. You can talk about the record high deficit. You can talk about the disaster in terms of your decision making on Manitoba Hydro. You can talk about the ever-growing health-care bureaucracy that this Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), this Premier (Mr. Selinger), continues to feed at the cost of delivering health care in our communities—through community clinics, through our hospital services, Mr. Speaker. This budget is, in fact, a disaster.

My question to the Minister of Finance is very simple: Why is it that you presented a budget? Did you not anticipate, did you not know that your—you were going to be receiving a 20 percent reduction or did you already have the budget printed and the Premier came down saying, you're going to lose 20 percent of your salary, Madam Minister? Which one is it?

Did you not know that there was going to be a 20 percent decrease in your budget? Is that the reason why you printed a budget that is not accurate?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to take a little bit more time. Take a little bit more time and read the budget and look at where we are spending money, where we are making investments and what we are doing.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: All of those budgets that he said that he voted against, Mr. Speaker, during our time, I'll tell you, that since we've taken office, there's over 2,034 more nurses, there's 345 more doctors, there's

more people in training, there's more apprenticeship programs; there's more police officers.

This budget is funding a helicopter, Mr. Speaker, which the member opposite says he supports. There's more corrections capacity in this province in here.

The member opposite asks for things and then he says, just because he's a Liberal, he's going to vote against it, Mr. Speaker. We're more principled than that.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Whitehead).

Order. I had recognized the honourable member for The Pas for a question but I see the honourable member for Inkster is up. Are you up on a point of order?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The member from Transcona is challenging myself to put something on the record that I have said, and I'm more than happy to do that in terms of to explain the growth of the bureaucratic industry in the province of Manitoba related to health care. And there are more nurses pushing pencils than any other administration and—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When a member rises on a point of order, it's a very serious matter and I have to make a ruling after I hear what the honourable member—and I've heard enough from the honourable member to make my ruling.

And the honourable—before I make my ruling, I would strongly encourage the honourable member for Inkster and the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), if they have a dispute about figures, maybe they could go to sit in the loge and bring out their information, and they could share it and then we wouldn't have to bring it to the floor of the Chamber.

But the honourable member does not have a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts. But I would encourage you two to get together to share your information.

Correction Facilities Expansion

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to ensuring safety and security of all Manitobans, and has deep respect for correction officers who handle difficult—often difficult situations in a professional manner. That's why, since 1999, we have added a total of 1,418 beds to adult custody jails.

Can the Minister of Justice please inform the House about the current plans to expand corrections facilities in Manitoba, including plans for The Pas?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member for The Pas.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that invests in crime prevention. I'm very proud to be part of a government that supports our police and invests in policing. I'm very proud to be part of a government that supports our prosecutors and adds resources. And, of course, with police and prosecutors doing their job, there's certainly pressure on the correction system. And The Pas Correctional Centre will be enhanced with 40 new beds added to that facility. Construction will begin within the next few weeks and they will be completed later on this year. I look forward to visiting that facility with my colleague from The Pas in a few short weeks.

I should also let this House know that an additional 64 medium security beds will be added to Milner Ridge Correctional Centre. That work will be also done as quickly as possible, commencing later this year and being completed early in the spring of 2011.

This is a further investment of \$20 million. It's equivalent to adding another Milner Ridge to Manitoba's correctional system.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we respect our corrections officers. We'll keep enhancing public safety.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired. Order.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Kristen McLean

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): I'm not used to being first, Mr. Speaker, but at any rate, I'm pleased to rise in the House today and recognize Kristen McLean who has won the Manitoba School

Boards Association Student Citizenship Award. This award is presented to students who demonstrate outstanding commitment to both their schools and their communities. Though most young people like Kristen do not help their communities for the sake of awards, it is important to recognize and celebrate the contributions they have made to the world around them.

Kristen McLean is a grade 12 student at Lac du Bonnet Senior School and has made many contributions to her school, church youth group and other community activities. Kristen's teacher Cheryl MacKinnon nominated Kristen after noticing her involvement in spearheading various fundraising initiatives for the school. Kristen is also known as someone who loves music and is always willing to share her gifts. She often sings the national anthem at community events and participates annually at the Music Monday event at the Lac du Bonnet town dock.

(14:30)

Kristen is also an active participant in her church youth group. In all her activities, Kristen is a role model for other youth and deserves this recognition for the many ways that she contributes to her community.

Ms. McLean has a bright future ahead of her as well. After graduating she plans to attend the University of Manitoba in the music program. She hopes to become a music teacher and continue to give generously to her community.

Of course, we must also pay tribute to the individuals that support Kristen. Her parents, teachers and friends have undoubtedly supported her in all of her endeavours. It is dedicated individuals and the people who support them that give Manitoba towns a reputation for strength and community that they deserve.

I'm pleased that I can take this opportunity to recognize the work of Kristen McLean. She's a dedicated citizen and role model who encourages all of us to actively participate in our communities. I wish her all the best in what I'm sure will be a bright and fulfilling future. Thank you.

Shamrock School Haiti Donation

Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale): I rise today to thank a group of remarkable young philanthropists. In the aftermath of the winter's earthquake in Haiti, six grade 6 students at Shamrock School, led by Jessica

Dufurat and Ashley Prokop, raised almost \$3,400 to be donated in reconstruction and relief efforts.

After having watching the—watched heart—the heartbreaking news coverage of the disaster, Jessica and Ashley decided to act. Together they created an affecting PowerPoint presentation chronicling the hardships of life in Haiti both before and after the earthquake. They toured the presentation through each of the school's grades 3 to 8 classrooms. Students and their parents rallied to the cause. As donations poured in, each was marked with a large Hope for Haiti heart. Jessica and Ashley's classmates helped in the effort, drawing posters and helping collect and count donations.

Motivated by Ashley and Jessica's efforts, another grade 6 class pulled together a fundraiser of its own. Their popcorn sale further boost donations.

The funds, once collected, were donated to the Canadian Red Cross which the students felt was the organization that could best translate the funds into needed products and service.

Even as I speak now, news reports are trickling in from western China where another series of earthquakes seems to have claimed many lives. Mr. Speaker, there will never be a shortage of need in this world. There will never be a shortage of pain, injustice or anger. But only look to Shamrock School to find that there will also never be a shortage of empathy, energy or the willingness to do what's right.

Thank you to the young humanitarians at Shamrock School. Your efforts can already be seen making a difference in the cities, villages and countryside of Haiti. I urge you to keep watching the news and keep reading newspapers. It is important to witness the reconstruction that you've helped. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Elizabeth Buhler

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I'm very proud to stand up in the House today to announce that a constituent of mine, Elizabeth Buhler, is now the oldest Canadian in the world. Mrs. Buhler is a resident of Salem Home in Winkler and celebrated her 111th birthday in February. She received the title of oldest Canadian when Mary Josephine Ray of Prince Edward Island sadly passed away at the age of 114.

Elizabeth Buhler was born on February the 8th, 1899, in the Ukraine. She married her husband on September the 7th of 1924 in Russia and emigrated

to Canada the following year with her parents and several other family members.

For many years, Mr. and Mrs. Buhler worked on their farm near Winkler until they left it to their son in 1956. In total, the Buhlers have one son, five daughters and a child that died at birth. When Mr. Buhler passed away at the age of 69, the couple had been married for 43 years, and now Mrs. Buhler has been a widow for almost the same period of time. Mrs. Buhler lived on her own in her own house in Winkler until shortly before her 107th birthday when she agreed to move into Salem Home.

The supercentenarian, who has lived in three different centuries, recognizes that the key to living a long life is exercise and a healthy diet. In fact, Mrs. Buhler has also been recognized for being the oldest participant to take part in a 10-kilometre fundraising walk.

She enjoys singing hymns in German that she learned as a girl and can still remember every word.

Many people who know Mrs. Buhler agree that they would not be surprised if she goes on to live a much longer life and possibly become the oldest—the world's oldest resident. Although both her sight and hearing have diminished over the years, four years ago Mrs. Buhler's doctor diagnosed her with having the heart strength of a 16-year-old.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to pay a short tribute to the long life that Elizabeth Buhler has had so far. Mrs. Buhler is an inspiration to all Canadians and a good example of what it takes to live a long and happy life. I would like to wish Elizabeth Buhler a happy belated 111th birthday and hope that she has many more birthdays to come. Thank you.

Montana Lehmann

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a remarkable talent in my constituency, who at the young age of 13 is well on her way to what most of us only dream of, fame and success on the theatre stage. Montana Lehmann has been singing, dancing and acting all her life. From busking with her grandfather at The Forks, Montana has quickly progressed to the big league, winning the Rainbow Stage Trophy and Scholarship in the recent 2010 Winnipeg musical festival over contestants almost twice her age. With upcoming performances in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in April, *The Little Mermaid* in June and Danny Schur's *Strike* in July and August, Montana's dream of becoming a musical theatre actress is clearly within reach.

This rising star practises hours each week to develop her talents, including one hour of voice lessons, six hours at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People studying Shakespeare and up to six hours at the Junior Musical Theatre Company.

Mr. Speaker, it is enormously encouraging to see home-grown talent of this calibre flourish. Manitoba has a vibrant theatre community where venues like Rainbow Stage, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Prairie Theatre Exchange and the Manitoba Theatre for Young People thrive along smaller independent theatre troupes.

Our province recognizes the importance of investing in the development of local performers by supporting Manitoba's theatre schools, hosting festivals and helping provide scholarships and grants through various organizations.

A special thank you goes to the supportive family of Montana Lehmann and the families of the many young performers like her, who selflessly drive their children to classes, watch their rehearsals with encouragement and show up devotedly to all their performances ready to clap and cheer.

I wish Montana Lehmann all the best in her burgeoning career. She has a bright future ahead of her, and I know this young lady has the talent, determination and spirit necessary to carry her far.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Education Week

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize this week as Education Week in Manitoba. I'd like to recognize the significant work that our teachers and support staff play in the growth of our province.

Our teachers and teachers' aides spend countless hours guiding and teaching our youth. They help shape our young people to be healthy, productive members of our communities. Our teachers impart inspiration to our youth to create and think about big ideas and these are the ideas that drive Manitoba forward. From early childhood educators, to our university professors, to our school trustees, as well as the staff that work beside them, there are thousands to recognize for the roles they play in our Manitoba education system.

