

**First Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
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	St. Norbert	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 24, 2011

*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, and 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.

For the information of members of the Assembly, I just wish to inform you that there was an error in the printing of the Legislature *Hansard* from Friday last, and that the new version will be available shortly for members.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### Point of Order

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

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, I'm seeking some clarification from you, Mr. Speaker. You just indicated that there was an error in the *Hansard* transcription. Could you perhaps point to that error so that we can look at it, because we're not exactly sure what you're referring to.

**Mr. Speaker:** A few moments ago, I was advised that there was an error in the printing. I have—I am not personally aware of exactly what that error was at this point in time, but I will endeavour to get that information and make it available to you.

### PETITIONS

#### PTH 16 and PTH 5 North—Traffic Signals

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The junction of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north is an increasingly busy intersection which is used by motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Town of Neepawa has raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about safety levels at this intersection.

The Town of Neepawa has also passed a resolution requesting that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation install traffic lights at this intersection in order to increase safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider making the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north a priority project in order to help protect the safety of motorists and pedestrians who use it.

This petition is signed by C. Malfait, B. Clark, E. Nicholson and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

#### Newborn Universal Hearing Screening Program

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

More than three in 1,000 newborns are born with educationally significant hearing loss, but Manitoba's current hearing screening program does not allow for every child to be screened.

Without early detection, children are more likely to develop poor speech and language skills and also encounter social and emotional difficulties, which leads to poor academic performance.

Early diagnosis of hearing loss in newborns can make a considerable difference in a child's development because newborns can be provided with effective programs and supports that foster developmental success.

While most other development-developed countries and many Canadian provinces have a newborn screening program, Manitoba is lagging

behind. There are only a handful of screening programs in the province, while all other newborns can only be tested if they have risk factors of hearing loss or if a parent specifically requests a test.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors to consider implementing a universal hearing screening program accessible to parents of all newborns in Manitoba.

This petition is signed by J. Naismith, C. Clark, G. McCarthy and many, many other concerned Manitobans.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, for the information of Assembly members, we have with us here today seated in the public gallery from Laidlaw School, 32 grades 5 and 6 students, under the direction of Mr. John Matas. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And also in the public gallery, we have seated students from Ashern Central School, 11 grade 11 students, under the direction of Mr. Paul Armitage. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here to the Manitoba Legislature.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Manitoba Hydro

#### Expenditures Review and Project Updates

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** About four weeks ago, on September the 27th, a memo was written from Manitoba senior vice-Manitoba Hydro senior vice-president of power supply, and that memo said, and I quote, that drastic actions need to be taken to reduce expenditures over the next two years. The memo outlines a series of cuts, reductions and slowdowns in all of Hydro's major capital projects. The memo instructs staff to, quote, mothball projects and delay spending. Included in the delays is work on Keeyask and Conawapa.

By contrast, Mr. Speaker, just last week, three weeks after that memo, this government's Throne

Speech claimed that the projects are moving full steam ahead.

I just want to ask the Premier: Which is it? Is Hydro building these projects or is it mothballing them?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the projects are moving ahead. The memo written by the senior vice-president was looking for efficiencies and cost savings that could be deferred this year as part of the normal capital planning process they do. But none of the in-service dates are in any way affected for bringing these projects online with the \$7 billion of additional contracts that have been signed by Manitoba Hydro.

\*(13:40)

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the memo drafted by the senior VP is anything but routine. It says that we need to—it's clear we need to take drastic actions to reduce expenditures. Then it goes out—and it goes on to lay out every major project: Keeyask—delay all expenditures as much as possible; Conawapa—delay all expenditures as much as possible; Pointe du Bois Spillway—defer to 2016; Riel Converter Station—delay all expenditures as much as possible; Ontario Firm Import Upgrade—defer by five years; HVDC projects—defer or delay; Dorsey relay project—look at possibility of deferring; ESD projects, Kelsey Generating Station—defer installation; Great Falls—delay awarding of all further contracts for three to four years; Pine Falls—delay awarding all further contracts for three to four years; Pointe du Bois—delay awarding all further contracts for three to four years and mothball the project.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier who is correct, the senior vice-president of Hydro in his internal memo to staff or what this Premier says to the public of Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the boss of the senior vice-president said this is just good management of resources. It's very traditional every fall as they move through the midpoint of the capital program, that the senior vice-presidents review with their staff where savings and efficiencies can be gained in the capital planning process for Manitoba Hydro.

The in-service days are in no way affected for the major projects that are going to be built, including Keeyask, including the bipole, including moving forward on Conawapa. But they are looking for efficiencies that can be gained in-year on their capital planning projects because then those

efficiencies can be used for the priorities that need to be moved on, and the priorities that are going to be moved on are the ones that we've talked about so extensively in the Legislature, in the public: Keeyask, Conawapa and the bipole.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, he's been—they've been talking about bipole for 12 years and they haven't even filed their application for an environmental licence.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is this: the memo in reference to the Pointe du Bois Spillway replacement says defer in-service date to 2016, and when you go back and you look at Hydro's capital plans, it says that the Pointe du Bois Spillway replacement is required because the dam does not currently meet dam safety guidelines with respect to spillway capacity. The work is required because of basic safety guidelines not being met at Pointe du Bois and now they're talking about a delay in that project of the in-service date to 2016.

I want to ask the Premier why it is that on a matter related to basic safety, he's delaying projects.

**Mr. Selinger:** The—there—it is true that Manitoba Hydro bought Winnipeg Hydro, and with that they got assets such as Pointe du Bois, and those assets are in need of some upgrades, and they will be done to ensure that continued—the continued safety, security and reliability of the generation assets that are there.

But the reality is that in every regular cycle of a budget and a capital planning process, senior managers in Hydro go back to their staff on a regular basis, and this happens virtually every year, and middle managers are very aware of this process. They ask them to identify things that they might be able to defer and not have to do this year in order to achieve savings within the capital budget process and then as they move forward they renew their capital planning lines of authority for capital. They seek new authority and if authority can be made available for higher priorities, they reallocate it. This is called good management, and I'm glad Manitoba Hydro is following through on that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** On a new question, the Premier refers to it in his words as good management, and here's what the memo dated September the 27th, 2011 says: It says executive committee is just finalizing a review of this year's capital expenditure forecast and it is clear that we need to take drastic actions to reduce expenditures in the next two years.

How can the Premier claim good management at the same time as the senior VP says that drastic actions are needed to be taken to reduce expenditures over the next two years?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the answer remains the same. They review their projects. They identify where savings can be achieved and where deferrals can be made with the objective of meeting the in-service dates for the contracts which they have signed.

I remind the member that he was one—when the term sheet was signed, he indicated that it was done on the back of a napkin and that it really wasn't worth the napkin it was written on. The reality is the term sheet was converted into a firm contract for sales, and these sales now require more energy to be generated in Manitoba through new generating capacities and new transmission facilities.

And Hydro's committed to delivering on that in an efficient a way as possible, which is why they have these types of capital reviews at the mid-course in an annual budgeting process.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the power sale agreements that he refers to were smaller, later and worth less money than what they originally announced a couple of years ago.

And perhaps that is why they are in a position, because of problems within the US economy, and we don't blame them for what's happening in the US economy, but Hydro is adapting to that reality of reduced revenue coming out of the US economy and talking about delays.

And that's why we are wondering why the disconnect between what's happening internally at Hydro where they talk about delays and expenditure reductions on a drastic scale at the same time as this Premier is sending the exact opposite message publicly to the people of Manitoba.

And I want to ask him: Is this just a repeat of what he did on Crocus: one message privately, a different message for the public?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad we're slipping back into the old habits that occurred before the election. And I can say to the member opposite, that the—this government will be building Manitoba Hydro with Manitoba Hydro for the benefit of all Manitobans.

We won't be tying it up in litigation. We won't be tying it up in red tape. We won't be micromanaging it from our seats in the Legislature like the member opposite would like to do, with telling them where they should put things.

The reality is this: Senior managers were reviewing the capital budgeting process to see where efficiencies can be gained. They have a commitment to delivering on signed contracts for new power, something the member opposite never believed in, was—threw cold water on when he first heard about it, was very skeptical and dismissive of it. They followed through of converting term sheets into signed contracts. Now they're going to follow through on building it.

We won't do what they did in the '90s, which was mothball Conawapa and put us into over a decade of do nothing on Hydro.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the trouble is that everything that comes from this Premier and this government is talk, but when you match it up with reality and action, it's a 180-degree difference from what he says publicly to what's actually happening at Hydro and in the province.

We've had a downturn in the US economy. The contracts they're looking at are worth less, they're delayed and they're smaller than what was originally announced. In fact, the value of the contracts is worth less than what the planned expenditures are on the capital program.

And the Premier has said and has made a lot of announcements with respect to Hydro, but the reality is all they do is talk. They said 12 years ago they were going to build bipole. They haven't even applied for an environmental licence.

He accuses others of being the mothball party, but let's read the memo from his own VP of Hydro. It says here on page 2, Great Falls, delay awarding all further contracts for three to four years, receive ordered equipment and mothball it. That's what it says in their own Hydro memo, 12 years after being elected, in writing, four weeks ago. Mothball the project.

Why doesn't he acknowledge today, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to Hydro, all he does is talk, when in reality he's the leader of the Hydro mothball party?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member raising this memo, because if he would have read it

thoroughly, they're looking for efficiencies while, quote, protecting the fall 2025 in-service date on Conawapa, on Keewatinoow, Riel converter stations, while maintaining the 2017 in-service date for the bipole. If he would have read the memo thoroughly and not parse the words and the language like he always does to make the point that's not really contained in the memo, he would have noticed that they're trying to achieve efficiencies while protecting in-service dates.

Will the member now apologize for misleading the public once again on Manitoba Hydro?

\* (13:50)

### **Assiniboine River Flooding Financial Compensation Timeline**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, in response to our call for a flood response review, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said in the press on Saturday: If anybody, for whatever reason, feels they have not had an opportunity to get the programs that they need, we encourage all members of the Legislature to give us those names and we'll follow up with them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've given him names in individual letters, and there's been no response. In August I wrote a letter on behalf of Mr. Gilles Ponsin whose farmland was destroyed because it was used as a borrow pit to build the Assiniboine River dikes. His livelihood is gone this year and likely next year. The Premier said we're moving rapidly, but Mr. Ponsin has heard nothing from this government and he needs to know what will happen for next year. He needs to support his family.

When will this government either restore Mr. Ponsin's farmland to pre-borrow pit condition or compensate him for his lost income?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Clearly, we've made absolute—we've made it absolutely clear to everyone that whether you talk on a general basis in terms of approaching the people of Manitoba with our programs that we would be thorough, or whether we had individual cases to follow up, we'd be thorough on that as well. From that last week some names were brought forward; they've already been followed up on, and we'll do the same with this instance as well.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, I've written letters. All of the summer I spent writing letters on behalf of people who lived along the Assiniboine River dikes

whose land was either used or destroyed. They understand, of course, that it was an emergency situation and it needed to be done, but they were assured that they were going to be compensated. Another name for the Premier, maybe he remembers standing in Mr. Willi Foth's farmyard while heavy equipment was destroying the yard, putting his hand on his shoulder and saying, don't worry, Willie, we'll take care of you. Well, that didn't happen. That did not happen. The Premier did not keep his word.

When will this Premier, will this government, restore Mr. Foth's property or compensate him for his loss?

**Mr. Struthers:** Mr. Speaker, when our Premier said that we would have a compensation package and it would be a comprehensive one based on the needs of Manitobans, we came through with that. When our Premier said we were going to build a channel to help regulate Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, we have shown that we are coming through on that as well.

Every time there's an individual case that comes up that needs to have follow-up, I make sure that people from the department of—the—of MAFRI have followed up on those suggestions, followed up on those requests, because we—our commitment has been very clear, that we don't want a Manitoban who deserves to be part of these programs to be left out. We'll make sure we follow up.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I attended a meeting in the RM of Cartier last Thursday, and there's a lot of confusion about what programs are available to people for what things. This government says it's acted quickly but it has not acted quickly. There's still many people out there searching for answers.

Will this government, Mr. Speaker, establish an office to deal with compensation for the Assiniboine River diking project to assist those whose properties were used to build those dikes? Will he do it today? Will he follow up on that with all of those people?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I really want to say that I'm proud of the folks in the civil service in a number of different departments who worked very hard to make sure that the announcements that we have made of the programs that we've announced are available to the Manitobans who deserved that kind of attention. We've also made sure that we follow up on any names, whether they're brought here to the floor of

the House or whether they are in letters or whether in conversations that we have in the hallways.

However we need to act to serve our constituents, we're committed to doing that. If it takes another briefing with members opposite so that they understand, too, the compensation programs that we've announced, we'd be more than happy to do that as well.

### **Spruce Woods Provincial Park Flood Damage and Clean-Up**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** Mr. Speaker, early this spring I wrote to the Minister of Conservation warning of potential high water for Spruce Woods Provincial Park, which is located along the Assiniboine River. The minister indicated in his response that dikes were being built and the campground and infrastructure should be protected. The fact of the matter: The HESCO barriers that were erected were washed over and washed out on two separate occasions. Due to this government's inability to protect the park on two separate occasions, considerable damage was done.

Mr. Speaker, at this point no action has been taken in cleaning up the park. I ask the government: Why are they dragging their feet on this file?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** I think the member's more than aware of the huge challenge we faced this past spring. Yes, indeed, the HESCO barriers that were put in place were overwhelmed. I think the member's aware that we saw historic flooding in that area, one-in-300-year flooding, and I think he would also acknowledge that a lot of the work that was put in place, particularly on the Assiniboine dikes in around Brandon, later on at the Souris River, and the work that we're doing right now to bring down the levels to Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin did work. And I hope he would acknowledge the fine work that's been done by many dedicated staff, many contractors, many engineers throughout the province.

And what we're dealing with right now, Mr. Speaker, as we still fight the flood, is we're also dealing with cleanup. Indeed, this is one of the areas. We're dealing with infrastructure, restoring infrastructure; it's a huge challenge, and again I think we should put on the record thanks from all Manitobans for the work that's been taking place 24-7 over months and months and months, first dealing with floods, which we're still dealing with

and now building with—rebuilding our parks and our infrastructure.

**Mr. Cullen:** During concurrence in the spring and during the flood, I asked the Premier (Mr. Selinger) his perspective on cleanup of the park. His response, and I quote, as soon as the water's out of there, to clean it up, obviously, that would be our priority.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here we are months later, the water has receded and there's been no action taken. The clock is ticking, winter will be here soon, and we risk missing yet another season at the park because of the inaction of this government. The community and campers around the province wonder when they can expect answers from this government.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, I want to stress again, Mr. Speaker, we're still fighting the flood. What has been particularly unique this year is the degree to which we've had an unprecedented situation across the province. We had a record number of municipalities with states of emergency. We had very significant impacts on our infrastructure, and many Manitobans are still not back home.

Mr. Speaker, we're still dealing with that flood, and our priorities as we proceed over the next period of time are indeed, yes, to rebuild the infrastructure in our parks system, but also to build—to rebuild our critical infrastructure. I remind the member of the pressure coming from other colleagues of his on the other side of the House for critical infrastructure. That, indeed, is a priority as well.

I want to assure the member we fought the flood by working together, Mr. Speaker, and we will rebuild working together. It's going to be a significant effort. There's much more work yet to be done, but we will do it by working together.

**Mr. Cullen:** It's pretty clear decisions have to be made and this government is not making decisions. Mr. Speaker, not only are neighbouring communities being impacted but businesses operating within the park are being impacted by their closure. The government has refused to deal with these businesses. Instead they are getting the runaround from various departments.

Mr. Speaker, I table a letter sent to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) back in August by some of the business owners, signed by Cheryl and Henry Booy who have a business at Spruce Woods Park, and quite clearly they've been dramatically impacted by the closure of the park.

And I ask: Why is this government refusing to do with—deal with these businesses in a very appropriate matter?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Conservation):** In my role as acting Conservation Minister, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to advise the member that, in point of fact, 16 provincial parks were affected by flood damage and efforts to actually be in reparations could not occur until after flood waters had receded. And assessments are, in fact, have been under way, and we are in the process of issuing tenders for several of those projects and anticipate that the spruce park will be repaired and back functioning in 2012.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the unprecedented efforts of all Manitobans, the army, the Province, civil servants and others, to deal with the flood of the—the greatest flood in the recorded history of that part of Manitoba, has been outstanding, and we are doing our part to work with all participants to ensure that that park and other parks are up and running for the 2012 season.

\* (14:00)

#### **Brandon University Strike Mediator Appointment**

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** The faculty of Brandon University is now about to enter the third week of a strike. Students and their parents are becoming increasingly distressed at the impact this strike is having. Some students are in the final year at Brandon University, and this is the second strike they have had to work through their—through during their studies. Students fear they will lose an entire semester's work of their education, an education they have already paid for.

Can the Minister of Advanced Education indicate whether her government will act in the best interest of students and appoint a mediator?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** I thank the member for the question, and let me welcome him to the Chamber as well.

Mr. Speaker, we know this is a difficult time for students. We know that their families, of course, as well, want to see them back in the classroom, as do we. And that is why I can inform the member that the Brandon University Faculty Association did request a mediator, in writing, this morning, specifically asking for Michael Werier, and as of



noon today I can inform the House that Minister of Labour appointed Mr. Werier as the mediator.

**Mr. Helwer:** Can the Minister of Advanced Education explain why it took her government nearly two weeks of academic time to appoint a mediator and move to reconciliation?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I'd like to welcome the member for Brandon West to the House, and I'm sure he'll have a successful time here. I wish him all the best in his time here.

I would just like to take the opportunity to clarify for the House how we've been participating through this.

The first thing that we did was to appoint a conciliator, who's been working with the parties. Our efforts are to ensure that the parties can talk at the table and can come a successful collective agreement. That conciliation has been ongoing.

At some point in time, it became clear that we needed to move to the next step, which was mediation. I was informed this weekend that they would be looking for a mediator. We moved immediately to secure a mediator and, today, I've signed letters appointing Michael Werier as the mediator. And I hope, as I'm sure he does, that Mr. Werier's efforts will be successful, an agreement will come to conclusion and everybody can get back to work and school in Brandon.

**Mr. Helwer:** Mr. Speaker, this strike, the second in three years, can have a devastating effect on students, their studies and the reputation of this fine university. These students have invested their time and their money into their education in the hopes of bettering Brandon and our province. Now they are left with uncertainty and the potential of losing their entire semester.

What plans are in place to ensure that students are able to meet the requirements to earn their degree should this strike go on much longer?

**Ms. Selby:** I thank the member for his question, and understand his concern as is everyone's concern at this time.

We would like to see the students where they want to be, back in their classroom. I would point out to the member that the parties are both speaking, and the best thing we can hope for is that they come to a conclusion quickly and get the students back in the classrooms where we know they want to be.

But, also, I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that no term has ever been cancelled at Brandon University because of a labour dispute. There is flexibility that the university has and, at this point, early on, we are confident that the students hopefully will be back in the classroom very shortly. But, in other cases, the university has been able to compress some courses, extend the semester if need be, or even change the times of the exam.

But, as I said, Mr. Speaker, at this point we still remain hopeful that students will be back in the classroom, as we know they want to be, and we want to see them there.

### **Moose Population Restoration Plan**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, the moose population in some parts of Manitoba has been decimated. According to a recent survey, in game hunting area 14 and 14A moose numbers plummeted from 2,480 in 1992 to only 148 animals to date. This NDP government has been warned for years of the declining moose numbers in game hunting area 26 in eastern Manitoba. First Nations, Métis, trappers, the Manitoba Wildlife Federation and licensed hunters fear moose numbers are declining to the point of possible endangered status.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Conservation admit that he wouldn't need to be investing in a moose population restoration plan if this government had managed the moose population properly in the first place?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I also welcome him to the House. I thought the question was presented in an articulate fashion, a little bit of fall-off in the end in terms of blame.

Mr. Speaker, I think that he raises a valid concern, which is one of the reasons why the Department of Conservation has been able to negotiate with those on the western side of the province with respect to a ban on the moose population and are working on the eastern side as well to achieve the same goals.

So I think both the Wildlife Federation, First Nations and all parties concerned have the interest of the preservation of the population in Manitoba in mind. We've taken action on the east—on the west side and are in the process of finalizing some action on the east side through consultations, and I'm sure

the member will welcome that and the continuation of those consultations as they in fact take place as we speak.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Mr. Speaker, stakeholders have repeatedly warned moose populations are declining. This NDP government even admitted on May 26th, 2011 that if populations decline further, there's a risk that they will not recover. In my region, moose populations in GHA 26 have fallen from 1,600 to 800 animals. On September 8th, 2011, Manitoba Wildlife Federation president, Reid Woods, wrote this government requesting a conservation closure in GHA 26. No action was taken.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Conservation needs to step up to the plate. Will he commit today to using temporary conservation closures in game hunting area 26 to help protect vulnerable moose populations?

**Mr. Chomiak:** And again, Mr. Speaker, I—there is an acute appreciation of the difficulty and the declining populations across the province, and, in fact, we are on the process of dealing with local communities and those otherwise affected with respect to a ban in order to maintain the populations as they are as well as providing resources—some resources in the area to deal with alternative methods of expanding and maintaining the existing population. There is no doubt that we are at some very serious low levels, some historical low levels, and we have taken action. We are in the process of doing that, and I can ask the member to just stay tuned as there will be further announcements and developments in the very near future in regard to the—sustaining the moose population.

#### **Diabetes Diagnoses Reduction Strategies**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, in 12 years under this government, tens of thousands of Manitobans have developed diabetes because of this government's shameful neglect of the diabetes epidemic.

Does this government not care about the devastation this causes to people's lives, the deaths and the hundreds of millions of dollars of extra costs that the Province has to occur in order to treat the diabetes? Why is this government so callous about wasting human potential? Why does the government not have an effective approach to reversing the diabetes epidemic?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** The member should note that we do actually have a number of chronic disease projects all across Manitoba to address issues like diabetes. And, as a matter of fact, we've set up the Department of Healthy Living to stimulate all kinds of activity throughout Manitoba to change lifestyles and to encourage people to adopt lifestyle practices which will prevent chronic disease developing in their lives, including diabetes. He knows that. We have a separate department for it for the first time in the history of the province, separate deputy minister and separate Estimates and very significant investments being made through the RHAs and through many of the non-profit organizations that we partner with to prevent and mitigate diabetes.

So we have some specialized health clinics as well, including the Youville health clinic, which specializes in diabetes prevention and treatment in Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerrard:** And the toll in lives continues to go up. In Manitoba today, there's an unconscionable number of lives who are lost because of diabetes. Diabetes is cruel in the miseries that it causes before it kills. It's a No. 1 cause of blindness. It's the No. 1 cause of kidney failure. It's the No. 1 cause of peripheral vascular disease and amputation. As this epidemic has galloped forward, the Premier has ignored it in Throne Speech after Throne Speech, in budget speech after budget speech.

Why did the Premier once again in this year's Throne Speech not mention, let alone 'priorize', addressing the tragic and expensive diabetes epidemic in Manitoba?

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Selinger:** I hope the member did pay attention to the Throne Speech where we said we are going to move on things like having a primary health care physician available to all Manitobans so they can get access at the community level, close to where they live, to the kind of medical care which will give them the advice they need to prevent chronic disease developing in their lives, like diabetes. That's exactly what we promised in the Throne Speech.

The member will also know that, unlike a decade ago, we have over 900 community gardening projects in northern Manitoba so people can have access to healthy food. These are the kinds—these kinds of initiatives make an enormous difference in people's lives, when they can have access to locally

grown, healthy vegetables as part of their lifestyle. And we've moved on those projects with the leadership of local communities.

We've also hired 3,000 more nurses in communities all around Manitoba and over 250—over 300 more doctors around Manitoba. And we have specialized services for diabetes prevention as well as more services for dialysis, more services to have access to medications, including the best medications that help people manage diabetes so they can retain and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, and the toll in human suffering and lost lives goes up and up.

Mr. Speaker, dramatic reductions in new cases of diabetes are possible if one treats this as an epidemic and provides an adequate preventive approach. And yet in a list of the top 98 public health priorities, the A to Z list that this government provides, diabetes is not even mentioned. Diabetes is not mentioned nor 'priorized.' How could this Premier have so completely ignored diabetes?