I'd like particularly to note the important work that a school in my River Heights constituency is doing. Brock-Corydon School has proudly been a UNESCO associated school since 2003 and is

currently one of 16 UNESCO schools in Manitoba. The volume of creative and generous initiatives that pour from the minds of Brock-Corydon students is remarkable. They contribute to a gambit of charitable organizations including Haiti relief, UNICEF, Pennies from Heaven, Christmas Cheer Board, Ladybug Foundation, cans for Shriners, local day cares, Winnipeg Harvest and coats for Coats for Kids.

These young philanthropists are also forward-thinking environmentalists. In 2006, grade 5 students at Brock-Corydon established a volunteer club called the Environmental Action Team under the guidance of teacher Dorothy Goddard and Principal Udow. Currently the team boasts approximately 15 student volunteers who actively promote environmental awareness in the school.

It's inspiring that our local schools take such a proactive approach to student development, particularly encouraging environmental action. The work of Principal Udow, Mrs. Goddard, Ms. Edgar and the students is highly commendable and I'm proud to have such a dynamic school in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I still have a moment, so I want also to recognize Jonathan McGavock, assistant professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba and a research scientist at the Manitoba Institute of Child Health. Jonathan's been awarded the Cosmopolitan Foundation of Canada's annual award for diabetes research, which is worth 98,000. With this award he'll be studying the impact of physical aerobic exercise on insulin sensitivity. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BUDGET DEBATE

(Eighth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in amendment thereto, and the proposed motion of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) in subamendment thereto, in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), who has 19 minutes remaining.

* (14:40)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I think what I'm going to do is to continue on with the discussion that the member from Transcona and I were having, and that's to pick up on the point in terms of health care.

The government itself, Mr. Speaker, over the number of years, has spent a great deal of money in health care, and they've recognized that Manitobans believe that health care is the No. 1 priority and the government has put a great deal of money into that No. 1 priority.

Mr. Speaker, what I would challenge the government to start reflecting on is the ways in which they are actually spending that money in health care. You see, I ultimately believe that the greatest threat to health care is the way in which one manages change, and the greatest failure of this government to date has been its inability to manage the necessary changes that will improve the quality of health-care services.

When I canvassed my constituents, I found that half of them—more than half—believe that health-care services today are worse in general than they were back in 1999, and one could ask, well, how can that be when you look at the amount of money that we have put into health care since 1999?

It's now—makes up over \$4.5 billion. Back then, it was just over \$2 billion. Well, in part, Mr. Speaker, the—if you start to look at the way in which they're spending money, what you will see is the greatest growth area in health care is in health-care bureaucracy. So, in the comment that I made earlier to the member from Transcona, you know, today we likely have more nurses that are actually within bureaucracy than we have ever had, or pencil pushers.

That is, in essence, what I believe to be true because the bureaucracy has grown. Take a look at Logan Avenue. If you take a look at Logan and Main Street, you'll see a health-care bureaucracy at its best. Go a number of blocks west; on Logan and Keewatin, you'll see a building up for sale that used to be a clinic that served thousands of residents, most of which lived in Weston and Brooklands. For a few hundred thousand dollars, that clinic could have continued on in some form of a non-profit fashion, Mr. Speaker. We could have had health-care professionals working out of that clinic, but the government to date continues to turn a blind eye.

And, yes, the minister has told me now that, yeah, they're trying to do something in regards to it. Well, there's the difference. I would have guaranteed those residents, Mr. Speaker. These are people that live in the North End of Winnipeg that need health-care services, and there's no reason why the provincial government could not have guaranteed ongoing services of a walk-in or a community-based medical clinic.

You know, it wasn't that long ago when there was a budget that was presented, and NorWest health wasn't even mentioned in terms of their access centre. It wasn't until I brought it up in question period. Then the government started—first they kind of ignored it and then the second time, they said, okay, yes, yes, we'll go ahead with the accent centre, and they're still talking about going ahead with the access centre.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have, in the past, and will continue in the future, in whatever capacity, to ensure that the residents of Winnipeg North that live in Winnipeg's North End, are going to be well served at what I believe is the most important issue to them, and that is quality health-care services.

And that's why when this government cut back on emergency services in the Seven Oaks Hospital, Mr. Speaker, that I stood up in opposition to their actions. And no matter what and how the government tries to spread misinformation—provide misinformation to this Chamber—I know what the government okayed and sanctioned as being all right for in the Winnipeg regional health to take in terms of actions at the emergency services.

Yes, in certain areas there has been improvement at the Seven Oaks Hospital. It does have a wonderful, new emergency—24-hour emergency servicing centre there, Mr. Speaker, but some of those core services that used to be provided are not being provided and those are critical. These are the types of things that are important to people that live in the North End.

Mr. Speaker, what did this government do when the community police offices started to close in the North End of Winnipeg? They did nothing. They sat back. I raised the issue initially. There was an immediate response because it started to happen right after the last provincial election, and they didn't want to get embarrassed. So there was an immediate response that looked to be okay but, then, during the hours of some evening a year later, a decision was

made that we're going to shut down those community police offices.

And now we got a helicopter that's on the horizon, and we're doing some other things, but I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, those community police offices made a difference, and those are the types of things in which this government has been negligent on.

I drive down the North End of Winnipeg every day, and I see the conditions, and I know you, yourself, Mr. Speaker, someone that represents a North End area, cares about the residents in northwest—or north Winnipeg. Well, I, too, share in that care. I drive down and I see boarded-up residents' homes, commercial buildings. These are all things that government needs to put more energy in, more programming that's going to make a difference. We have too many children living in poverty in Winnipeg's North End, and it's time that this government take more of a concrete, tangible action. And if this government's not prepared to do and take the necessary action, that there will be other politicians in other areas that will do it.

I hope and trust, Mr. Speaker, that the residents of the North End Winnipeg will not be forgotten. This government has taken them for granted, and it's sad to see that. They've taken them for granted because they believe that they'll vote in NDP no matter what. Well, I'm here to tell the government that you should never take the people of Winnipeg north for granted. They deserve better and, I believe, ultimately, that the North End is a beautiful area of the city of Winnipeg, of our province, and it—there's a need to give it more attention.

This is a budget that does not benefit the residents of Winnipeg's North End in the long run, Mr. Speaker. Yes, when you spend \$10 billion there's going to be a lot of good things, and there are a lot of good things that are happening in Winnipeg's North End. But if there was more of a co-ordinated approach, a plan, that I believe that there would be even a better future for Winnipeg's North End, indeed, for all Manitobans.

And, on that particular note, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with members of this Chamber.

And I look forward to be able to continue the debates as the—as time quickly approaches on a wide variety of other bills, including the balanced budget legislation—balanced budget legislation that, I must

say, most Manitobans supported. But what we have found is the government continues to make the modifications to balanced budget legislation to the degree in which we are just creating a shell, an impression, a public impression that Manitoba has balanced budget legislation. But, in theory, when you compare the balanced budget legislation that we have today and the balanced budget legislation that this government is talking about, there is no comparison to what it actually was back in the late '90s.

And that's the balanced budget legislation that premier—or former premier Gary Doer said that he supported. That's the balanced budget legislation that the current Premier (Mr. Selinger) said that he supported. They are gutting it, and, ultimately, at the end of the day, all of us should be concerned about the long-term impact on the province of Manitoba with this particular budget. Thank you.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud to rise and speak in favour of this budget.

This is a tough year, Mr. Speaker, and we have not hid that from Manitobans. We've been very open and transparent about the challenges that we are facing as their provincial government. We've seen the governments across Canada, including the federal government and, indeed, around the world, who are struggling with some very difficult issues as they bring forward budgets, democratically elected governments as they bring forward budgets to attempt to meet the needs of the people, and our government is no different.

* (14:50)

Before I get into the specifics of our budget, I wanted to correct some of the comments from the member from Russell. He was saying that the CDs have not increased a—have not seen an increase over the last number of years. In fact, since 1999 to 2000 fiscal year, where they received two point—2.58 million, to the '09-10 budget where they received 5.615 million. That is more than a hundred percent increase.

Ms. Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

There has been more than 90 percent growth in the participation of municipalities in the CD program, and I welcome and thank all those CDs for working together on Manitoba's water. There has been an increase from 78 to 148 municipalities, if we put specific figures in there. And this has been accompanied by an increase of over a hundred

percent to 107 percent, Madam Deputy Speaker, so we are keeping up. There are challenges. We are looking to the CDs to do a lot of terrific work, which they are coming through with.

And one of the things that I also wanted to point out is external funding to CDs. So, on top of what they receive annually, they're also able to access monies from the Water Stewardship Fund and the Fisheries Enhancement Fund. Now, the Fisheries Enhancement Fund is a one-of-a-kind in North America, and we have increased funding since 1999 from \$300,000 to \$850,000, and that's working with the seven main fishing groups in the province of Manitoba. And they work on a proposal basis, and they are the ones who make the decision as to how those monies would be spent. So, again, thank you to them for their hard work, their very, very tough decision making, because we know they get a lot more proposals than they're able to respond to, but they do a very good job on that.

To fix all the errors in what has been stated by the member from Russell would take far more than the time allotted, so I'll just leave it at that and talk about our five-year economic plan. You know, members opposite say we don't have a plan. Well, they've said that since 1999 and, in fact, 10 balanced budgets tell you that we, in fact, had very good plans. This year, as we all know, things are a little different and, again, we've been very open and transparent on that. Our five-year economic plan is made up of five basic components: Investing in the vital front-line services that we know that Manitobans want and, indeed, Manitobans need; stimulating the economy, and I'll get into more detail on these; managing government spending—we're looking at different ways to reduce spending and to manage spending; restoring balance—we have the plan for five years; and keeping Manitoba affordable, because we want to make sure that families are able to be living in the province of Manitoba wherever they are and are able to afford staying in the communities that they've built, that they treasure and that they look forward to being a part of.

When we talk about education and training, just to reflect on some of the questions to my colleague the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) today, they were talking about cuts in education. Again, that's incorrect. Certainly, the provision of almost 3 percent for public schools increase this year shows our commitment, not only this year, but, if I may say, the former member—the former minister of Education saw unprecedented increases throughout all the

schools of Manitoba. And I do mean all the schools of Manitoba.

We have also seen this year, in post-secondary institutions, a 4.5 percent increase in operating costs. You know, a lot of organizations have special—have monies provided to them for special projects, special programs. We're talking about operating funding. We're talking about the base funding that really makes institutions work well. And this is money that people who are doing the planning—you know, there's a lot of tough planning going on in our schools, in the post-secondary institutions. This tells them what they will have every year. And to see an increase this year, I think is a very strong statement of faith in what they're doing and how they're developing the students of Manitoba and how they're providing education.