I ask the Premier: Was his government just incompetent or does his government not really care about people with diabetes?

**Mr. Selinger:** I thank the member for the question again, and he will know that every single year in our budget we have put additional resources in, not only for health care but for community development projects which allow communities to grow their own vegetables and have access to healthy foods.

And he will also know that we had an all-party task force in this legislation which made a number of recommendations, including more physical activity programs for young people both inside and outside of schools. He will also know we've made very significant investments in recreation facilities all across Manitoba—all across Manitoba, whether it's community clubs, whether it's arenas, whether it's facilities that allow people to participate at all stages of their lives in physical activity in a congregate way together so that they can maintain healthy lifestyles.

And as I go around the province and I visit senior centres, I see congregate meal programs. I see nutrition programs that are being mounted at the community level by nurses from the regional health authorities.

There are so many initiatives. I'd be happy to give a detailed list to the member opposite of the things we're doing in partnership with local citizens

and in local communities to ensure that they retain and can maintain and turn around and have a healthy lifestyle in Manitoba.

### **Health-Care Services Diagnostic Machine Upgrades**

**Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, we know health care is the top priority for Manitoba families and that an important part of meeting the needs of patients is ensuring they get a timely and accurate diagnosis, with testing available close to home. Every day that goes by waiting for a diagnosis can be difficult, and I'm sure all members of this House have a loved one who has been in that situation.

Can the Minister of Health please provide an update on what government is doing to improve health care in Manitoba, especially when it comes to getting patients faster diagnoses?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I'm very proud to inform the House that we committed this morning \$120 million over the next four years to provide new and upgraded medical equipment, Mr. Speaker, throughout the province. We know that this, of course, will—[interjection] How can you be grumpy about faster diagnosis? It really escapes me.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this announcement, of course, includes a new MRI machine at Grace Hospital, where we were very pleased to make the announcement. It will include a new MRI machine in Selkirk and in Dauphin. It's going to include new high-tech ultrasound equipment for fetal assessment at Health Sciences Centre and, indeed, the new women's hospital. And it will include upgraded diagnostic equipment around the province that will not only provide greater resolution in the scans but will also provide even faster service. Thank you.

### **Upper Assiniboine Valley Producers Request for Government Meeting**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** And I guess I'll say I'll believe it when I see it, Mr. Speaker, and I'll segue into this.

On June 1st, 2011, the minister responsible for EMO told the House, and I quote: We're going to continue to work with those municipalities and the affected people. When it comes to floods, we fight together.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this NDP government, why we are hearing a much different

story in many parts of the province where we have severely affected communities by flood waters this past spring and summer. What I'm hearing is that there is much confusion and concern among agriculture producers as to what is available in programs and compensation packages for the flooding and devastation. The upper Assiniboine Valley producers have requested a meeting with government departments several times, and they have been ignored.

Why is this NDP government reluctant to deal with groups of producers such as the upper Assiniboine Valley producers, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I was really proud to announce the 40 per cent of the AgriRecovery program that we did do at the end of June. I invited, at the time, the federal minister to participate and sign on with us for their share of that AgriRecovery program, which flowed hundreds of millions of dollars into the hands of farmers in every region of this province. We continue to work with farm groups and farmers themselves to make sure that we make the most of that program and that that money gets to farmers as quickly as it can, many farmers who have already received their share of that announcement.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I can affirm that many farmers and producers have not received compensation from this government, Mr. Speaker.

The upper Assiniboine Valley producers are telling me that they are requesting a meeting because there is much confusion and concern among the producers as to what is required and why the government departments involved appear to be at odds over how to deal with this very important issue, Mr. Speaker. This is in direct contrast to what the NDP government was spinning five short months ago.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for EMO: Why is the government apparently reluctant to deal with the groups of producers who have been fighting for their homes, for their livelihoods, for so many months?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that this was a very tough year for farmers in every region of our province. We know that they've been dealing with unprecedented levels of rainfall and unprecedented snow levels coming out of a blizzard

that we did have. We know that there are farmers who are pressed up against a wall, whether they weren't able to seed their land or whether they weren't able to get hay off pasture land and feed their cattle. So that's why we moved quickly to get that program in place. That's why we've got people burning the midnight coal and midnight oil in our offices, GO offices, right across Manitoba. And if there are farmers out there who are still looking at how to be involved in these programs, I really do recommend that they sit down with our agricultural staff to make sure that they don't get left out. We had made those commitments and we want farmers to benefit from them.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I'm asking a very simple question: How come it is so difficult for this government to commit to meet with a group of producers who have been fighting for their livelihoods, for their farms, for their homes, for their families, for several months, and in this case, the upper Assiniboine Valley have been fighting for years for this government to pay attention to their issues? So, Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple: Why is this government so afraid to meet with the upper Assiniboine Valley producers?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I take the point that the member for Riding Mountain is making. I know that there are producers in that part of our province who have been suffering this year and other years. I do, though, want to remind her that we have in the past stepped forward with these Assiniboine Valley producers. There have been several years in which we have made announcements and flowed money to those producers, last year being the biggest number of the biggest amount of money that we've flown to them over the years.

\* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't mind meeting with any groups in terms of learning about their situations and designing our programs to make it work for every Manitoba farmer.

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

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Orders of the Day, I would like to advise members of the House that we have with us, in my loge to my left, Mr. Elijah Harper, the former member for Rupertsland. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you, sir.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Reg Alcock

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** It is with deep sadness that I rise today to mourn the loss of a great Manitoban, a man who served this province and country with passion and integrity and could always be counted on to be a servant for Manitobans. On October 14th, 2011, the Honourable Reg Alcock passed away at the age of 63. I extend my profound sympathy to his family and many, many friends.

A holder of a master's in public administration from Harvard University, Mr. Alcock began his career as a senior administrator at both the Children's Home of Winnipeg and the Seven Oaks Centre for Youth. He also served as a director of Manitoba's Child and Family Services.

In his distinguished public life, Mr. Alcock served as the MLA for Osborne from 1988 to 1992 and as a Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South from 1993 to 2006. He rose to prominence in the federal Liberal governments of Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, first, as parliamentary secretary to the president of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and later, as the president of the Treasury Board. Throughout his public career, Mr. Alcock's intelligence and respect for the office he served and for the people he represented was inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, I had the great honour of knowing Mr. Alcock professionally and personally. His wit and breadth of knowledge made him a most engaging lunch companion. We spent a lot of time together in the past year discussing his research in public policy and board governance, as he found the health sector to be, what he called, an interesting case. In the last few months, his words of support and encouragement came in the moments I needed them most, and memories of these kindnesses will be ones I will cherish always.

I know all members of this House will join me in honouring the Honourable Reg Alcock, a true champion of Manitoba and, indeed, a lovely, lovely man.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Robert and Sandy Shindleman

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** It is my pleasure to honour the recipients of this year's B'nai

Brith Award of Merit, Robert and Sandy Shindleman. Both recipients are entrepreneurs and community leaders having found Shindico in 1975 which specializes in retail development.

Having grown up in Portage la Prairie, Sandy was the first to venture into business as a real estate agent for home and commercial properties in Winnipeg. It was at this stage that Sandy developed his tireless work ethic and where he employed his father's key business practice of treating people well.

Robert joined Sandy at Shindico in 1984 after working with his father on their many enterprises that included a family farm. What makes Robert and Sandy especially deserving of this award is that they have both taken on an active role in sustainable community development. Specifically, the Shindlemans have ensured that their head office was built with energy efficiency in mind, having built their office with LEED principles. Also, among their many philanthropic initiatives, the Shindlemans have funded the Shindleman Aquatic Centre, Manitoba's largest leisure and wave pool, in Sandy's hometown of Portage la Prairie.

On November 12th, Robert and Sandy Shindleman will be honoured for their leadership in corporate development and in their philanthropic work. B'nai Brith, an organization that is dedicated to human rights advocacy, will host an event to celebrate their many achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud Robert and Sandy Shindleman for their outstanding contribution to Manitoba and for being model citizens. Mazel tov to both of them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### Winnipeg Phoenix Soccer Club

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the wonderful season the Winnipeg Phoenix Soccer Club has been having. The club's many different boys' and girls' soccer teams have won an impressive number of city and provincial championships and recently placed highly at the Canadian Nationals. The Winnipeg Phoenix Soccer Club's strong winning record is a great demonstration of the dedication, tenacity and perseverance of youth in the northeast corner of Winnipeg.

This year, the under-14 boys', the under-18 girls' and the senior women's teams won their categories of the 2011 provincial championships. As

well, the 18-year-old girls and the under-15 boys teams each won the Winnipeg city championship.

Following the winning tradition of their successful program at Phoenix, on October 10th the under-14 boys won their bronze match at this year's Canadian national championships held in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland. Placing third overall in the national championship is no small feat, but it was wholly deserved by the team's impressive performance in this tournament.

The Winnipeg Phoenix Soccer Club was started in 2002 by a group called the Friends of Soccer Manitoba Foundation, which is affiliated with the Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association in northeast Winnipeg. This unique and highly competitive soccer program serves as the elite team for youth ages 10 to 18 in northeast Winnipeg, providing a chance to shine for hundreds of youth in the area.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of the players, coaches and volunteers, this soccer program has shown itself to be a great opportunity for players to develop their soccer skills to a semi-professional level. The continuing success and the particular structure of the Winnipeg Phoenix Soccer Club set it apart from similar programs in the city. Players choose to try out for the program in their respective age group and a dedicated board works to retain full-time staff and coaches. Clearly, the results of their efforts are evident in the team's success.

I wish to applaud the youth and young adults involved in the Winnipeg Phoenix Soccer Club for their continuing success, particularly the under-14 boys for their third-place finish at the Canadian national championship earlier this month.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask leave to have the under-14 boys' coaches and team members' names included in this statement in *Hansard*.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave from members of the House to have the names included in the *Hansard*? [Agreed]

**Ms. Braun:** Thank you. Franco Albarran, Andre Baires, Alex Bandel-Watchman, Brett Bredin, Emmanuel Briceno, Adam Grewe, Aaron Hidalgo-Mazzei, Tobias Hyrich-Krueger, Ryan Jensen, Taaron Kenning, Evan Koenig, Marvis Kreitling, Alic Rasmussen, Arlo Reichert, Jashandeep Sangha, John Unrau, Travys Wood, Garry Christie, Lukas Douglas and Malcolm Mitchell.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**James Armstrong Richardson  
International Airport**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I feel it significant to acknowledge the opening of the new terminal at the Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport. First introduced to the public in 2004, the airport's redevelopment program has yielded this brand new, beautiful terminal, which will open October the 30th.

Passenger trials for the new airport took place on Saturday, October the 8th, were an overwhelming success. Winnipeggers were impressed with the design that both modern and upscale, and easy to follow natural light pours into the building making a pleasant travel experience. The member from Charleswood and myself were fortunate to attend the airport's opening gala this past Saturday, October the 15th. The energy at the event brought the excitement levels for the new building to a high.

Airports are more than just a place to move people and products. They reflect a social, cultural and economic spirit of the community. With the new terminal, the Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport has been transformed, not only to the physical sense, but also the Winnipeg Airport Authority serves the travel community.

Winnipeg is a fast-growing city and is gaining a vast increase in positive international attention in many fields, including commerce, agricultural and sport. With return of the Winnipeg Jets, the increased tourism that is sure to come when the Canadian Museum for Human Rights opens its doors, our new transit hubs comes as a fortuitous and valuable time. The new terminal shows the city's commitment to maintain and showing off the reputation to visitors the moment—the time and they arrive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Swan Valley Regional Secondary School  
Envirothon Team**

**Mr. Ron Kostyshyn (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, there are five very talented students from the Swan Valley Regional Secondary School that I would like to recognize: Teagan Markin, Breanna Anderson, Nyla Burnside, Matt Forbes and Eddie Shaw that won the very competitive North American Envirothon this summer. They beat out 53 teams from around North America in a test of knowledge of environmental issues and natural resource

conservation. To see such a group of bright, young Manitobans demonstrate their talents and represent the Swan River so well on an international stage fills me with much pride.