We've seen an increase in apprenticeship training support by \$2 million. And this is an area that we know we have shortfalls in, we know that we have—well, we're continuing to have the Manitoba economy moving forward. We know that we need trained apprentices. *[interjection]* Thank you. We need trained apprentices in all the skill sets, and it takes time and it takes a lot of effort. But our commitment is there, and our partnership is there for the folks who are literally building this province.

We continue to support Rebound, which is a program that helps low-income people learn new skills that lead to jobs. A lot of people are wanting to be contributing. I think most people want to be contributing. And we're trying to find a way to help people re-enter the job market or enter for the first time, and to let them know their government supports them and that we want to be part of the success that we know a lot of people will see when they do re-enter the work force.

We have allowed for tuition fee increases of 5 percent at universities and by \$150 a year at colleges. We also are trying to balance, even through the tough times, what institutions need to move forward and what students and families can afford because, as I mentioned before, underlying all our support for education is the understanding of the need for a trained population, a trained work force so that we can continue to be innovative and move forward.

We have created a new grant for students who need additional financial support to attend school. Grants are, as you know, not loans. They are, in fact, money that are given to students who are achieving

or who have achieved. Again, it's a statement of believing in people as they try to develop their educational prowess, and it's also a way of saying that we believe in them.

When we talk about new child-care spaces, this government has had an unprecedented record of creating child care. Again, we remain the only jurisdiction across Canada that has not-for-profit built into legislation, so that we know that the money is going into the care of the kids and not into lining private, for-profit pockets.

It was quite an unusual question from the former minister today about lining pockets. I'm still trying to figure that one out.

You know, workers work hard, child-care workers are no exception, and so creating a pension so that, at the end of the day, the child-care workers and support workers will have a pension to retire on is very important. And, as we know, the majority of child-care workers are women, and I think it's very appropriate to be creating pensions to make sure that women who have worked hard all their lives taking care of their own children, taking care of children in the family and taking care of children in the child-care centre will be able to live out their years in dignity, in safety. And that—the creation of the pension—goes a long way in providing that.

We're also dedicating resources to ongoing programs through the new Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy. I was very concerned when I learned that the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement was coming to an end. We've worked very hard. Various ministers, our previous premier, Premier Doer, and our current Premier (Mr. Selinger) has also worked very hard on this, and I want to congratulate all my colleagues for what I think will be a successful new program. It took a lot of 'stick-to-it-ness,' and I really appreciate that.

There's been a lot of talk about investments in addictions. The opposition are saying that we're cutting addictions and services. In fact, we know they're increasing. We've had the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) setting the record straight and putting the real information out on the *Hansard* and to the people of Manitoba.

Of course, health care, which is another area that we are focussed on that members opposite were not focussed on in the last election—and the member from Carman has tipped the hand of what they will not be focussing on in the next election, and that

does include health care. So that's not surprising. They're two for two. At least there's some consistency in their position, which is a nice, kind of a welcome relief.

We're providing more additional funding to train more doctors and nurses. Again, I believe we're up to 345 new doctors and in the thousands of new nurses since 1999. So, congratulations to the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and her team.

And, again, we go back to the education. We go back to supporting, you know, all the way from child-care centres up. It takes a lot to invest to have someone prepare to be a doctor and to be a specialist, and that has to be a lifetime journey.

I was very pleased to join with the women MLAs on this side of the House in the announcement of the birthing centre in south Winnipeg. We know that women and families are wanting to have several alternatives to bring their children into the world, and we know there's been a very positive response. I want to thank the women at Women's Health Clinic for doing this, particularly Madeline Boscoe, for whom it was a dream for decades. And, again, she is a lesson in 'stick-to-it-ness,' and I was very pleased to attend her farewell. She's leaving Manitoba to tend to some family issues on the West Coast. And I'd like to thank Madeline, and I know our entire caucus would like to thank her for her vision and her ability to help us make that centre open and to help us make that centre—collectively make that centre—a positive place for women and families to be.

* (15:00)

We have limited increases to the Pharmacare deductibles to the rate of inflation. This is very big, Madam Deputy Speaker. My own parents are seniors and, I know, appreciate the care that this government has shown. They are lifetime New Democrats and this is one of the reasons why, and I'm pleased in their senior years that they're able to see the benefit of a lot of their good work.

We're continuing to build a regional CancerCare centre and are upgrading the Westman Lab in Brandon. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are the government for all Manitobans, and we are working for the needs of all Manitobans wherever they are. And this another proof to that.

Constructing a new mental health crisis response centre and proceeding with the plans for the new Women's Hospital in Winnipeg; again, these are commitments that we did make some time ago. To

build a new facility there has to be the announcement, the planning of the structure, the partnership. All of this takes time, and I'm glad I'm part of the government that does take the time to get it right.

We have consolidated specialized services for children and youth with disabilities. I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that that the SKY Project, as many of us call it, has been a long-time vision, more so for parents of children with disabilities who have, for quite some time, let us know that they've been wanting to have one central place that is accessible for low-income families, that is accessible for people taking public bus routes, that is accessible to come and spend the day in one facility so that a child needing various services can, in fact, access those services in the one location.

And I think it's really tremendous. I worked on this when I was Minister of Family Services and I know my colleagues have worked on it as well, and I really look forward to the day that we have the official ribbon cutting. And I hope many, many of the families who are needing that service will be joining us that day.

When we talk about managing the economy to stimulate economic growth, I know members opposite think it's a bit of a joke and something to laugh at. We don't. We take it very seriously, which is why we are investing 1.8 billion in infrastructure spending. In fact, that will help to create 29,000 direct and indirect jobs and in low economic times, I've heard many economists say, it is—you know, when the private sector is having a rough time, a responsible government steps in and stimulates the economy. And that is exactly what we've done. So, again, I'd like to thank the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and my other colleagues who have worked, minister of MIT, minister of economic—CED minister—of various portfolios, who have seen this vision, know that this is what a responsible government does and, in fact, that is what we're doing.

There are always requests, and I think we saw one yesterday coming from the House, about pet projects that are wanted in their particular areas. One of the areas that I'm particularly interested in, as Minister of Water Stewardship and, I know, minister of MIT is, as well, and I know we share the concerns, actually, with the member from Morris, is PTH 75, north of Morris.

And this is an area that when that highway is closed, I believe industry has told us, can cost up to

\$250,000 a day. We know that that affects the Manitoba economy, we know that a big piece of growing the economy is ensuring that there is a route that you can go through, from the I-29, south of the 49th parallel into Manitoba and north into Winnipeg and beyond.

And so, we are very seriously going to be taking the consultations that the minister from MIT will be leading later this spring and into the summer, to find out what will be the plan to ensure that PTH 75 is open. And I'd like to take this opportunity, although this spring was not as concerning as last spring, there were a lot of concerns, particularly leading up to the snowfall. Luckily, we had the snow thaw—I mean, luckily we had an evaporative thaw, rather than a liquid thaw, and that reduced the water on the land and in the waterways greatly.

But I want to thank the members of my department, MIT, EMO, all of our partners north of Winnipeg, south of Winnipeg. I know I toured south of Winnipeg and north of Winnipeg and spoke to the mayors and reeves, and I want to thank them for all the preparatory work that they did. And I want Manitobans to know we have added more to our tool chest for fighting floods and high waters and ice jams and anything may come our way. And we'll continue to review what worked well and where we can improve and continue to work for the folks in Manitoba, throughout Manitoba.

Again, I want to bring to the attention of the House the open spirit of the corporation that owns the first Amphibex that was purchased. They have been very generous in allowing other communities to use the Amphibex when needed and I want to thank them for their continuing vision and good heart around that.

Some other areas that we're working on for highways is the Trans-Canada Highway east, PTH 2, PTH 6 north. So, again, all of Manitoba is in our view.

We're providing \$148 million to replace and repair bridges including the bridge at St. Adolphe, which has been a concern. We've taken action on that. We're looking at what the experts are telling us and respecting that and moving forward with the work that needs to be done there.

Certainly, we were all concerned, on this side of the House, for the all-weather roads in northern Manitoba this year, and there were some very serious days and moments when trucks and drivers were

actually stuck out on the—on what had been roads which had become sort of slushy pathways. And I want to thank those heroic souls who went to save individuals that they hadn't known. They went out in dangerous conditions to bring people back, and thank them. And, you know, sometimes we're told that certain people such as movie stars might be heroes, et cetera. I think it's the everyday people who, in difficult times, perform extraordinary actions for the good of all. And I would say that those folks who went out to retrieve the others who were stranded on the ice would certainly fit into that category.

We are constructing new schools in La Broquerie, Winkler and Steinbach. As everyone in the House knows, those are not traditional NDP strongholds, but they don't need to be for our government to be working with the communities, to be responding. Again, I go back to our commitment to education, right from new child-care spaces all the way up to specializing in a particular area in medicine, or whatever area of study an individual is interested in.

As I continue through our list, Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that there are a lot of other areas that we are focussing on. I was very, very pleased to hear the new Minister of Housing and community economic development talk about the 1,500 new social housing units that we will be seeing over the next five years. I know she's made some terrific announcements over the last few weeks. It's very exciting. And one of the most exciting parts of it is that people within the communities themselves, where the houses are being built, will be developing these skills. They will be developing, they will be building and perhaps even living in the homes that they've built. And there's nothing like a sense of accomplishment to build a sense of pride in the community and commitment to do more.

We are increasing the operating and capital investments in social housing by close to 10 percent, and, again, we're putting our money where our priorities are. And everyone needs a good home, and to be able to help people, again, develop and live happily in their new homes is really an achievement and is really a pillar of any society.

We are expanding the campgrounds at Asexippi, Winnipeg Beach and Wellman Lake. I know that members opposite were against the fact that we were not going to be charging Manitobans during this tough time to use their provincial parks. We want to make sure that—sure, it's not going to

make or break the bank for everybody to buy one of the \$20 passes or not but, again, it was an act of goodwill by this government to say, let's make sure that we're able to enjoy the simple things in life, like a provincial park, during good times and during bad times. *[interjection]*

So I hear the member, you know, heckling from across the way, but, again, we'll see how he votes. They voted against removing the fees last year. We'll see how they vote on social housing this year. We'll see how they vote on economic stimulus. We'll see how they vote on increases to education. We'll see that in a short time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Again, we're focussing, even on this time, to improve the environment. We're providing funds to reduce methane released from landfills in Brandon and Winnipeg. This is very important, Madam Deputy Speaker. I know that there are several other jurisdictions in Canada that are ahead of us, but we need to move forward on this and, indeed, we will.