\* (14:30)

Starting at the local levels, teams competed for the distinction of representing their state, province and territory. The North American Envirothon is an annual event that—where the winners of the provincial and state compete with each other for top honours. With more than 500 high school students throughout North America participate yearly in this program.

Before winning the North American competition, the Swan Valley team first won the right to represent Manitoba by beating out 23 teams from across Manitoba. Swan Valley has represented Manitoba at the North American Envirothon in the nine of the past 13 years, placing in the top 10 four times before placing first in this year's competition.

To put their accomplishments in perspective, no team from Canada has ever placed in the top three, let alone win the competition in the Envirothon for 24 history until this year, that is. During the competition, the team faced a wide variety of environmental knowledges, challenges, dealings with aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and salt and freshwater estuaries.

In their final oral presentation they gave a knockout presentation, clinching the overall victory. Their success demonstrates the commitment our youths are facing—has to face the environmental challenges of tomorrow.

Along with the bragging rights and satisfaction of representing communities so proudly, each student received a \$5,000 scholarship to a school of their choice. They also received the overwhelming support of the Swan River community which is installing a sign at the entrance of the town declaring them the 2011 North American Envirothon champions.

It is a great pleasure to recognize such a group of young Manitobans today, and I wish them continued success in what will no doubt be a very bright future for all of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### House Business

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** I just have some House business, but I wonder if I can seek the indulgence for the House. I'm just making sure I've got the right script so I don't read the wrong thing, and I can hear that it's coming.

Perhaps we should come back to this, Mr. Speaker, when we've got the right information in front of us.

### THRONE SPEECH (Second Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. Then we'll move on to the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers),

THAT the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this First Session of the Fortieth Legislature of—

### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry. The honourable Opposition House Leader.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a point of order.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I do believe that what the Government House Leader is waiting for is very important to the continuation of orders of the day and should be dealt with before we proceed into orders of the day. So I'm going to ask if there's leave of the House to just take a brief recess until we get the necessary documents.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to allow for a brief recess to allow the documents to be printed and distributed to members of the House—the government—at least the Opposition House Leader and the Government House Leader? Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Agreed, and then we'll wait just a few moments then.

*The House recessed at 2:33 p.m.*

*The House resumed at 2:43 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Call the House back.

### House Business

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** On House business, will you please canvass the House to see if there is agreement to waive the deadlines identified in rules 31(2) and 31(3) for the filing and House leader consideration of private members' resolutions to a time of the choosing of the House leaders related to the resumption of session in the spring and that in the interim the PMRs can be announced a week in advance in the House for consideration the following week.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement to waive the deadlines identified in rules 31(2) and 31(3) for the filing and House leader consideration of private members' resolutions to a time of the choosing of the House leaders related to the resumption of session in the spring and that in the interim the private members' resolutions can be announced a week in advance in the House for consideration the following week?

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, we will agree to that.

I just want to inform the House that there was an error in the sessional order on Thursday, and the House leaders are dealing with that and hope to have a corrected agreement as soon as possible so that it doesn't impact any further on the session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** So is it agreed then in the House that we will waive the deadlines identified in the rules 31(2) and 31(3) for the interim? *[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now resume consideration of the adjourned debate on the address on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers),

THAT the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us in the First Session of the

Fortieth Legislature of Manitoba, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'm very pleased and honoured today to have a few moments to speak about the Speech from the Throne and to propose an amendment to that speech supported by the Progressive Conservative caucus.

At the outset, though, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes to thank and acknowledge a number of people who do so much to assist our work in this Legislature and others who have done a great deal to support the democratic and the political process outside of the Legislature. I want to begin by thanking the Lieutenant-Governor and his staff for their competent and thoughtful work that they do, and his grace and articulate—graceful and articulate reading of the speech and all the other functions that he performs in the very significant role that he occupies within our system of government; as well, to his staff who support his work and support the work of this Chamber so ably.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the Clerk and her staff here in the Legislature. We appreciate very much the support they provide. Even after six years in this Chamber, there are many, many times when those minor points and those rules that we are bound to follow are not obvious, and we get that great advice from the Clerk and her staff as we go about doing our work within this Chamber. Many of those rules are grounded in ancient historical traditions and they're there for good reasons, and we support the very excellent effort they provide to all of us as members of the House in keeping this place running in an orderly way and in a fashion that befits the responsibility of all the individual members of the House.

As well, the staff of Hansard and the other staff at Members' Allowances and other offices that support our work as members of the Assembly do so with competence and with goodwill, and I want to thank all of them as well. Also, the pages who are joining us for this session of the House, welcome and thank you for the good work that you're doing, and we look forward to getting to know you a little bit better as time goes along and certainly wish you well in your studies and your future plans as you look to participate and contribute to our province and our country in different capacities over the years.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and congratulate you again. I had a brief opportunity to



do so on the record at question period on Friday morning, but I want to congratulate you again on being selected by so many members of this House to fulfill the important role of Speaker of this Chamber in a professional and neutral way. You're off to a terrific start, and we thank you again for putting your name forward and for the service that you will provide in a distinguished way over the coming years as the Speaker of this House, somebody who follows in the traditions of many very good speakers over many years, and I know that you will fulfill that responsibility exceptionally well. We saw evidence of it in your chairmanship of various committees over the years, and certainly you've earned the respect and admiration of many members from all parties, and we welcome you into that role and we know that there will be a passionate debate that will take place in this House. There'll be matters where there are disagreement and dispute. That's the nature of democratic politics, and we have a lot of confidence in your ability to mediate all of those various points of view in a fair way and in a way that's consistent with the history and traditions of the—this Chamber.

\*(14:50)

I also want to thank and welcome back all members of the House, all those returning members. I will say that it's good to see all of my colleagues here again. It's good to see members opposite. It is competitive, this political world that we live in. It was a hard-fought campaign, but there are many members that I am happy to see here again. I think all things being considered would have preferred to see you again, perhaps in other contexts, wishing you well at retirement parties or other things, but that's not the choice the voters made, and so I am happy to see you here, and I congratulate you on your success in this campaign. I wish everybody well, both professionally and personally, as you fulfill the important responsibilities that our constituents have given to us, that Manitobans have given to this government and to the opposition as well.

I want to welcome and also particularly congratulate all of the new members who are coming in. As the Speech from the Throne indicated, we have a very significant number of new members joining us in the class of 2011, and I want to welcome you all here. I—as I listened to the early speeches and comments from new members, and get to know you better, I certainly have lots of confidence and optimism about the contributions that you'll make to this Chamber and to public life

generally. And so congratulations to each and every one of you on successful campaigns and on a good start to your new responsibilities as members of this Chamber.

I also want to say, with the number of new members coming in, I think we have an opportunity for—there's always an opportunity for renewal, but with some of the new energy and ideas that come into this House, we look forward to some renewal and some opportunity to perhaps do things differently than how they've been done in the past. And I would encourage each and every one of you to know how important the responsibilities are that you've been handed by your constituents and to look at this as an opportunity to strongly stand up on behalf of your constituents within this forum.

We do break down in accordance with party lines in terms of the way we are organized, but we all have obligations and commitments that go beyond party lines, and I encourage you to bear that in mind as well, as you look to the opportunities that you'll have, to reform this Chamber and to bring about a better and more democratic kind of politics on behalf of all Manitobans.

Finally, I want to thank all of those candidates who put their names forward in the election who were not successful in being elected. There are many, many good people from all parties who put their names forward, who were nominated by their own parties, who sacrificed a great deal in terms of time away from family, time away from work, lost opportunities to do other things. They feel that disappointment at not being elected on the 4th of October, and I think it's important that we acknowledge all of those individuals for the commitment that they've made to democracy in our province and thank them for what they've done and encourage them not to lose hope about their future prospects. The—some of the greatest parliamentarians of all time have won—have run and not won, in some cases, many times before actually being successful, and then have gone on through their perseverance to ultimately be elected, either to this Chamber or to other parliaments, and to do incredible things on behalf of their countries and their provinces and their constituents.

So I want to encourage all of those candidates who came forward, who didn't get a mandate this time, to maintain their interest in public life, to consider running again the next time around and to

always look for ways to serve their neighbours and their communities and their province.

There are many people who make election campaigns possible. All of us have campaign staff and volunteers that we would want to thank, and I want to take a moment to thank the many volunteers and campaign staff who put in a monumental effort in the lead-up to, and through the recent election campaign. Many of them were up early in the morning and worked till late at night in an effort to get us elected, to get our message out to Manitobans, and also made sacrifices in their own right in order to participate in this process.

And I want to thank and acknowledge my terrific executive in Fort Whyte, my campaign volunteers in Fort Whyte, who went out and ran a great campaign with a successful result on the 4th of October. And they did so in a campaign where their candidate was busy working in other parts of the province for much of the election, and so were required to run a campaign without their candidate nearby for a good part of the election. And that's a particular challenge for volunteers and I want to just pay particular tribute to the Fort Whyte team for running a really good campaign without the benefit of the candidate being there. Now some may say that that was actually an advantage to them. I don't know if I want to acknowledge that or not, but they were successful in the end without the candidate being there for a good part of the campaign, and so I want to thank all of them for their stellar efforts, each and every one of whom is a volunteer. They're not paid to do what they do, so it's a particularly meaningful contribution when they do that.

We also had a great team of young people involved in our campaign centrally who worked long days with a lot of passion and energy, and I want to thank each and every one of those members of our central campaign staff who worked so hard, who, I know, were bitterly disappointed at the result, but should be proud of the effort that they put in throughout the campaign. It is an achievement to get 44 per cent of the popular vote in an election. It's a disappointment to not have as many seats as we would have liked, but that level of popular support is a reflection of what was a good campaign.

I want to just take a moment to thank and acknowledge Senator Don Plett, Marni Larkin, Jonathan Lyon, Jonathan Scarth, Greg Burch and the rest of the team who worked so hard through the recent campaign, and who, as every campaign does,

will weather a certain amount of commentary, some praise and probably at least an equal amount of criticism. And I want to just thank each and every one of them for the way they sacrificed their own time and contributed to our recent campaign.

I want to just also be sure to just thank and acknowledge the families of members who run for office, both whether we are successful or not in being elected, those families sacrifice a great deal: first and most obviously, time away from their family member who may be the candidate. Very often, they take the criticisms and the negativity of politics more personally than the candidates do. We all know when we get involved in politics that we're signing up for a certain amount of negativity and criticism. Family members very often don't feel that that's what they've signed up for and they take it particularly—they can take it hard sometimes. And I want to just thank all of them and acknowledge that they have sacrificed more than the individual candidates in many cases because they don't see the many rewards and the many fulfilling aspects of what we get to do.

And I consider it a privilege to be one of the 57 members of this House, and regardless of which side we sit on, where—which bench we're on in this House, we're all privileged to be one of the 57 members that gets to come and sit in this House. When you consider we live in a province of 1.2 million people, it's very, very few who get the opportunity to come and serve in this Chamber, and it is a privilege and there's so many fulfilling aspects to the job the family members don't get to participate in.

\*(15:00)

They sometimes see the negative side of it without getting the benefit of it, and so I think it's important that we thank and acknowledge them. And I know in my own case, the effort and the time put in by my parents, my two brothers, my wife, Jen, my two kids, Rachael and James, my in-laws and so many other cousins and family members who went out and did things like deliver brochures and put up signs and answer phones and do all those things, but, as well, just spent a lot of time away from me and had to listen to a lot of the criticism that was coming our way. And I think I want to just make sure that they know how much I appreciate their support through this entire process.

And I want to—*[interjection]* Thank you. I want to extend that thanks to all family members as well,

and other members will have a chance to speak, but other family members—and nobody is immune to it; we all criticize—when other family members will have felt that sting, and I want to acknowledge all of them because it is not easy to be a partner to or a child of or a parent or a sibling to somebody who's involved in this line of work. So they deserve special thanks and acknowledgement. *[interjection]* As the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) just said, they deserve a medal, and I couldn't agree more. It is an unbelievable sacrifice that they make.