*(15:10)

I'm very pleased that we are continuing to invest in restoring Delta Marsh and Netley-Libau Marsh. These are the two main wetlands in Manitoba and we want to work with community—in the scientific community and the local communities—to restore these wetlands. The scientists have told us that by restoring Delta Marsh—pardon me, Netley-Libau Marsh—we can reduce the impact of phosphorus loading on Lake Winnipeg by some—I believe it's 6 or 7 percent. Every percent counts, and to be able to reduce by that much through one project would really be very good. And I look forward to not only working on that but having that completed.

We have provided more support for flood forecasting equipment and operations and strengthening flood fighting abilities, which go back to the comments I made a little while ago—providing more support for municipalities—so it's interesting to see members opposite will vote against their own municipalities receiving more funding. And I wonder how they are going to legitimize that on the doorstep. You know, people aren't fooled. They know what's in the budget for them. They know what's in the budget for their communities. And they know how their member would vote. Again, I'll be very proud to stand and be counted in support for that.

More funds for public transportation and ambulance services in Winnipeg. This is very important. We know that a lot of low-income people

rely on the bus, take the bus, and the more affordable we can make that, the better that is for the quality of life for the Manitobans that we care about.

Also, providing more funds for the redevelopment of the Disraeli Freeway. Again, this is a big project. It's an important project. It's a project that, at the end of the day, will show benefits environmentally, because the quicker traffic can move through any roadway, the less stalling there will be, the less emissions there will be sent out into the atmosphere. So this is also very positive.

And we're working on infrastructure to pave the way for IKEA to come to Winnipeg. I think it's very, very positive that even in a time of difficult situations we still have places like IKEA. You know, they can go into just about any community they want in the world. I'm not sure how many stores they have now, but to be coming to Winnipeg at this time is a great vote of confidence. And I think it's—you know, they have a range of products, some higher end, some not so high end. But we know that they're quite an exciting and interesting organization to have within the province of Manitoba. I don't know what other provinces they're in, but I do know that they will be kind of a fun store to be at. And I welcome them and other investors to the province.

So, with those few remarks, perhaps I'll just finish today with congratulating the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) for a job very well done, and tell her how proud I am to be supporting her first budget.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Well, I'm always honoured to stand and speak in this House and today I'll be responding to this budget, Madam Deputy Speaker. But before I start I would—as my colleagues have done before—I would like to congratulate the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) on his election and taking his seat in this House. I think that we all are very privileged, every one of us that is an elected representative and has a seat in this Legislature, because there's very few people that have the honour of serving their communities as we do. So I think we always need to remember our roles, and when I look around at this wonderful, beautiful Chamber, I am always reminded of how important a job we all do here.

I want to also say I'm very proud to represent the constituency of Morris, which I have for the last

seven years, and I intend to do so for a longer period of time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I want to just make a few comments to what the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) had said. Yes, I'm very pleased that this government has looked at doing a hydraulic study for Highway 75. I remember, last year, speaking to the former minister for Infrastructure and suggesting to him that he should look at rerouting the Morris River north of Morris, because that was an option that was being put forward by members of the community and the municipal council. And I'm really glad—he said, that time, he really wasn't aware of that, but I'm really glad that he actually did have a look at doing that plan, because that, I think, will go a long way to providing a permanent solution for keeping Highway 75 open. And, yes, I think that keeping Highway 75 open is more of a priority for this government, in terms of CentrePort than it is for the good people of Morris. But it is nevertheless going to be a very positive thing for the community of Morris, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So I want to thank everybody that's worked hard on that and we look forward to some permanent solutions being found in a very timely manner and not just a study that's done and sits there for a long time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I also want to just say that I did a bit of a survey in my constituency, and, overwhelmingly, the surveys that come back told me some things about what people feel about this government. One thing is there has been—the question was: Is health care better today? And the answer overwhelming was, no, it is not. And as—I think it was the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) outlined that when you have \$4.5 billion now put into health care, over an increase from \$2.2 billion in 1999, that amount should have improved health care, but, sadly, it has not.

The other thing that my constituents are concerned about are the conditions of some of the PR roads, notwithstanding Highway 75 and Highway 2, but a lot of the other PR roads that have been neglected.

The growing debt is a major concern, a major concern to my constituents.

Good governance, which they rated this government as poor; my constituents rated the performance of this government as poor and they want good governance, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some of the other issues they brought up: Why are we being penalized—why are they bringing in these waste-water ejectors when they don't understand that transferring from title to title within a family is going to cost upwards to \$25,000? Also, drainage, the backlogs and permits that they're not able to get; new taxes on quotas, Madam Deputy Speaker; overall reduced budget for agriculture, and we see adult education being decreased in this province. And the town of Morris had an adult education centre but it was closed in 2003. They'd like to be able to get that back. But, basically, my constituents are concerned about big government, big spending and big brother attitude that we see with this government.

These are just a few of the comments from the survey that I did, but I also just want to say that I'm privileged and honoured to be the critic for Advanced Education, Manitoba Public Insurance and Workers Compensation Board, and I know that I will be able to work very closely with the ministers responsible for those areas, but certainly there are some challenges, Madam Deputy Speaker.

What we see in advanced education is a cash-starved post-secondary education system where there has been not enough funding put into universities, and they are now at a situation where they're basically starving to death and on life support, Madam Deputy Speaker. They need to be able to deliver the best education that they can so that our students can be well learned and be best and good in terms of the global structure. We can be the best centre of excellence for education, but I'm concerned when Dean Feltham of the Asper School of Business says that their school could be in jeopardy of losing their accreditation within five years because there's not sufficient funding to provide the things that are needed in the classrooms. That concerns me and the problem is this did not need to happen. If this government had looked very systematically at what needed to happen every year with education funding, we would not have found ourselves in the situation we find ourselves today. It is the NDP that have actually caused the crisis here.

I just want to say a little bit about MPI as well. The \$14-million boondoggle of these enhanced driver's licences, I know we spoke to many insurance people last night and they say it's a bust, Madam Deputy Speaker; no one wants them.

And a couple of the reasons why: They said, first of all, it takes too long to get them. Second of all,

why not get a passport? It's only a few dollars more, and, thirdly, they are very smart, figured it out, that what if I had to drive down to the United States but something happened back home and I had to fly back home immediately and I didn't have a passport. What would I do? They're smart enough to figure that out and just say, you know what? I'm going to choose to get a passport because I can use that anywhere, Madam Deputy Speaker.

*(15:20)

But Mr.—Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the biggest problem with this budget is the humungous debt load that it's going to place on our children and our grandchildren—unprecedented debt. When we see a deficit of \$550 million in one year, that is just unbelievable.

But this is all increased spending because they are predicting that they're going to get more money from personal income taxes. And we also know that taxation by stealth will net some more revenues, and by that I mean people are going to have to pay more for hydro; they're going to have to pay more for water; they have to pay more for camping. There's a tax on farm quotas. They got to pay more for cars, Madam Deputy Speaker. And yet at the same time, if people are having to pay more, there's been cuts—cuts to education. We just heard about a school closure. Cuts to children that are 'auditorially' impaired. Cuts to education. Cuts—the adult education centre in Portage la Prairie was closed.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we see a government that's out of touch with the reality. Here they are trying—increasing the deficit and debt so much in this province, trying to backfill that by stealth with stealth taxes and, at the same time, penalizing Manitobans for their waste and mismanagement and poor spending over the last many years.

We have to remind this government of the priority of Manitobans. Manitobans have overwhelmingly told us they're opposed to the \$640-million, west-side line going down the wrong side of the province. And let's make no mistake about it. When they try and say that they're going to form a memorandum of understanding with Saskatchewan, somehow they think that people are going to say, oh, that line goes so close to the Saskatchewan border, I guess they're going to sell line energy off that line to Saskatchewan. Well, let's just put that one to rest, Madam Deputy Speaker, because there's no off ramp on the power grid. That

power has to come all the way back, past east of Winnipeg and go all the way back. So that's just smoke and mirrors. It's just another area where they could place the priorities in the right place.

Another 350 for the city waste-water management system to remove nitrogen when scientists tell us that isn't a necessary thing. In fact, it could be more detrimental. But, no, this government chooses to forge on with that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

What is really disconcerting is the debt, Madam Deputy Speaker, at an all-time high, now over \$21 billion, and we're adding 2.3 billion more. That's 10 percent in one year. Just to put that in perspective, the interest rate on that amount of money is \$1,300 every single minute. With this debt, every man, woman and child in Manitoba now owes \$19,000, or, for a family of four, that's \$76,000.

Now, when you run deficits like this, you need to be held accountable. And when the balanced budget legislation was brought in, this was the reason, to make government spend within their means. And if they couldn't do that, they had to take a cut in the ministerial salary. But this government isn't prepared to do that. So they know what they have to do is they have to change the balanced budget legislation to allow them to keep their ministerial salaries.

Now, I know there's a lot of people out there that got photo radar tickets, that would love it if somebody could change the law so that they didn't have to pay the ticket, Madam Deputy Speaker. But that isn't going to happen. But what is going to happen is this government is going to change the law so that they can protect their own ministerial salaries on the backs of Manitoba taxpayers.

You know, increasing the size of the Cabinet, protecting ministers' salaries, wasteful spending and, at the same time, cuts to services for hearing-impaired children, cuts to adult education, cuts to addictions support, cuts to rural schools, cuts to agriculture. And, yet, Manitobans are going to have to pay more for hydro, they're going to have to pay more water, they're going to have to pay more for camping, they're going to have to pay more for cars, seniors are going to have to pay more for Pharmacare, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I think that this is really tragic. It's tragic that we see a government with misplaced priorities, the priority on their political success, as opposed to doing what is good for all Manitobans in this province.

They—you know, when I talk to families, families tell me, why is this government running up such a debt; I'm very concerned about that. Because they say, I know, in my family, when we have a debt, we need to tighten our belts, and we need to work through that and find a solution.

We know we have to tighten our belts. But this government doesn't know about tightening their belts. They don't understand what working Manitoba families have to do in situations when times are tough. They don't understand that, Madam Deputy Speaker. Instead, they burden families with this horrendous debt which is going to be on the backs of not only families today, but families tomorrow and in the next generation, as well, because there is point of no return. There is a point.

Now, what's going to happen? You know, we talked about federal transfer payments and, at some point, federal transfer payments are going to dry up, Madam Deputy Speaker and, at some point, interest rates are going to go up. And at that point, this government is going to be belly up because they will not be able to handle that situation because they didn't save for the good times when the times were good. They didn't save for the bad times. They didn't save for the bad times when times were good. Now the bad times are here, and now they've got to go into debt. Families know that's not how you do it, in your households. I don't think anybody in here thinks that they can just go borrow money endlessly and the bank's just going to give it to them. Because there's a limit, there's a point of no return.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a budget that is self-serving. I think it's the worst budget I've ever seen. It places such a burden of debt on Manitoba taxpayers. Its priorities are out of touch with Manitoba taxpayers. I cannot support this budget. Yes, I think there are some individual things in this budget that are noteworthy and could be supported, but we know that this is a bill—or a budget that has to be supported either with yes or no. And there's so many things that we cannot support; we cannot vote for decreases in services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot support this budget. As I said, there may be some good things in it, but because it has failed to address the priorities of Manitobans by forcing Manitoba families to pay higher hydro rates, higher water bills and a range of other hidden taxes in order to pay for three wasteful NDP pet projects, which are forcing Manitoba Hydro, against its advice, to build Bipole III on the

west-side route, costing Manitobans an extra 640 million and damaging the environment; and forcing the City of Winnipeg to remove nitrogen from its waste water, a decision that is expected to cost ratepayers an additional 350 million and which, respected scientists say, could be more harmful to the health of Lake Winnipeg; and forcing unwanted enhanced driver's licence on Manitobans, costing 14 million and creating a sinkhole of debt now at 23.4 billion and rising. As a result, Manitoba families will be forced to work longer hours at lower pay to pay off this bills in years ahead.

* (15:30)

And scrapping balanced budget law in order to allow the NDP to accrue massive deficits totalling 2.039 billion over the next decade putting social programs such as health care and education at risk, and failing to preserve front-line health-care services with innovative service delivery, emphasizing preventative care and reducing bloated bureaucracy, and failing to recognize the importance of agriculture and rural communities on our economy, and failing to offer a plan to encourage private investment to create opportunity and wealth, so Manitobans can feel that we will one day emerge from the hole of debt and dependency and see a brighter future, and all this at the same time that they're going to change the balanced budget legislation to protect their own salaries, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how much woe can a Wowchuk chuck?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

I just want to—I want to remind all members that we—in the House, we address members by their constituency or by their position and not by their names.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Yes. Well, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, we had a choice on this budget, and we decided that this budget should move Manitoba forward instead of drag us back to the 1990s.

The members opposite would have absorbed all of the negative impacts of the recession in one year by balancing the budget and forcing over \$545 million of cuts to services like health care, like Education, like Family Services, like Justice and all the other departments—Environment, Culture and Heritage. All of those other departments would have been whacked as well. That's their solution, and that

would have just dragged us further underneath in terms of economic growth.

They would have allegedly not increased any capital spending, because they don't like the concept of capital spending that requires any borrowing. So there would have been no hospitals built, no personal care homes built, no roads built, no schools built, no sewage treatment facilities built, no clean water facilities built. They would take us back to an environment, sort of a Hobbesian world of nasty, shortish and brute-nasty, brutish and short.

But in their view, they would have called that a budget where the revenues and the expenditures matched up with each other in one year, and they would have actually been out of sync with the entire planet—not to put too fine a point on it, Madam Deputy Speaker—because all of the economies in the developed world and all of the economies throughout the world have recognized that, because of what happened with the propeller heads that developed all these weird, exotic mortgage products and financial products all over the world, and then spread that risk everywhere without having any accountability for it, and generating this massive moral hazard which caused this enormous financial meltdown and forced government to have to step up to the plate—just like they did in the '30s when the same thing happened in places like Wall Street, where governments had to step up to the plate and find a way to reignite the economy so that people would have the opportunity to get back to work and to rebuild the essential assets that make for a strong community and a strong economy.

This time around governments all over the world, regardless of their political stripe, recognized they couldn't go back to the protectionist, deflationary, cut-at-all-costs Hobbesian, short, nasty and brutish approach to governing. And we've decided to take that lesson as well and to join with governments across North America, indeed across the entire world, to do things that will lift the economy up, which is why we've decided that we will focus on investing in front-line services; which is why we will have more doctors in Manitoba; which is why we will train and hire more nurses in Manitoba; which is why we're going forward on a mental health crisis response centre, which will provide unique services to people in those circumstances, and which is why, just recently, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and myself started dismantling the old Weston Bakery so that we could put in place a new women's hospital in Manitoba to

provide better services to women at that stage of life where they're having a new child.

And I will tell you that there are additional resources in this budget to help people to stay in school and to graduate from high school, which is why there's more money for the Brighter Futures fund. And we've put more child-care spaces in play, over 650 new child-care spaces in this budget, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I remember, in the '90s, when the members wouldn't fund a single additional child-care space. As a matter of fact, they were cutting child-care spaces and forcing working families to be in a crisis while they tried to earn a living for their families, in terms of child care, and it was a very dark time for working families in the '90s. And we're going to take a look at how we can put in place a pension scheme for child-care workers as well. And we've got some good ideas on how we can do that.

Children with—children and young adults with developmental disabilities who need to live in the community, there are more resources for those families and those people, as well, in this budget, and that budget—those resources have more than doubled over the last 10 years.

In Corrections, there's more corrections officers and, as the minister announced today, there will be more spaces with—inside our correctional facilities to provide security to the public. There will be more prosecutor positions. There will be more Lighthouses to allow young people to have alternatives to life on the streets, more recreational alternatives. And you know what? There's even going to be more recreational facilities at the University of Manitoba for groups like the Bisons and groups like—that want to play lacrosse and groups that want to do track. And even the Winnipeg Blue Bombers will have a better home as we move forward, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But let there be no mistake, 90 percent of all the additional spending in this budget will go on health, education, training and justice. And there will be, in health care, a new health innovation network because, every year, the people that are running our health-care system are looking for more effective ways to do it. We don't have to do the dramatic changes to Pharmacare that are occurring in other provinces on pharmacy fees, because we put in place best practices on how to use generic drugs and how to purchase generic drugs and to make sure that we got the best price on those several years back, which

has reduced the growth in health-care expenditure for drugs while expanding the number of drugs that are available for Manitobans, expanding the choices that they have.

And, of course, we're going to stimulate the economy. There's going to be \$1.8 billion of capital investment which will generate over 29,000 additional jobs in Manitoba. And, you know, a recession starts when somebody loses their job; 29,000 person-years of employment will allow many Manitobans to participate in the economy. They will get apprenticeship opportunities. They will get opportunities for additional training. Employers will get co-op education tax credits. All of those things will allow us to come out of this recession with better schools, better hospitals, better facilities on the justice side, better water and sewer, better streets, better highways.

There will be a wind power project in southern Manitoba around St. Joseph, \$345 million of investment in wind power in Manitoba at a time when we need to diversify our energy resources. And it will generate over 220 person-hours of additional employment.

What about housing? We've made a commitment to build over 1,500 new units of social housing. And this year alone we will build 400 additional units of social housing—in this year alone—all across Manitoba. And when I say all across Manitoba, I'm—Thompson, we're going to have 24 units there; Brandon, an additional 24 units there; in Winnipeg there will be additional units. And, throughout Manitoba, we will install new units of social housing, which will allow Manitobans to have a secure place to live. And we will do this as a way of not only generating jobs but in generating long-term assets for Manitoba.

The members opposite jump up and they say that we're spending too much at the same time as they put their list in front of all the new things they want to spend on us. On the one hand, they say we spend too much. On the other hand, they have their laundry list of things that we want to spend on, including new schools.

Well, I can tell you, we will maintain affordability in Manitoba. There's been over three quarters of a billion dollars of tax relief in this province since 1999. There has been no increase in the sales tax or personal tax rates. As a matter of fact, over the last decade they have gone down, which has allowed Manitobans to have more purchasing power.

The purchasing power and the disposable income of Manitobans has risen over the last decade, compared to the '90s where it actually declined. It's gone up in Manitoba over the last decade.

* (15:40)

And to encourage healthy living, we are expanding the fitness tax credit for people up to 24 years old, so that they can get more active and participate in their communities.

So we're moving Manitoba forward, Madam Deputy Speaker. We're moving Manitoba forward in such a way that when we come out of this recession we'll have a stronger economic base, we'll have a better trained work force, we'll have a better educated population and all of those things will allow the economy to grow more rapidly as we go forward in a way that will ensure our future prosperity.

Virtually—on addressing the issue of the imbalance between expenditure and revenue—virtually every province in this country has developed a multiyear plan to do that. We join them in developing that multiyear plan. We will come back into balance within five years. We will do that, while not having savaged our front-line services. We will do that without having laid off hundreds, literally thousands of civil servants. We will do that while continuing to invest in health care, and we will do that in such a way that when we lift out of the recession, we will lift out more quickly than other jurisdictions around the world. And that's why Canada has been a good country that has weathered this recession better than most. All the different levels of government have gotten together, whether municipal, provincial or federal, we've all worked together to do these infrastructure investments. We have actually collaborated together to get this done, and that is part of what we're all about in this country.

Now, members opposite, they spend all their time in this Legislature trying to figure out how things can't happen. They're the monkey wrench party. They're the party that doesn't want anything to happen, unless, of course, it's something specific to their constituency. But we do something that generates the overall Manitoba community, they always find a way to be against it. They don't want to do wind power. They don't want to build hydro-electricity in northern Manitoba. They don't want to build Keeyask. They don't want to build Conawapa. They don't want to build a bipole. They

don't want to have greater security for our hydro-electricity. They don't want Aboriginal people to get training and trade skills. They don't want to give more money to the public schools. They don't want to give more money to the universities, but then they complain that those facilities aren't being properly funded.

You know, at a certain point you actually have to square the circle. You actually have to have a plan that will move Manitoba forward. We have that plan. We will present it to Manitobans. We will show them how it will make us better off.