And just to digress for just a moment, I have a grandfather who's still with us right now. He's 92 years old. His father was a member of the Legislature here, and his advice to me was always, why would you ever want to get involved in that business? He was the child of a politician, and I think you sometimes find that it's the children of politicians who are the most averse to getting involved in it because they got—other than the member for Thompson's child, who's a notable exception and a distinguished and—a distinguished example of somebody who has gone into it—but in many cases, I think the experience of it is a difficult one, not so much for those of us who have the privilege to be here but sometimes for family members. And so I always know he was very supportive of the choices and the decisions but always wary of the whole process because of his own experience of hearing his own father being criticized over the years on various issues and taking it quite personally. And I think his father would have had a different message. I think he would have said, absolutely, get involved, it's a great—it is a great way to spend your days. And so everybody has their own perspective.

Now, I do want to address the Speech from the Throne and introduce our amendment, and I will just begin by thanking everybody involved in the preparation of the speech. Having worked as a member of staff in government in Executive Council at one point, I know the pressure that staff are put under to generate drafts of speeches, and particularly when time is short. I remember some late nights in trying to finalize speeches from the throne and get them signed off by everybody who had to sign off in order to get them to the L-G. So thanks to everybody who participated in that process, and our criticism of the speech is aimed at the substance of it, not the people involved in its preparation.

And so let me just move on to some of our comments and concerns about the substance of the

Speech from the Throne that was brought forward last week. And there are a lot of important points and issues that will be debated over the course of this debate in the House. I will not touch on all of those many important points. Other members will touch on different aspects of it. The amendment that will be introduced touches on a number of areas.

I want to just focus my comments on two specific areas of concern that I would have about the Speech from the Throne. There are many things in the speech that Manitobans will like and support. Everybody wants to see expansion of health care and efforts to make our communities safer and other steps. It's not so much that the—that there aren't things in the speech that won't be supported. There's a concern we have about the disconnect between what the government says and what it actually does within our communities, and secondly, there's a fundamental omission within the speech that is important to be addressed.

And the omission really relates to the basic question of, how do we pay for all of these things that the government is promising to deliver to Manitobans? We want government to provide good services to Manitobans across the province, but there's a basic question that many Manitobans have asked, have asked me and have asked members of our caucus. Over the years, during and subsequent to the election campaign, Manitobans have raised concerns about the financial sustainability of the government's plans and the basic ability to generate the wealth necessary to pay for those items that are identified within the speech. I think that we had a great tradition in this province and in this country of different parties staking out a commitment to fiscal responsibility.

Tommy Douglas is remembered for medicare, but few also remember that he was a staunch fiscal conservative who believed that it was important for government to pay its way as it went and thought that the accumulation of debt was an irresponsible legacy to the next generation. Members from our side have said at various points that while there's a need for strong public education and health care systems, and strong public infrastructure that we must always be mindful of our ability to pay and our legacy to the next generation.

And Duff Roblin, who was a very active premier in this province, who did a great deal, from the floodway to the building of a public hydro that we know today, to the expansion of our public education

system, paid a significant price politically. But the legacy is a great one for acknowledging that we—the government had to pay as it went, and he introduced a sales tax in 1967 that he paid dearly for, but it was done as a measure to ensure that as the government went along that it was paying its way. And we are at a point in our history when Manitobans can't afford to pay more taxes. We've seen taxes increase over many generations, and so we're at a point where we need to be sure that we're able to pay for all of these things in a way that avoids any further increase in taxes, hydro rates, or other fees or costs on Manitoba families.

And our point is that the Speech from the Throne and the government's actions and plans to date would seem to suggest that its focused on the expenditure side, but is paying very little regard to the other side of the ledger, which is how do we pay for this in a way that doesn't involve increasing taxes and costs on Manitoba families who simply can't afford to pay more than they're paying today. And as we look at the numbers and the direction of the movement of those numbers we want to sound an alarm bell in this House and publicly about the sustainability of the track that the government is on right now.

And so let me just go through what some of those numbers are, and they're not in dispute; they're printed in the government's own documents, and so it's not that they are matters of opinion. There may be different opinions about what the numbers mean and how we deal with them, but the numbers are what they are. And the first one is that the level of debt in Manitoba today, total debt, so this includes Crown corporations, it includes general purpose debt to support the operations of government, and it doesn't deduct so-called assets in order to arrive at net debt, which we believe is an important point for debate in terms of accounting policy.

That total debt is—that total debt is \$25 billion as of today, and it's growing at a rate of 10 per cent a year. When you increase debt by 10 per cent a year, and this is above and beyond operating deficits that are being reported, you will find yourself in a position at some point—we will find ourselves in a position at some point of having to repay that debt. You cannot liquidate government assets, public assets, to pay for that debt. It's going to have to be cash that's raised through higher taxes and fees at some point down the road. And that debt, at \$25 billion and growing at 10 per cent a year, is also

money that will attract the requirement to pay interest.

\* (15:10)

And we have the good fortune right now of having relatively low interest rates, but I don't think anybody who is being responsible about our financial position will say that we can count on those interest rates staying low. Firstly, it's important to recognize that we don't control the interest rates. That's the Bank of Canada and the governors of the Bank of Canada who respond to financial and economic pressures in the setting of rates. But with inflation where it is today, with debt levels where they are, the pressure will be to raise interest rates, and I think the consensus is that those rates have nowhere to go but up. And that creates a clear and present danger in terms of our standard of living and our ability to finance programs and services as we go into the future. So, that first number is \$25 billion and 10 per cent a year in growth on that total debt.

Secondly, we start from the point, in terms of taxes, of having to acknowledge that Manitobans pay the highest taxes west of Québec. That means that the average Manitoba family pays thousands of dollars more than most of our neighbours in terms of taxes already. We have the highest—we have the lowest basic personal exemption, which means we start paying taxes sooner in terms of income tax. We have the highest top marginal rate and we're the only western province with a payroll tax.

We also know, if we look at the history of this government, that the current Premier (Mr. Selinger), when he was Minister of Finance, expanded the PST base. So the Manitobans are paying more PST today than what they did when this government came to office.

We also know that this government has introduced a variety of other taxes and fees and hidden charges in a variety of areas, the land transfer tax being a good example, but other fees and charges and levies that have reached the point where they are just at a level that they can't be increased any further without very serious, negative consequences for Manitoba families.

We also know that at Hydro, rates have already gone up by 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and that the PUB has said that if things continue as they are, hydro rates will increase by 140 per cent if the government carries on on the course that it's in right—that it's on right now. And so we start with

rising hydro rates, we start with the highest taxes west of Québec, we start with a \$25-billion debt.

In addition to that, when we look at the annual operations of the government, we are in a position today where the government is projecting to the end of this year, on the core operating budget, a deficit of 470—sorry, \$490 million. And that projection is on the core budget, which we think is an important number to follow. And I think that many economists and accountants would agree with that because that is the deficit that is supported by taxes. That's the deficit that can only be closed by tax increases. You cannot use the surpluses of Hydro and other Crowns to transfer into the core operations of government to make up for those shortfalls, and so the net result is that you have to borrow that amount in order to carry on.

And so, if the government is starting with a \$25-billion debt, it's already growing at 10 per cent a year, it's borrowing outside of the operating budget for capital to the tune of \$1.5 billion this year, and then running an operating deficit on top of that of \$490 million this year. These are all borrowed funds that will have to be repaid by Manitobans at some point down the road, with interest. And so, we know that we start—this is the starting point from today as we look at the financial position of government and its ability to pay for all of these new commitments.

The next important number is that the government's budget increases over the past four years have averaged by an average of 5.1 per cent annually in operating expenditures. And we note that the five-year plan to balance the budget, of which two years are already gone, there are three years remaining, calls for expenditure increases averaging 2 per cent. So, if in the first two years you've increased spending by over 5 per cent, and your average is 2 per cent over five years, and you've got three years left, that leaves you with a requirement to increase spending by less than 2 per cent in order to meet those targets over the coming three years.

With the expenditure announcements and plans that we see in the lead up to the election, through the election campaign and then repeated in the Speech from the Throne, what we see is a completely unsustainable level of spending and a completely unrealistic approach to financial planning going forward, that we fear will result either in more debt than what the government is currently letting on, or in higher taxes, or both.

The end result, if it ends up being more debt, is that it will be higher taxes further down the road. Debt is simply deferred taxes, and that is a concern for the next generation of Manitobans who will be required to pay the bills.

The other worrisome development is the extent to which the Province depends on Ottawa to finance its activities. We see, as of today, a government that is being treated with more generosity by Ottawa than any other government in our province's history. The federal government today transfers more money to Manitoba than it has at any other point in history. It's an extremely generous federal government and this provincial government has taken that money and turned around and spent every nickel of it and then some.

And the ability of the federal government to continue to bail out the Province of Manitoba is limited. The federal government, because of the financial crisis, has deficits of its own, it has pressures of its own that it has to meet, and the ability to carry on bailing out a provincial government with a spending problem, is going to be limited going forward.

And we know, and I would expect, because it's already started, that as this government gets further and further into financial difficulty, that the natural political tendency will be to turn around and attempt to blame Ottawa for its financial position. Now, we hope—we hoped that that wouldn't be the approach because it wouldn't be honest, Mr. Speaker, but we suspect that that will be the approach because it's already starting, blaming Ottawa for a variety of challenges and issues when the reality is that Ottawa, starting with the 1998 agreement that was negotiated by Premier Filmon with Prime Minister Chrétien and that I was happy, as a member of staff, to be part of, that those transfer payments have increased to record levels over the coming—over the 12 years since. And this government, in spite of the massive increase in support from Ottawa, still finds itself in a position of being short money and running deficits and having to go out and borrow.

And so we have a situation where we have a generous parent in the form of Ottawa, the generous bankers who are all too happy to continue to underwrite debt. But we know that neither approach to financing the Province is sustainable for much longer and that the predictable outcome is going to be that this government will either have higher deficits and more debt, or it will be required to raise

taxes, but most likely, Mr. Speaker, will attempt to blame Ottawa, and I think that's a regrettable approach to take. It's counterproductive in terms of the relationship with the federal government, and, fundamentally, it's dishonest because it's this government that had the opportunity to invest those dollars in ways that would have created a domestic economic base that would have allowed us to pay our own way going forward.

And that, perhaps, will be seen as the singular failure of the past 12 years, is the failure to invest in building up our own source revenue to encourage investment, to encourage job creation and to generate enough wealth and enough taxpaying Manitobans in order to sustain the level of spending going forward. And that failure is not one of anybody other than the current government, and it's nobody but this government that should be held accountable for that as we head into predictable financial stress and significant challenges on the horizon.

The final concern I want to just put on the record before introducing the amendment is with respect to the future of Hydro. We have just come through a regrettably dishonest debate about the future of Hydro. The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that the legislated mandate of Hydro is to deliver reliable, low-cost energy to Manitobans. Because of interference of the government, we have Hydro being put in the position of delivering unreliable high-cost energy to the people of Manitoba, which is the exact opposite of Hydro's legislated mandate. And the debt of Hydro is reaching record levels.

\* (15:20)

We see contradictions now between what the senior executives at Hydro are saying and what the Premier (Mr. Selinger) is telling the public. We have the very regrettable decision by the government to direct Hydro to build the next high voltage transmission line down the far west side of the province, a decision that every expert has weighed in on and has said is wrong. The landowners and the farmers and others who are going to be negatively impacted, have very clearly said that it's wrong for them and it's wrong for agriculture. First Nations communities on the east side have commented on the lack of economic opportunity and the regrettable missed opportunity arising from this decision. And, fundamentally, for all of the citizens of the province, the result of building a transmission line 500 kilometres longer than it needs to be will be less reliable and higher cost energy for the people of

Manitoba, the exact opposite of what Hydro's mandate is. And so we ask the government to reconsider.

I—we note in the Speech from the Throne a change in language, by the way, on the issue of Bipole III. Up until the election, the government was saying that they were going to build the Bipole III on the west side of Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis, and that changed in the Speech from the Throne and now says they're going to build on the west side of Lake Winnipeg. I don't know—we don't know—we hope that the government is going to clear up the contradiction. We don't know whether that's a flip-flop on this decision or whether it's just a typo in the Speech from the Throne, but we'll look to the government to clear up that apparent error and contradiction within the Speech from the Throne. We don't know if this is a subtle precursor to a flip-flop on the route for the line or whether it was just an honest mistake in the drafting of the Speech from the Throne, but, Mr. Speaker, we know that either way they've been looking at going west of Lake Winnipeg. But to omit the reference to Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis is interesting and at odds with what they've been saying to the public up until the Speech from the Throne.