And when it comes to debt retirement, this is the first government since 1961-1962 that actually pays, every single year, the employer's contribution for teachers' pensions. This is the first government since 1961-62 that actually pays the employer's cost of contributions for civil servants' pensions. Those things were ignored in the past. Those things were just—let grow into large liabilities. By paying them every single year, we reduce that liability. We've reduced the future cost to future generations of people that are serving in the public sector, whether they're teachers, or civil servants, or nurses, or front-line workers in terms of Conservation officers. Those people will now have their pensions paid for on a go-forward base—basis every single year. And we will make additional contributions to the civil service pension plan and the teachers' pension plan, to allow those pensions to have security, to allow those people to know that when they finish their career of public service—where they're not allowed to make a profit—when they finish their career of public service, they can have a decent pension for the many years they've put in front of the public by offering themselves going forward.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that could have been done in the '90s. They had that choice. It was recommended to them that they do that. They ignored that advice. They kept those pension liabilities off the books. They buried them in the back of the Public Accounts. They didn't count them.

We also are going to pay down the debt. We're going to pay down the debt by 600 million bucks—more than what the opposite—members opposite would have done. And we will start that debt repayment this very year, so that when the stimulus program is over, when we rebalance the budget after five years, the net increase in debt due to shortfalls in deficits and operating expenditure will be about \$1.4 billion. That'll be the approximate amount.

All the other investments in terms of borrowing will go into hard assets. And, you know, members opposite like to say that we have increased the debt by \$10 billion. The debt is—net debt is \$14 billion. It's 27 percent of the GDP. It's smaller—it's smaller—than it was under the members opposite. Under them, it was 33 percent of the GDP, and they were spending 13-and-a-half cents on the dollar to service the debt. We are spending 6 cents on the dollar to service the debt; 6 cents on the dollar, which gives us the room to do the stimulus. The good financial stewardship of this government, over the last decade, has created the room to allow us to do the stimulus now which will allow the economy to grow. That's the plan. That's what we're going to do as we go forward. And, you know, I'm thinking that, as I look over this budget here, that the members opposite are not going to afford—they're not going to support strategic investments.

What are some of the strategic investments? CentrePort Way. It'll be a major investment in an inland terminal for rail, for airlines, for highways. All of those facilities will be able to come together and Manitoba will again become a hub of transportation, whether it's north or south, or east or west, or through the entire midwest of the United States. We are investing in that kind of infrastructure in Winnipeg on the Yellowhead Highway, south of Winnipeg on Highway 75.

We're going to prevent—invest \$43 million to upgrade drinking water and waste-water treatment systems. We're going to invest in infrastructure to develop the retail sector in Manitoba, including at Polo Park and including at the IKEA store. And we're going to invest in highways in record amounts to improve our public transportation system in this province.

And, by the way, we restored the cutbacks of the '90s. The Province pays 50 percent of the cost of public transportation operating expenditures in the city of Winnipeg. They had reduced that to a hard fixed grant in the '90s and all the incremental costs were paid by the City of Winnipeg. We're now a full partner on public transportation, whether it be in Thompson, whether it be in Brandon, whether it be in Winnipeg, we're paying 50 percent of the cost of that.

And when you look at our community colleges, the Len Evans Centre for Trades, it's moving ahead very aggressively in Brandon. It's going to provide a doubling of the opportunity for trades there.

I was just up in Thompson, Manitoba, where we're expanding the University College of the North. There's going to be a doubling of the opportunity for trades and apprenticeships in northern Manitoba. There's going to be more opportunities for northerners to get those skills so they can build those hydro dams and build other opportunities in the north which will lead to prosperity for all of us.

On the innovation file we've enhanced the research and development tax credit up to 20 percent. Now we're making a portion of it refundable for organizations and businesses that do collaborative research with universities. And then we're going to move beyond that to have other forms of refundability under the innovation file because Manitoba businesses, Manitoba young people, in record numbers, are developing products and services which can be exported all around the world. We have a strong innovation culture in Manitoba and we want to strengthen that and market those products all over the world.

Just the other day, I heard of a small software company in Manitoba that had developed some applications that could be used on various cellphones and smartphones and we hooked them up with an opportunity in Québec where they came back with a half-a-million-dollar contract. They came back with a half-a-million-dollar contract after one major visit to a trade show down there for products that are being developed right here in Manitoba. That's how we're going to grow the economy with our young people.

Our new media tax credit is one of the best in the country and, again this year, our film tax credit, under the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk), went on a total spend, up to 30 percent, which allows the film industry to remain innovative in Manitoba and competitive.

So all of those things lead to an innovation culture in this province and those are the kinds of things that we're going to do that will allow us to move forward.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are many other points I'd like to put forward in this budget and if you give me another half hour I'll do that, but the real point that I want to make is, is that we actually have a vision for moving this province forward.

And we're going to strengthen that vision starting tonight with the Premier's Economic

Advisory Council which will be meeting—they will be meeting at the Hotel Fort Garry, over 125 of Manitoba's best entrepreneurs, over—Manitoba's best community economic developers, best educators are getting together to look at how we can further our green energy agenda, to look at how we can further our innovation agenda, to look at how we can retain and continue to allow youth to generate entrepreneurial opportunities in this province. And they will come out of there with a series of ideas, like they did a decade ago, that will fuel our vision for the future in this province. And it will be a positive vision built on getting things done, built on making sure that we move forward and built on ensuring that, even with our immigration program, that we move from the 2,000 we were bringing into this province in the early—and the late '90s—we're up to 13,700 this year.

*(15:50)

As a matter of fact, last year's incoming population to this province, at over 17,000, was the highest growth of population in over 40 years, right here in Manitoba in the middle of a recession.

And you know what? In the last decade we've increased the number of newcomers to Manitoba by over 90,000 people. That's more than the population of Brandon, more than the population of Portage la Prairie, more than the population of Thompson combined—combined. You take all of those urban areas and put them together and we've brought more people to Manitoba than all of those urban areas combined.

And we will continue to find ways to bring newcomers to Manitoba. Over 140 countries brought people to Manitoba last year. We will have one of the best provincial immigration programs in the country. This will strengthen our population base. We will work with them on settlement services, to get them into jobs, to get them into schools, to get their qualifications recognized through our Fairness Commissioner in the Department of Labour and Immigration. And all of those things will make for a prosperous tomorrow as we bring more young people to Manitoba, as we bring more entrepreneurs to invest in Manitoba. We will expand the economy and we will do it in such a way that we provide those public services that allows everybody to live here in dignity and worth. That's what this government's about and that's what we will do going forward. Thank you.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I am pleased to rise and put a few words on the record today in favour of the Leader of the Opposition's amendments that he brought forward to this budget. And, certainly, I will be putting on the record today the numerous reasons why I will be opposing the budget as it stands. And those reasons are numerous, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But before I get into the actual budget debate, there are a few things that I would like to say and, like all colleagues in the Legislature have mentioned in their response to the Budget Address, I want to welcome the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) to the Manitoba Legislature. I can recall some almost 10 years ago, when I first came into the Legislature, and members from all sides of the House were welcoming. Debates have their time and their place and, of course, we're always here to debate, but we're always here in a respectful way for those who are elected in a free and democratic process to this Manitoba Legislature. So I want to welcome the member for Concordia here and we look forward to the many debates and, I'm sure, the many years ahead that we will have the opportunity to debate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I also want to take this chance to thank my constituents for instilling in me their confidence in me to carry forward their issues in this Manitoba Legislature. It has been many years now. And, certainly, in the last little while, where I've had the opportunity to talk to a number of constituents of mine about this budget and the number of concerns that they have raised with me about this budget, and so I will be bringing those forward. And really, my constituency represents—it's called Tuxedo, but it represents three constituencies really. We've got our three areas: River Heights—a little bit of River Heights, a little bit of Charleswood as well as the—as well as Tuxedo. And I think it's important to remember that in these—in our individual communities that we represent, there are a diverse number of issues that are brought forward. And I think we need to be respectful of those issues that are brought forward by our constituents in our communities, whatever—wherever we may represent, whether it be in rural Manitoba or in the city of Winnipeg. I think we need to be respectful that each constituency has its own individual needs and issues that will be brought forward in the Manitoba Legislature.

So, with that, I just want to thank my constituents for bringing many issues forward and I

certainly will, over the course of this session, be asking questions of the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) and others on their behalf in this Manitoba Legislature.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank the staff in the Department of Finance who put these documents together for us, the budget documents. Of course they are working with—they can only work with the tools that are given to them by this Minister of Finance and the Premier (Mr. Selinger), and I think they do the best job that they can to work with the unfortunate situation that we're placed with as far as our economy here in Manitoba. And so, I just want to thank them for all the hard work that they do for us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP government is continuing with their wasteful spending. This Budget 2010 was an opportunity for the NDP to reverse these wasteful decisions and I think when we talk about wasteful decisions that are being made, it's very difficult to talk about them without mentioning the Bipole III line and their decision to force Manitoba Hydro to put this bipole line down the west side of our province, a decision that will cost some—upwards of—and \$640 million plus more than—for ratepayers of Manitoba Hydro and for taxpayers of Manitoba. And we believe that it's a wrong decision, that they should reverse that decision, but that's an example of sort of the wasteful decisions that they've made over the years, and why we're sitting in a situation of being laden with debts that we are today. And so that's just one example.

Another example, Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, is the decision to force the City of Winnipeg to remove nitrogen from their waste-water treatment, a decision that would cost the ratepayers and taxpayers of Winnipeg and Manitoba upwards of \$350 million.

And these are the kinds of decisions that are being made by this government that are wasting taxpayers' money, that are increasing the debt, that will ultimately fall upon future generations to pay off. And I think it's unfortunate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the total personal taxes and costs for the following individuals and families went up as follows: the cost for a single person making \$30,000 a year actually went up. Despite what members opposite say, it went up by \$207. The cost for a single-earner family of four making \$40,000 went up by \$775. And I think it's important

for members opposite to listen to this because this is a number of their constituents, my constituents. These are the tax dollars that are being—these are the dollars that are going up and being taken out of their pockets.

Costs for a single-earner family of four making \$60,000 a year went up \$781. Costs for a two-earner family of four with an income of \$60,000 went up \$797, Madam Deputy Speaker, and costs for a single person making \$50,000 a year went up \$744. So, when the Minister of Finance likes to say that she's putting more pockets in Manitobans, she's not.

And so these are the facts, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I suggest that she and members opposite reconsider how they will vote on this budget based on the misinformation that has been put on the record by members opposite.

This budget isn't following through in the NDP's promise to cut taxes. The government is failing to deliver on the promises it made in the '09—or '08-09 budget, about its five-year plan to reduce personal income taxes by 2011, specifically, the first rate of 10.5 percent and to increase the cutoff to \$35,000, among other commitments. The NDP are not reducing the corporate income tax rate from 12 to 11 percent as promised. And we aren't seeing the scheduled increase from 75 percent to 80 percent for the farmland school tax credits. And those are just a few examples, Madam Deputy Speaker, of some broken promises that this government has made.