With all of that said, Mr. Speaker, we, on behalf of our constituents and on behalf of the many Manitobans who supported parties other than the government party, have an important job to do in this House to make sure that those views and perspectives are represented as strongly as we can, and we fundamentally take issue with the lack of reference to the basic question of how do we pay. How do we pay for everything that they're promising to do in a way that doesn't penalize the next generation and doesn't penalize hard-working Manitoba families?

The issue of reliance on Ottawa is one that we want to see the government starting to work to get ahead of. We want to take—see them take steps today to ensure that we avoid the sorts of choices that are being made in other places, where governments around the world today are either cutting services or increasing taxes and, in many cases, are doing both because of financial mismanagement over many years. So it's not an academic, theoretical problem; we see it happening in governments around the world today. And if we fail to learn the lessons of those experiences, then we're destined to repeat those mistakes and to find ourselves in a position here in Manitoba of having to cut services, increase

taxes or do some combination of those two things because of the financial lack of sustainability to the government's plan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with all of those concerns being put on the record, I want to assure members that they are put there in a spirit of goodwill and with hope that they'll be noted by the government and addressed in their planning as we go forward.

With all of that said, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

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

But this House regrets:

- (a) That the Throne Speech failed to acknowledge the provincial government's inability to pay for its commitments without raising taxes on Manitoba families or to acknowledge that adding to our debt at a rate of 10 per cent each year and relying on equalization is not sustainable; and
  - (b) That these are uncertain economic times, and yet the Throne Speech failed to lay out an economic strategy for the province of Manitoba or to eliminate wasteful spending; and
  - (c) That the Throne Speech did not mention the importance of trade to our economy or make any references to entering into trade agreements to spur our economy; and
  - (d) That the Throne Speech did not demonstrate a commitment to protecting Manitoba Hydro from political interference that is forcing Hydro to cut back and delay critical capital expenditures; and
  - (e) That the Throne Speech failed to acknowledge the catastrophic mistake of following the far western route for Manitoba's next high voltage direct current transmission line; and
  - (f) That the Throne Speech failed to demonstrate what steps the provincial government will take to shed Manitoba's title as the violent crime capital of Canada, which was reinforced by a summer punctuated by arsons, stabbings and homicides putting Winnipeg on course to have a record number of homicides in 2011; and
  - (g) That the Throne Speech failed to acknowledge the ongoing socio-economic hardship and
- disruption caused by the 2011 flood and failed to commit the provincial government to undertake a comprehensive independent review of provincial actions and resources in the 2011 flood as well as a review of provincial flood compensation to ensure all Manitobans are being fairly compensated; and
  - (h) That the Throne Speech reinforced the provincial government's ongoing indifference to the needs of Manitoba's farm families and rural communities, whose economic well-being is so important to the health of the provincial economy; and
  - (i) That the Throne Speech failed to outline a plan to reverse the interprovincial loss of more than 1,800 doctors over the last decade, meaning thousands of Manitobans will remain without a family doctor; and
  - (j) That the provincial government, after 12 years, has not restrained the growth of health-care bureaucracy which fails to make front-line patient care a priority; and
  - (k) That the Throne Speech did not provide a plan for improving access to Manitoba's post-secondary institutions nor did it lay out a plan to tackle truancy or improve grade school students' test scores, which have dropped to among the lowest in Canada; and
  - (l) That the Throne Speech failed to address the circumstances that have led to Manitoba again being the child poverty capital of Canada and have not improved food security for the thousands of Manitobans who rely on food banks annually or that have not curbed the growth in the number of Manitobans who rely on employment and income assistance to survive.

As a consequence, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

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

But this House regrets:

- (a) That the Throne Speech failed to acknowledge the provincial government's inability to pay

for its commitments without raising taxes on Manitoba families or to acknowledge that adding to our debt at a rate of 10 per cent each year and relying on equalization is not sustainable; and

- (b) That these uncertain economic times—that these are uncertain economic times and yet the Throne Speech failed to lay out an economic strategy for the province of Manitoba or to eliminate wasteful spending; and
- (c) That the Throne Speech did not mention the importance of trade to our economy or make any references to entering into trade agreements to spur our economy; and
- (d) That the Throne Speech did not demonstrate a commitment to protecting Manitoba—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

The motion is in order. The floor is open for debate.

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak today for the first time in the Manitoba Legislature, a unique, historic and awe-inspiring place. The honourable member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) told us at one of our first meetings that each of us is one of only 57 people in the world who are allowed in this room to pass laws for Manitoba. That is an amazing responsibility.

I would like to congratulate everyone here on their success. On the night of October 4th, after the polls closed, I waited, as I'm sure others in the room did, my heart full of anticipation, for the numbers to begin to roll in. And as they did in a strong show of support for the NDP in my constituency, gratitude to my constituents was complemented by a sense of immense responsibility, knowing the people of Burrows were sending me here to stand before you today and, further, to serve them daily with energy and integrity.

\* (15:30)

I would like now to offer my thank you to the honourable First Minister, who was amazing in everything, I thought, that he did, and it was a treat for us to be on the doorstep being able to sincerely state that he is a man of integrity and honesty and empathy.

The first time I entered this magnificent building as an MLA-elect, I was entirely speechless, an

unprecedented experience for me. I wandered the hallways, lost in thought and sometimes just lost, wondering if I was dreaming, and my only sadness occurred as I studied the many portraits and photographs hanging here and reflected on the near absence of women's images amongst them. I knew my moment of speechlessness would be brief. I hope that if my daughter visits these impressive halls at her grandmother's age of 90, that the landscape will have changed as more and more portraits of women join those of their esteemed peers. And I am proud to stand with the women in this room, from both sides of the House, who are opening the doors and breaking through the glass ceilings of our world.

I grew up on a farm in southwestern Manitoba, the youngest of five children. My mother was married in 1944, at which time she refused to include the word obey, then the norm, in her vows. I think it was a mystery to her why anyone would think she should include it, nor was it what my dad would have wanted. They clearly had a partnership.

My mother is here today. She'll be 90 on November 21st. Mom. She continues to live on her farm alone. She is a hard-working woman with a balance of compassion and humour that makes her the kind of person I have always strived to be. People often say I sound like my mother, as if it's a bad thing, but I've always wanted to sound and act like my mother. She was able to guide us rather than to control our big and vibrant family. She is never judgmental, and is always interested in new people and new experiences. She is my hero, and I salute her here today. Mom.

I can still picture my dad riding his tractor on the farm. He wrote songs as he worked the fields, sometimes about his neighbours, to the tune of Bob Dylan's "The Times They are A-Changin'." He played piano by ear, was a self-taught scholar and eventually a school trustee and chairman of the Antler River School Division. He loved that work: the negotiation, the problem-solving, the debates and helping people from different ends of the spectrum reach consensus. He is also fondly remembered for his knack of making any favour he did for a friend or family seem like a favour they were doing for him. My sister said that when dad gave you money he was able to make you feel you were doing him a favour by taking it off his hands. My dad had a tremendous impact on my life. He was killed in 1986 in a farm accident, and I still miss him. He would have been so proud to have been here.



I moved to Winnipeg at 18 and eventually established a lucrative corporate career, but in the early '90s I did a complete switch by opening an emergency foster home, which happened to be in my constituency, for teenage boys. I was on my own with as many as four boys, and it was a 24-7 job. I knew so little that I didn't know enough to know that I didn't know anything at all. This may sound like I got things a little backwards, but my personal journey has been one of learning. The learning I've had is not merely academic, although I have been educated at most of Winnipeg's centres of learning, from business college, to the real estate board, to Red River community College, the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, all in different fields, of course. I even had a brief but rewarding career as a professional actor performing at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People and Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, to name a few. But the moment I experienced the changes that the right intervention can have in the lives of youth at risk, what I truly and deeply learned is that helping people change their lives for the better is what I hope to do.

The cuts made in the early '90s to foster parents' rates made it difficult to pay the bills, and I faced the decision that many of us must: to pursue money or vocation. But the hooks of working with kids at risk were firmly entrenched. A young man from our program once wrote to thank us, saying that if he had not come to us he would now be in jail or dead. It was not an exaggeration and, instead, he will be graduating high school and going on to post-secondary education.

It's tough to find anything that replaces that sense of life-changing work once you've experienced it. After working in a recovery unit for a specialized population of teenagers involved in crime for 16 years, I found my second love as well as a trainer. Things like the impact of abuse and neglect on child development and working with sexually abused children, and I would like to just make a comment about my coworkers in the field of youth care who deserve a special mention. In this line of work I have met many amazing, hard-working people who are dedicated to the well-being of children and youth who spent every Christmas for many, many years going to work, and I want to acknowledge them here today. It is one of the most rewarding aspects of my life having done that work.

In 1996, I had a little girl, my only child, Mikaela, who is here today. Although she claims that if I am using her actual name, she's probably in

trouble. She was a surprise in every way. She is beautiful inside and out and, until she hit 13, she bestowed upon me endless hugs and snuggles. Her boyfriend, who is also here today, now gets all of those. She is an actor, a singer, a dancer, sometimes a comedian, and has been a tremendous assistance to me in bettering myself because she often points out my faults. She is the light of my life and, without doubt, the best thing that ever happened to me. Having Mikaela in my life motivates me daily. I passionately desire a world where my daughter will never be prevented from reaching her potential because she is a female.

Last week, the honourable member from Fort Rouge provided an opportunity to attend a LEAF breakfast on Canada's underground world of human trafficking, a difficult, heart-breaking topic which Canadians must not ignore. Some provinces are giving as little as \$300,000 a year to try and end this, and I am grateful that I am in Manitoba where our government was commended for being at the forefront of this fight with initiatives like Tracia's Trust and financial contributions to the fight to end child sexual exploitation to the tune of about \$8 million. We are a leader. It's this exact kind of thing that makes me proud to be part of this government that I believe has empathy and desires above all to make life better for all Manitobans.

This election was my first canvassing experience and, when I knocked at a door, the thrill for me was who answered. People from all over the world, some who had come years ago, like a little woman I met from Poland, who at the age of 12 experienced the occupation of her country by the Nazis to those who had just arrived a week ago from the Philippines, India, Laos, Vietnam, or Guyana, to name just a few. All different cultural worlds, all ages and socio-economic backgrounds, but whether they had been here a week or their whole life, they surprised and honoured me by their willingness to engage. Some shared the things that they were broken-hearted about: the loss of a loved one, or a job, or their mobility, or their children, or an injustice that had been done them, and sometimes we cried together. I met many people who are not yet citizens who are excited about the process and being on their way to becoming new Canadian citizens. I am grateful to them for the friendly smiles and handshakes.

We have already promised during the election to continue to address many of the areas that my

constituents in Burrows were most concerned with: making life affordable; continuing to ensure seniors have the supports they need and choices they want as they age, including more personal care home beds and stronger home care; and ensuring all Manitobans, including all families in the Burrows constituency, of access to a family doctor by 2015. This is a full five years ahead of the national recommendation for all Canadians to have a family doctor by 2020.

For families in and around my community, the new Nor'West Access Centre currently under construction is a key part of that plan, which includes training and hiring more doctors and nurse practitioners and building more clinics.

\* (15:40)

And, of course, all Manitobans deserve a safe community. Many things we have already done got high praise in Burrows, such as the cadet program, the police helicopter, fighting for tougher laws for violent crimes, but they also recognize that we need to get to the roots of crime. We need to address poverty, as we are with our ALL Aboard anti-poverty initiative.

We need to reach out to our youth and help them strive for what is good, and to become the best they can be. We need to continue to provide opportunities so youth can involve themselves in sports and other forms of healthy living activities. No government on its own can do this; citizens must do what we are known to do so well in Winnipeg: give of our time, resources and knowledge to engage with our children as coaches and as mentors. Creative initiatives, apprenticeship programs, keeping tuition fees affordable for our youth and other training programs were also seen as invaluable. The right initiative changes lives.

One thing I consistently heard from many of the Burrows constituents is that they are proud to be residents of the North End. They wanted me to get the word out that the North End is full of hard-working, honest, law-abiding, creative, never-give-up, friendly people. I wish they could all be here as I say this in the Manitoba Legislature. We invite you all to come and visit us. If you met the people that I have met, I don't think you would leave.