* (16:00)

The Manitobans also, Madam Deputy Speaker, remain the highest-taxed Canadians in the west. And the NDP are forecasting an increase in personal income tax revenue of 708—of \$78 million but not by expanding the tax base but by increasing taxes for existing taxpayers of Manitoba. And that's what was seen already in the examples of those single-earner families, single-income families that I was talking about earlier, and the increases to the individuals out there. So it's rather unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, the deficit is being driven by—this deficit is being driven by overspending in this government. This is a government of spend more, get less. We see that they are cutting many essential services out there. We've been—we brought these forward, the Leader of the Opposition and members of our caucus and members of the Liberal Party, have brought forward issues in this Manitoba

Legislature of where this Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) and members opposite and the Cabinet have decided to cut spending in certain areas where they cut essential services in certain areas that have dramatically negative impact on Manitobans.

So, again, the NDP are going to be rewriting the balanced budget legislation again, yes, to further erode the original intent of the legislation. The rationale, Mr. Speaker, is to apparently restore balance over five years but, really, we know what it's all about is that this government has an out-of-control spending problem and they are unable to get that in control and, as a result, our debt is on the rise and this government will be running deficits for the next five years.

So it's unfortunate that other provinces, Mr. Speaker, have plans to balance their budgets much sooner than Manitoba, and it's unfortunate that this government—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Finance is questioning that, but Manitoba doesn't have a plan to return to surplus budgets until 2014, and even then there really is no plan in place to really eliminate those deficits. From what we can see we're talking—if we look at the bipole line, if we look at nitrogen removal, if we look at all of the wasteful decisions that will impact us in the future, I suggest that there isn't a real plan for eliminating the deficit in our province.

If we look at Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan is forecasting a core government surplus for 2010-11 budget year. So—Alberta will return to a surplus budget by 2012, and B.C. is planning to be back to a surplus budget by 2013. So, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is just wrong when she says that we are ahead of other provinces in that area, and those are just minor examples. Mr. Speaker, this budget does not contain a vision at all for Manitoban—for Manitoba. While Manitoba didn't see the same decreases in GDP experienced by other jurisdictions, in 2010-11 Manitoba will be at the back of the pack in terms of GDP growth. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the Manitoba economy contracted by 0.7 percent in 2009, behind P.E.I., Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and our real GDP growth will rank seventh in 2010 at 2 percent and eight in 2011 at 2.4 percent.

The 2010 budget doesn't lay out a plan for Manitoba's economic growth or a road map for where the province is headed in the next five or

10 years, let alone the next year, Mr. Speaker. The NDP squandered 10 years of unprecedented transfer payments and failed to move our province forward and now they aren't prepared to deal with economic challenges.

During the NDP leadership race last fall, one of the candidates said that, and I quote: When I'm sitting down in a room with Stephen Harper I'm going to make Manitoba's situation look as dire as I possibly can to get every possible cent out of the feds. End quote. This candidate has since been promoted in Cabinet and is our Attorney General. This is the philosophy of Manitoba's NDP and it is not the philosophy of members on our side of the House. Our Leader of the Opposition has said many times, and members on our side of the House have said many times we need to reduce the dependency on the federal government. We need to reduce the dependency on those transfer payments from the federal government.

We have—in this government, this NDP government, is increased that dependency over the years, Mr. Speaker. They've gone in the wrong direction. And we've come through some pretty good economic times over the past decade under this NDP government's watch, but rather than choose to reduce the dependency on the federal government to put us in line with Saskatchewan, who is now a have province and is no longer dependent on the federal government for transfer payments—a place where I think we could be today had there been a government at the time that made the bold decisions and the tough decisions that needed to be made and reduce those dependent—that dependency on the federal government for transfer payments. But, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the government saw fit to spend the money on various pet projects of theirs rather than try and reduce that dependency on the federal government for transfer payments.

So fast forward 10 years, here we are, and we are still a have not province with no plan and no vision by this NDP government to take us out of that status of being dependent on the federal government for these transfer payments. It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because I believe strongly we could have been there today had those tough decisions been there over the last decade by this NDP government.

But, once again, it's the tax-and-spend government; it is the spend-more, get-less government in this province, the—this NDP government that sees—that just cannot possibly

curtail their spending, that they have to—they go out spend, spend, spend and, unfortunately, the people that will be forced to pay for it are our children and grandchildren by the way of the increase in debt in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to—just as I mention the debt of our province—our debt is skyrocketing, and the province's total debt now is 23.42 billion, the summary debt, up from 21.167 billion in 2009; this is a \$2.25-billion increase in one year. And had this government adhered to the Filmon government's debt retirement plan, we would have retired—and I know members opposite love to go back to the 1990s and talk about the 1990s. But had the—had this government actually adhered to the retirement—or the debt retirement plan, we would have retired over a billion dollars in debt rather than adding almost \$10 billion to our debt.

So it's easy to govern in good times, but, unfortunately, this government didn't make as much of the good times as it should have, and their mantra is spend, spend, spend instead of choosing to save and to pay down the debt. And it's unfortunate because that, of course, will be left for future generations to pay it down.

Mr. Speaker, the other day, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) had boasted—and as a matter of fact, actually, in his Budget Address, he boasted that Manitoba's debt is—represents 27 percent of the size of our economy. If we compare and contrast that with Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan's core debt, as a percentage of GDP, is 7.3 percent. And Saskatchewan, by the way, has put in place a debt retirement strategy and Saskatchewan is forecasting their debt-to-GDP ratio to go down to 5.7 percent by 2014.

And what's unfortunate that we see here is, yet again, we fall behind our neighbouring Saskatchewan. Not only are our taxes higher, not only have more—not only is more money being taken out of the pockets of Manitoban than our neighbouring Saskatchewan, but we're in a worse off situation for future generations that are going to be forced to pay for this government's inability to manage the fiscal house in our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, even when we look at the summary debt and summary budget, we will—Saskatchewan's debt-to-GDP ratio is 14.3 percent, and if we compare that to Manitoba, including Crowns and other reporting agencies in its

debt-to-GDP calculation, it would be comprised of 45 percent of our total economy would be debt.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why members opposite don't understand what this means to future generations in our province. It is unbelievable that they would leave this burden to their own children and grandchildren just because they can't help themselves to go out and spend more money than they have. So I think it's extremely unfortunate.

And, Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on for hours about the several reasons why I cannot support this budget, but, of course, time is limited and I think members on this side of the House have already expressed many of the things that I would also express in terms of my concerns with respect to this budget, with respect to my constituents' concerns in this budget.

*(16:10)

It's unfortunate that we're falling behind many other provinces, but, in particular, I look to our neighbouring Saskatchewan, where 10 years ago, when I first came—or almost 10 years ago—when I first came into the Manitoba Legislature, Saskatchewan was actually worse off than Manitoba. And fast forward 10 years, 10 years of NDP government mismanagement and here we are today with the situation that we're in is falling further behind Saskatchewan. We're depending more on the federal government and other provinces for our—for the spending problem that this NDP government has and we're going to lace our—we're going to leave our future generations with a huge amount of debt to pay off. And really what it is is it's like mortgaging our kids' future. And it's unfortunate that these—the NDP government is so narrow-sighted and only looking at the next day ahead of them, and rather than looking into the future and preparing Manitoba for the future, rather than doing that, they're just looking at quick ways that they can pay for their next pet project.

So I think it's under—it's extremely unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because there were huge opportunities that this government had and they squandered those opportunities. So, for many reasons, I am unable to support this budget, and members opposite have said nothing in their budget addresses that has convinced me otherwise. As a matter of fact, they've said several things that just further convinced me that we on this side of the House are making the right decision in not supporting this budget.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, I think a budget that—this budget fails to address the priorities of Manitobans. And I go to the amendment that was brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) that this—that it fails to address the priorities of Manitobans by forcing Manitoba families to pay higher hydro rates, higher water bills and a range of other hidden taxes in order to pay for three wasteful NDP pet projects, which I've already mentioned. It's creating a sinkhole of debt now at 23.4 billion and rising. As a result, Manitoba families will be forced to work longer hours at lower pay to pay off this bill in years ahead. And scrapping balanced budget laws in order to allow the NDP to accrue massive deficits totalling over \$2 billion in the next half decade, putting social programs such as health care and education at risk and failing to preserve front-line health-care services with innovative service delivery emphasizing preventative care and reducing bloated bureaucracy and failing to recognize the importance of agriculture and rural communities to the economy and a whole host of other things, while at the same time they are going to be introducing balanced budget—reintroducing balanced budget legislation and opening that act up again only to line the pockets of the Cabinet ministers opposite.

So we believe the NDP's priorities are completely out of sync with Manitobans, and for those reasons we have no choice, Mr. Speaker, but to vote against this budget.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by thanking you for your guidance. This certainly has been a raunchy session that we've had so far, and you've had to use your discipline because the members opposite have not been able to raise any issues, so they rather choose to disrupt the House and you have had to deal with that, and I thank you for that.

I also want to take a minute before I comment on the speech to welcome our newest colleague, the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) here to the House, and I hope that the ruckus that he has seen in this House over this first couple of weeks of his life here won't taint his view of this House because this is an honourable institute to be serving in.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that I take offence when people keep talking about Manitoba being a have not province. I am so proud of this province and I would hope that members opposite, I hope once in a while members opposite would talk

about the good things that are happening in this province.

Mr. Speaker, just look at what we have done for innovation in the food industry with the Food Development Centre, the centre—the Richardson Centre—the research centre at St. Boniface—it's recognized around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we are indeed leaders in innovation and I want to pay tribute to our farmers, our colonies, who have always been leaders in innovation. We just have to look back at the work that has done—been done in Canola at our universities that has put Manitoba on the world map. Our biodiesel and our ethanol mandates are the first in the country—

An Honourable Member: In Canada.

Ms. Wowchuk:—first in Canada. People are leading in that area. Our University of Manitoba is lead—recognized around the world for their courses for things like their jazz program—best in the world, in this province. Our infectious lab, disease lab, is recognized around the world.

So would the members opposite just continue to want to slap Manitoba down? They continue to refuse—recognize that Canada, as a nation, has always had a program of transfer payments. And, you know, the members opposite will also not recognize that we spend two to three billion dollars a year on fuel—fossil fuels, that are then gone—go to the federal government, go to Alberta. Manitoba pays their fair share, Mr. Speaker. And I ask the members opposite, once in a while, to stand up and be proud of this province instead of trying to beat it into the ground.