I promised the people I met that I would work hard for them. I promised them that I would be fearless in my willingness to speak up for them. I

promised them that we had a leader and a team that would hear the voice of the people of Burrows, because our leader, every minister and every MLA they elected in this government are vitally interested in their concerns and ideas about making life better. We want to accomplish these ends for Manitobans. Making Manitoba better for everyone is not just a slogan. It is the very reason we are here.

It is impossible to recount the hundreds of stories of the constituents I met along the path of the campaign, and I'm sure you're all glad I'm not going to. But to give you an idea, I'll share one brief tale from my canvassing trail. One woman whose door I knocked at asked me, seemingly completely out of context, if I would like to see her basement, and I said, why not, sure. And down we went. And there were literally hundreds of beautiful little outfits that she had made to send to the children of the Ukraine. She assured me that what I saw was minor compared to the number she had made since retiring. To me, this encapsulates the North End. Like this Legislature, it is a unique place full of history and awe-inspiring in so many, many ways.

And since this is my first chance to speak here, I want to thank all of those people who volunteered and helped us in our campaign. It was my first in which I played a significant role and it was all-consuming.

I am so grateful to those people who stepped up and offered to help, such as the members of Atlantic-Garden City United Church and staff from Macdonald Youth Services.

A special thank you goes out to my daughter, Mikaela, her good friend Isabelle and her boyfriend, Annachie. They spent many hours on the phones or experiencing the wonder of stakes and sledgehammers or literally running through the polls doing drops, yet again showing me the amazing capacity for commitment and achievement that teenagers have.

Thank you to my sister—I think she's up there—a conservative who put family ahead of her political beliefs this one time. Her baking and putting up signs were no doubt instrumental in the NDP achieving an historic fourth term. Thank you, Sylvia. And my other family members, admittedly some who may lean to the conservative—we did come from southwestern Manitoba—who supported me financially; my amazing official agent, Kris Carman; my campaign manager, Tom Simms; and Josh Luna, also here today, a young man who came out of the

blue and pulled it all together. No one ever would have known that he had not done this many times before if he hadn't told us.

I would also like to thank the honourable member from The Maples and the honourable member from Logan for their kindness and willingness to help me. I'd like to mention that I loved being at any event with Point Douglas team there because they bestowed their big applause on the candidate and also on this candidate from Burrows. So I'm very grateful to all that clapping that was done.

Thank you to the honourable ministers, who have all been outstandingly kind and thoughtful to the rookies, inviting us to new learning experiences, such as the agricultural event in The Pas which I was able to attend with the honourable member from Dauphin. I will pay him back later, both for the great experience and for the practical joke that he managed to work into the event. I'm guessing there might be a few people here who are willing to go with me on getting him back on the practical joke for Stan.

I also—oh, a huge thank you to the many staff here. Your unending patience and willingness to help is inspiring. I owe a debt of gratitude to Doug Martindale, a mentor and friend who gave 21 years to this House. As I went door to door, I cannot count the number of times people said to me, wow, big shoes to fill. And when I sat down at the breakfast that I mentioned earlier, the first thing the woman beside me said when I mentioned who I was was, wow, big shoes to fill. I went to a tea on Sunday and the man said, wow, big shoes to fill. Yes, big shoes indeed, and I will keep that always in mind as I serve the people of my constituency.

During the campaign, Doug organized a little coffee party for us at Fred Douglas Apartments and I met there a man who had come from St. Vital as a Conservative. And he said, but I—when I got here I had to turn into—I had to not only leave my house, but my political party, I'm now a strong NDPer—because he was living in the Fred Douglas Lodge, and I'm guessing it had something to do with the two women who made all the sandwiches and served them at this event. They were Ed Schreyer's aunts. Ed was born in 1935 and his aunts were about 95 and 97 years old. Doug and I agreed they didn't look a day over 70, which is what North End living will do for you. I won't say more now about Doug, because I am inviting you all—not just those in the House, but all Manitobans who have met Doug Martindale, to

buy a ticket to his retirement dinner, which will be coming up in the new year. Okay?

So we have many things we need to accomplish still in our north end, in our province and in our world. At the beginning of my campaign I wrote a letter in which I said, I'm too old to think I can change the world, but I hope to be able to influence some small part of it. And then came Jack's letter. Well, we're all now very familiar with the words which end “and we'll change the world.” When I read that I revised my thinking. Together, we in this room, along with the amazing people of Manitoba can change the world with creative, innovate, new initiatives. I aspire to and will work toward the day when everyone in Burrows and in our province will work together, side by side, regardless of where they originally came from or what their first language was or what food they like best to better our community, to end injustice, to fight for a better Burrows and a better Manitoba for everyone. I know my dreams are achievable.

Something big is happening in Manitoba, and I thank the constituents of Burrows for believing in me and giving me this new role to play in our great province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Next speaker, the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer).

**An Honourable Member:** Morden-Winkler.

**Mr. Speaker:** Morden-Winkler? Pardon me, Morden-Winkler. I'm still getting used to the new constituencies. My apologies.

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Let me just take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker.

It is my privilege and honour to rise for the first time in this Chamber and to address the Legislative Assembly to give my response to the Speech from the Throne as the people's representative for the Morden-Winkler riding.

At this moment, I expect that I am experiencing something that all current and past members of this assembly have experienced at one time: a sense of awe at the amazing architecture of this building; a sense of honour for the tremendous opportunity to be able to serve community, region and province in this new role; a sense of gratitude for all those who assisted me in getting this far; a sense of humility at the recognition of the capable men and women who

have gone before me and served in this same role and of their individual and lasting contributions for the betterment of Manitoba; a sense of duty that we have a shared and sober responsibility here that we must never lose sight of to represent our constituents, to voice their concerns, represent their viewpoints, and intercede and assist on their behalf where we can.

\* (15:50)

Peter George Dyck, my predecessor in this Assembly, is such an individual who answered the call to public service. First elected in 1995, he represented the Pembina riding in the Manitoba Legislature for 16 years. For his commitment and honesty, his straightforward approach, his sense of humour and unfailing optimism, he earned the gratitude of his constituents and the respect of his peers on both sides of this Chamber.

I want to thank and acknowledge Peter George for his years of service to the people of his riding and to the province of Manitoba, and extend best wishes to him, his wife Irene, and their family. It was Mr. Dyck who first approached me and encouraged me to consider a future in politics. It's been a long and winding path, but I will always be grateful for his advice and support.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I speak for all the new members of this House when I express deep appreciation for the warm welcome and the assistance that we have received, from our esteemed colleagues in this Chamber, as we take our places and become familiar with the rules and proceedings of the Assembly, and begin to function in the role that we were elected to. We are grateful to have your commitment, your experience and your example. I look forward to working in co-operation with all the members of this Fortieth Legislature to meet the many and considerable challenges of our time, to build stronger communities, and to achieve a bright future for our great province.

As today's proceedings demonstrate, our interactions will at times be lively, our discussions animated, our debate robust, our disagreement sharp. But it is my hope that our tone will never be so strident, our exchanges will never be so hostile, our thinking never so entrenched, that we lose sight of the fact that there is more that binds us together than that drives us apart, and that we share a common goal, which is to work to secure the well-being and best interest for each of the 20,000 constituents that

we represent, and for all the people who call Manitoba home.

You learn a lot of lessons on the campaign trail. You learn the importance early of keeping first things first. You learn what it means to put it all on the line. You learn yourself—you learn to introduce yourself to strangers. You learn how to draw out the concerns and comments of other people and how to commit their responses to memory. You learn to remember names, and you learn to react with humility when you inevitably forget one. You learn to drink bad coffee, and altogether too much of it. But one of the most important lessons that I take away from the election process is the importance of teamwork.

For those of us in this Chamber, and I'm sure there are a few who are wired in such a way so as to prefer doing things themselves, the realization comes very quickly on a campaign that the undertaking is simply too large, the tasks too numerous, and there are not enough hours in the day. And that's where teamwork comes in. There is nothing so satisfying as to be part of an enterprise that is moving in a particular direction, whose individual members are confident in their field, and competent in their role, and willing to commit time and resources to achieve a common goal, and to have fun in the process.

The candidate is intrinsically motivated, fully aware of and committed to the work at hand, painfully aware of how high the stakes are. But it is a humbling thing when other people come along who express an interest in the work, fidelity to the cause, a belief in the candidate's suitability, and a willingness to accept a role at the expense of their own time and resources. The team that we built in Morden-Winkler riding was second to none. A set of very different people from very different backgrounds: a real estate agent, an accountant, a newspaper man, a stay-at-home mom with a background in public relations, a social worker, a young man in retail, a business consultant, a business owner, some friends, some families, some relatives, some acquaintances, but all who made an essential contribution to the overall effort, and helped achieve a victory that is not mine alone but one that we share. I am 'debted' to each of you and I am proud to have you on my team as prouder still to count them as my friends.

And I am so pleased that some of my campaign team members are present this afternoon in the Speaker's Gallery. It's my distinct pleasure to

welcome candidate's assistant, Derrick Klassen, Tammy Bisschop, Get out the Vote co-ordinator Shelley Friesen, my wife, who worked on all the technology, my father, Max Friesen, who was fundraising captain, as well as some well-wishers and friends, Larry and Patti Schroeder and Elmo Shareski. Thank you for joining me today.

For every candidate there is, of course, another much larger group of individuals who perform a myriad of other tasks: knocking out doors and handing out literature, stuffing envelopes, affixing postage, putting up signs, organizing events and entering data. And there is the gratitude that we try to express in words and there is the gratitude in our hearts that can never be fully expressed.

And a deeper gratitude—a debt of gratitude goes, of course, to my wife Shelley who I'm very glad that could be with us today in the session. I simply would not be standing here today if it were not for your love and support and confidence that she has in me. My children, Madeleine, Evan and Gwendolyn are in school today, but I was pleased that they were able to be here last week for the official swearing in ceremony, and my children reported after the event that it was a little long for their liking, but they were—they thought that the Clerk of the House was very kind and that the desserts were excellent. My children have been good sports throughout the many changes in our household over the last number of years. They've been very understanding and supportive of me and I'm very proud to be their dad.

These days, the general public's idea of politics and politicians can be cynical at times, that the business conducted here is nothing more than gamesmanship, of no consequence, of no relevance or indelibly marked by partisan interests. The media doesn't always report the untiring work of conscientious legislators to represent their constituents in this Chamber, at committee, in the constituency, in order to move society forward.

Those of us who serve in this place understand that there are other ideas that inform our commitment to public service. Those ideas were alive in the traditions of Manitoba politics stretching back to 1870 when Manitoba joined Confederation, ideas that such great leaders as Duff Roblin, Sterling Lyon and Gary Filmon upheld and many MLAs have carried on traditions based on the idea that we have a stake in each other; that Manitoba's best days still lie ahead; that a promising future is contingent on the willingness of individuals to each play their part to

effect positive change in lives and in communities; that by taking up the call to public service while we might not solve every problem, we will still get something meaningful done. These are the ideas that inspire me and cause me to stand here today.

My first association with this place was a visit to the Manitoba Legislature at age 12. I accompanied my father, a three-term mayor of the town of Morden, on his way to a meeting with his own MLA. Growing up as I did in a household with a father who was a keen player in municipal politics, a respect for community and public service was modelled and taught. Later I was active in high school on the debating team learning parliamentary cross-examination and impromptu styles of debating under the expert instruction of English teacher, Karen Gunther. I learned invaluable lessons about persuasive speaking, negotiation, compromise, the ability to speak on one's feet.

I can recall, actually, returning to the Legislative Building for the 1985 Western Debating Championships and having the honour at that time of meeting former Premier Duff Roblin and Lieutenant-Governor Pearl McGonigal at a reception. I am certain that I mumbled incoherently in the presence of such admirable Manitobans and I'm equally certain that they instantly forgave me for being a little star-struck.

After high school, I pursued music as a career. I earned university degrees in Winnipeg and Vancouver and returned to Manitoba where I completed my Education degree and for the next 12 years, I taught band in academic programs in school divisions in Winnipeg, in Steinbach and Morden. I have many fond memories of that time conducting bands, instructing wonderful students, performing the repertoire and getting to know colleagues across the province with a shared commitment to ensuring a strong place for the fine arts in public education.