An Honourable Member: Stand up for Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Stand up—help Manitoba move into the future, instead of pushing it back into the '90s where you would send them.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I was asked what I was proud of—most proud of about this budget. And I want to tell you I am most proud of the fact that before we put this budget together I had the opportunity, and I took the opportunity, to listen to Manitobans, to hear what their priorities were. During the prebudget consultations, people told me what they wanted, what they expected, and their wishes and their desires. And their hope for the future is reflected in this budget. And I will always listen to Manitobans first, as we put this—put our budgets together.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is indeed, as I said—others have said, it has been a challenging time to put a budget together. But I want to reflect on what my critic also said. She said that what we should be doing is remembering the Filmon government debt retirement plan. We will never forget the Filmon government debt retirement plan. What was the Filmon government debt retirement plan?

An Honourable Member: To sell off all the assets.

Ms. Wowchuk: To sell off the Manitoba Telephone System, so that your friends could make a profit, Mr. Speaker. Have education funded at zero, zero and minus two—that's the Conservative record, Mr. Speaker. The Conservatives fired *[inaudible]* thousands of nurses. They cut the number of doctors that were going to be trained. They did absolutely nothing to stimulate the economy, and it's taken a decade to address some of those challenges and have the people trained, that the members opposite would not address.

And should—my critic, the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), said that we should be following the Filmon debt retirement plan. No, Mr. Speaker, ours is a different plan. Ours is a better plan. Our plan is Manitoba's five-year economic plan, a plan that is going to take Manitoba into the future. Because this plan is going to invest in those front-line services that are so important to people: Our health care, our education, our training, policing, supports to families, and increasing funding to schools higher than they've got funding for universities, because we recognize the value of education and of training. We won't take the Tory plan.

* (16:20)

Mr. Speaker, we are also going to invest, as we committed, in stimulating the economy, investing in roads and infrastructure, giving people jobs; 29,000 people will work because of the \$1.2 billion that we are going to invest in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, but at the same time, we recognize that we have to management—manage government spending, and that's what we are doing. We're managing government spending at the same time as we are training more doctors and nurses, at the same time we're increasing funding to universities and schools, at the same time as we continue to build on regional cancer care centres, at the same time as we fund the helicopter operations—that seem to be very important to members opposite—and we are

providing more police officers, prosecutors and additional Lighthouse projects. We are listening to the people, and we are supporting services.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that there are challenges, and that's why there are pressures on some of the departments. That's why some departments—half the departments will have less money to operate on, and, that's what the opposite—members opposite are criticizing of us. The members opposite are criticizing us because we are making some decisions about how we can control spending. But we have done that, as I said, we have decreased budgets in half of the government departments. We've made a decision on front-line services, and we are directing 90 percent of new spending to health, education, training, family services and justice. All people services—people services, front-line services will be maintained.

We have made a decision that we will reduce Cabinet ministers' salary. Despite the fact that this budget balances, we want to send the message to Manitobans that we, too, have a responsibility to help restrain costs, and that's why we're doing what we are. And we are also—have also said that we are—when we negotiate new contracts for the public sector, we are asking the public sector to consider a pause, Mr. Speaker.

All of these, Mr. Speaker, are very important steps, and we will continue to keep Manitoba an affordable place to live. I heard the member opposite talk about Saskatchewan. Well, I would remind her to read what Saskatchewan said, and in their budget address they said that Manitoba was more affordable than Saskatchewan as a place to live than—in any one of the categories in Saskatchewan.

But she has—she's very selective. She's very selective on what and what she says, and, certainly, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite also talked about how slow Manitoba's economy was going to grow. Well, it only stands to reason, if your economy only goes down a small amount in comparison to other jurisdictions, it's not going to rise as much either. And I'm very happy that Manitoba has a very diverse economy—very diverse economy—that has farming, forestry, mining, and many other sectors and innovation that keeps us more on a steady balance than other jurisdictions that—than—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, there are two—we know we are no different than other jurisdictions, no different than the federal government or any other province in Canada. We are no different. All jurisdictions have

faced the consequences of the recession. All jurisdictions have said they will have to run a deficit, and all jurisdictions have a plan—talk about a plan to move on. Federal government says it'll take them about six years. Ontario says it'll take them about seven years. We have said we will have our province back into balance in five years.

The members opposite would like us to stay within the existing balanced budget legislation, and that would mean, Mr. Speaker, we would have to increase taxes. We would have to cut services. We would have to fire nurses like the members opposite did. We would have to quit training doctors. We'd have to quit building roads or those schools and other things that the members opposite are asking for. All of that is what would have to happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have chosen a different path, and we will continue on that different path in order to maintain services for people.

I would ask the members opposite to read about what the banking industry has said about our budget. Certainly, they said, each of banks, whether it's the Scotia Bank, TD Bank, Bank of Montreal, all have said that Manitoba—one of them has said: Manitoba's economy is not immune to the great recession but has fared comparably well vis-à-vis the other jurisdictions. Bank of Montreal: Manitoba's well-diversified economy and solid recovery projections, combined with other spending declines, should allow the province to grow in a way—its way out with a small deficit, Mr. Speaker.

You have to—the members opposite are again doom and gloom when it comes to our deficit—

An Honourable Member: Doom and gloom.

Ms. Wowchuk: Doom and gloom. They forget and they don't want to talk about the '90s. They never want to talk about the '90s and their record. But I have to tell you, their record is much different, more doom and gloom, than what they're trying to project there.

By the end of 2010-11, our net debt-to-GDP is projected to be 26.8 percent, or, in other terms, it's 33 percent lower than it was in 1999, when at that time, it was 32.9 percent. Don't like to hear about that. I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that they were also spending more money on servicing the public debt when they were in power. When the Conservatives were in power, it was—they were spending 13 cents on every dollar, servicing the debt. Today, it is 6 cents on every dollar.

And I want to say and I want to pay tribute to my Premier (Mr. Selinger) and my predecessor for the work that he did in the years that he was in as the Minister of Finance, for the steps that he took to reduce our debt, to pay down our debt.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, even though the members opposite are against our plan that we are putting forward and they are against our plan to amend balanced budget legislation, this plan will pay the debt down at a greater rate than it would have been under the previous plan.

Now the members opposite say we didn't save money for this kind of day. Well, I remind you, Mr. Speaker, under our time in office, the rainy day fund, the stabilization fund, went to over \$800 million, and we didn't sell a Crown corporation to get it there. We got it there by good management and planning, and now we are using that money in a way that will allow us to continue to provide services for people, continue to pay down the debt, and, yes, we will make changes to balanced budget legislation. We will make changes because we will make it a better piece of legislation. It will be a better piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the fact that we are able to put \$1.8 billion into stimulus. Members opposite talked about not meeting all of our tax commitments. Just as in your household, sometimes you have to make decisions, to defer decisions, we have had to make decisions to defer some of the increases in taxes that we had said we would make in previous years.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward. We're moving forward on wind development. We are moving forward on hydro development. We are making investments. We are making investments into the economy that will result in 80–\$20 billion in revenue over the next 20 years to move our economy forward. And, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, in this budget—we have money in this budget to put in place for the stadium which is very important to the people.

We are moving the economy forward. We are going to a PEAC conference this evening with business people from across the province—the Premier's Economic Advisory Council. We will have some—

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 32(6), I'm interrupting the proceedings to put the questions necessary to dispose of the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government and all amendments to that motion.

Therefore, the question before the House is the proposed subamendment of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in the favour of the subamendment, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you can see if there's will to have a recorded vote on it.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have support for a recorded vote? If there is support, would members please rise, because we need four members to qualify it for a recorded vote.

The honourable member does not have support. So I declare the subamendment lost, and I now will move on to the amendment. Order, please.

Okay, the question before the House now is the proposed amendment moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) to the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of amendment, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is the proposed amendment moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Division

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

Yeas

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Fauschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Nays

Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Blaikie, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wowchuk.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 20, Nays 35.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote.

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

Order. The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Blaikie, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wowchuk.

Nays

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Fauschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

* (16:40)

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 35, Nays 20.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

House Business

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to announce that the previously scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for Thursday, April 15th, will now take place on Tuesday, April the 20th, at 7 o'clock. The committee will still be considering the Auditor General's 2009 follow-up report with the same witnesses as previously announced.

And on another point of order when you are ready, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Just for the information of the honourable Government House Leader, you don't need a point of order when you're dealing with House business; you are the House leader. So I will announce this back first please.

It's been announced that the previously scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for Thursday, April 15th, will now take place on Tuesday, April 20th, at 7. The committee will still be considering the Auditor General's 2009 follow-up report with the same witnesses as previously announced.

* * *

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if you'd be willing to canvass the House to see if there was unanimous consent to call it five o'clock.

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

Yes, it's been agreed.

Okay. So, the hour now being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Garden Valley School Division Dyck; Allan	766
Bill 21–The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immobilizers and Air Bags)		Balanced Budget Legislation	
Ashton	761	Stefanson; Wowchuk	767
		Lamoureux; Wowchuk	770
Petitions		Manitoba Hydro	
Waste-Water Ejector Systems		Mitchelson; Wowchuk	768
Maguire	761		
PTH 15–Twinning		Pension Benefits Amendment Act	
Schuler	762	Dyck; Howard	769
Ophthalmology Services–Swan River		Correction Facilities	
Driedger	762	Whitehead; Swan	772
Education Funding		Members' Statements	
Graydon	762	Kristen McLean	
Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area		Hawranik	772
Lamoureux	763	Shamrock School Haiti Donation	
Mount Agassiz Ski Area		Selby	773
Briese	763	Elizabeth Buhler	
Whiteshell Provincial Park–Lagoons		Dyck	773
Stefanson	763	Montana Lehmann	
Tabling of Reports		Braun	774
Health, Supplemental Information for Legislative Review–Departmental Expenditure Estimates, 2010-2011		Education Week	
Oswald	764	Gerrard	774
Family Services and Consumer Affairs, Supplementary Information for Legislative Review–Departmental Expenditure Estimates, 2010-2011		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Mackintosh	764	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Water Stewardship, Supplementary Information for Legislative Review–Departmental Expenditure Estimates, 2010-2011		Budget Debate (Eighth Day of Debate)	
Melnick	764	Lamoureux	775
Oral Questions		Melnick	777
Budget		Taillieu	781
McFadyen; Selinger	764	Selinger	784
		Stefanson	789
		Wowchuk	792

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