Throughout my teaching career, I was committed to high standards of proficiency. I encouraged the idea that school should prepare students to take their place as good citizens in society with the knowledge and skills to be able to fully work in the modern world. I advocated for a common-sense approach to challenges in the system. For example, that academic progress should be reported to students and parents in accurate and comprehensible ways. It's my belief that education is quite simply the most important investment we can

make in building the future of Manitoba, the most important weapon in our arsenal to combat poverty, inequality, crime, disenfranchisement and despair.

\* (16:00)

But we have to make wise investments. Investing in education means much more than annually boosting education spending, it means that we need to honestly address the problems that plague our education system: unacceptable drop-out rates, obscure assessment methods, overburdened teachers. Manitoba currently falls short of producing clear outcomes in academic performance. A 2010 OECD report clearly shows that the performance of Manitoba teenagers in math, science, and reading is slipping. We can do better. We need to examine where the weaknesses lie and direct resources where needed.

We all have identity questions from time to time, but my circumstances at work finally forced a kind of moment of reckoning, and I felt duty bound to do something about it. For years I had quietly considered a career U-turn and five years ago, after many long conversations with my wife, Shelley, I took a leap and committed to a new path. I left the school classroom and returned to the university classroom for a program in management and administration with a vague notion of where I wanted the tide to carry me.

In 2008, I managed a federal election campaign and went on to serve in that office as executive assistant for a Member of Parliament, and in that role I acted as liaison to local government and industry and business. I flagged funding programs to the attention of local stakeholders, I managed case work, I worked on issues for employees and employers, new Canadians, seniors and students, community organizations, and agricultural producers. I had a unique vantage point of the key issues facing Morden-Winkler and the RM of Stanley and, quite simply, I loved coming to work in the morning.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell this House a little more about the Morden-Winkler riding. I am so fortunate to represent the best riding in Manitoba. People are proud to call Morden and Winkler and the RM of Stanley home for many reasons: safe and strong communities, affordable housing and taxes, jobs, opportunity for business, a burgeoning ag industry sector, industry, a strong retail sector, good schools, state-of-the-art health care facilities, recreational amenities, services for seniors, a thriving arts and cultural scene. And underlying these all, a

strong commitment to shared values and the family unit, a commitment to serve others and give back to the community, a proud independence, an unbeatable work ethic, a get-it-done attitude. There is an attitude of optimism and confidence where I come from. Allow me to relate just a few accounts that illustrate the kind of extraordinary things that are taking place in this riding.

Winkler is a growing community noted for its industrious, forward-thinking people, and no place is this more evident than in the recent initiative to create a new park in the centre of the city. Winkler's Bethel Heritage Park was officially opened this June after years of planning, fundraising, and construction. Committee Chair Willie J. Siemens was instrumental in the development of this new park on the site of the former Bethel Hospital. For his efforts he has been named the Winkler Foundation's Citizen of the Year, and I congratulate Willie on his award and the City of Winkler, the Winkler Horticultural Society, and the Winkler Heritage Society, on the unqualified success of this legacy project.

The \$1.5-million park is a jewel in the heart of the city. And throughout the park commemorative cairns and storyboards tell stories about Winkler and its people. Most significantly, on the east end of the park, a cenotaph to honour veterans, and on the west side, a cairn to recognize Mennonite conscientious objectors. These components tell the story of the community's diversity. And in the centre, a replica of New York's famous Bethesda Fountain, its waters symbolically bringing healing and reconciliation to the groups and the contrasting points of view.

The second account is from Morden where the same progress and ambition is evident. Back in 2009 Morden's community development officer, Cheryl Digby, and the chairman of Morden Community Development Corporation, John Wiens, identified the need to increase the viability of small businesses by helping to offset their start-up costs. They would do so by undertaking a major project to create an incubator mall. With assistance from the federal government's Community Assistance Fund, this 25,000-square-foot incubator mall was opened in March of 2010, and today not only are all nine units filled, but two of the original tenants are moving on, purchasing land in the Morden Industrial Park with plans to build and relocate.

On the other side of town, Morden is responding to the growing need for independent living

accommodations for seniors, working with Winnipeg-based Homestead Manitoba on the development of Homestead South, a \$16-million complex located in the new Pembina Connection Development area. The project is currently under construction and will feature one and two-bedroom suites with meal services, weekly housekeeping and activities. And I know the mayor and council are thrilled to welcome George Janzen, Vic Janzen and the rest of the Homestead Manitoba team to Morden for that company's first project outside the city of Winnipeg.

The riding I represent has many strengths but it also faces challenges. Winkler-Morden and the RM of Stanley face challenges related to capacity building. This area is growing and as the population rapidly increases, we need to focus on key priorities to make sure that we can accommodate the continuing growth. Priorities like roads and infrastructure, long-term care spaces for seniors, access to health care and school overcrowding. Our challenge is to achieve a solution for traffic on Highway 32 through Winkler. Highway 32 South is the main artery moving traffic north and south through the city of Winkler, through the industrial park and south to the international border and port of entry.

The City undertook a traffic count study which revealed that the roadway handles 15,000 vehicles per day, and despite that, this government has not prioritized the expansion of this roadway to four lanes. The mayor recently indicated that the City is not—simply asking for an appropriate distribution of existing highway-funding dollars, noting that traffic counts on Highway 32 are higher than many other twinned highways in Manitoba.

During the election, local governments repeatedly stated that they want leadership from the provincial government to help address this serious infrastructure deficit. However, the word infrastructure is not even mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. Manitoba needs a comprehensive long-term strategy to address the infrastructure deficit.

Our challenges to meet the demand for personal care home spaces—the recently announced construction of the new personal care home in Morden to replace the aging Tabor Home will help to meet this need, but concerns exist about the size of the facility relative to the increasing senior citizens population in the region. We must build a facility for

the future; not for yesterday. The fact is that the number of Manitobans over the age of 75 is expected to nearly double by the year 2036.

Six months ago there were over 1,300 Manitobans waiting for placement in a personal care home. The number of personal care home beds in Manitoba has not increased under the NDP government despite the growth of the health-care budget and despite over \$30 billion in transfer and equalization payments from Ottawa. We have to make seniors' issues a priority in health-care decision making. We must ensure that the care that seniors require is there when they need it.

Our challenge is to continue to keep Boundary Trails Health Centre strong. Boundary Trails Health Centre is a huge success story for southern Manitoba with 94 beds and exceptional staff who provide acute-care services to a population of 40 to 50,000. It represents the latest technology and most sophisticated building systems available, including CT scanning and an MRI that was the result of local fundraising efforts.

But local residents and front-line health-care professionals alike are increasingly concerned that the regional health authority is implementing a role for Boundary Trails as a provincial health-care facility, accepting large numbers of patients from all across the province for specialized surgical procedures, taking up limited beds and compromising the ability of local residents to receive timely access to care, medical services and rehab. If the RHA is recasting Boundary Trails as a level 3 health-care services provider, the government must invest in and expand the facility to make sure that the resources exist to accommodate the expanded mandate, that existing surgery, oncology and obstetrics programs and diagnostic and emergency services are not compromised for local citizens.

\*(16:10)

Immigration to south central Manitoba began in 1997 in a new way and has accelerated to address a severe shortage of human resources, specifically, in the skilled-labour workforce. Over the past 10 years, the Provincial Nominee Program has helped many workers come to southern Manitoba and has made Winkler and Morden among the fastest growing places in the province. The Morden-Winkler area is now home to individuals who come from 98 countries. South Central Immigrant Services estimates that a thousand individuals are immigrating

to the area each year. Morden is expecting another 20 families.

Highway 32 south, personal care home spaces, stresses on our health-care system, meeting the needs of a growing population; these are some of the challenges facing Winkler, Morden and the RM of Stanley. Getting the job done will require real commitment, and locally elected officials have shown themselves equal to that task. But we need more than local cooperation to succeed; we need the participation of this provincial government, a commitment on their part to acknowledge their responsibility and to carry their load, to pay their share for this region of Manitoba that contributes so much to our provincial economy.

I have sat at kitchen tables and boardroom tables and coffee shop tables throughout the riding with people these past months who have talked about what is important to them. They've expressed their views; they've challenged me; they've offered me encouragement, advice and prayers. I share their principles of hard work, determination, co-operation, teamwork, honesty, personal integrity and service to others, all of which find their root in my own faith. I am deeply honoured by the confidence placed in me by the Morden-Winkler constituents, and I endeavour to represent them in this place to the best of my abilities.

I look forward to getting to work with my colleagues on building a better Manitoba; a Manitoba that asks the question, how do we pay, and learns to stand on its own two feet and does not rely indefinitely on equalization payments from the federal government and public debt to finance its future; a Manitoba that looks to improve conditions for families and individuals by taking aim at the high tax burden that Manitobans continue to bear; a Manitoba that is serious about making our communities safer; a Manitoba that will shift the emphasis in health care from a ballooning bureaucracy to strengthening front-line services for local residents; a Manitoba that tackles the problems that plague our schools with a common-sense approach and doesn't simply offload responsibility to teachers; a Manitoba that recognizes the tremendous contribution that the Morden-Winkler riding is making to this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** I want to begin my remarks by offering my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on assuming the

Speaker's chair. I—and I will do my utmost, as your deputy, to assist you in that regard. I have to say, when I was contemplating seeking the position, I did have some reservations because I knew that, had I succeeded, that I would not be able to participate as much in the debate. And, as many of you know, I do tend to take a partisan approach at times to some of the issues, and that truly would have been very painful for me to spend the next four years in this Chamber and not be able to fully express myself as to how I feel on the issues. So you do have my heartfelt congratulations and I will carry on from my position here.

I want to be—also give my sincere congratulations to the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), our First Minister, on a truly historic victory. There's no other way to describe it. A fourth majority government in modern Manitoba times is unheard of, and to achieve that with an increased majority, on top of all things, indicates to me that he has truly assumed his undisputed role as our Premier now, that he is no longer within the shadow of our former leader, and I know that he will lead us well in the four or eight or 12 years to come. And I would like to acknowledge his past services, our Minister of Finance position that doesn't get as much of the limelight as the Premier does, but his hand on the tiller over the 10 years that he was the Finance Minister, the 10 consecutive balanced budgets, the growth in our economy of upward of 50 per cent, all of those good works of his behind the scenes, in large part, contributed to the three majority governments that we had leading up to our re-election just a few weeks ago. So, my hat's off to our Premier in that regard.

I do want to congratulate all of the new members who have joined us here in the Legislature, I—by my count, 14 new members. Almost a quarter of our caucus has changed out, and I want to acknowledge the good works of all of those members who have left us. And I know that their replacements are going to do very well in their stead, and I do look forward to their speeches and their participation in the debate and in the management of our province going forward.

I want to also thank my campaign team. It was a hard-fought battle in the Interlake, never a yellow dog seat, in my mind. I never take it for granted that we're just going to win time and again. And all of us worked very hard to achieve this re-election through some very difficult times, I have to say, with the flood and so forth, which I will speak to in greater



detail in a few moments. But just to thank all of the people that came from outside of my constituency to help me, in addition to all of my executive and, of course, my wife who has stood behind me now for four terms. They say behind every successful man is a very surprised woman, and my wife has been four times surprised now, but she has been an absolute pillar in support of me, a driving force behind a lot of the work that goes unrecognized in a campaign. And once again we together have succeeded in being re-elected.

I look forward to serving a new constituency. The Interlake has changed considerably. With the redistribution, I've picked up a lot of territory on the west side of the Interlake, the RMs of St. Laurent and Coldwell, of course, and I now go across The Narrows into the Westlake area, picking up communities such as Eddystone, Cayer, Reykjavik, as well as the Ebb and Flow First Nations. So I do look forward to the new areas. It's going to be very exciting meeting new people and learning the issues there.

And I want to look back as well to thank people in other areas of the Interlake that have now left, in particular, the people that live in the community of Riverton. Those were some of my strongest pulls over the 12 years that I was in office, and I now pass the torch on to the member for Gimli, himself a man of Viking heritage. So he will fit in well there, I know, and I wish him well in the community of Riverton.

I have to say goodbye to the RM of Armstrong, also some good support from the people there, as well as people from the area of Hecla Island as well.

And I might add that I say goodbye to the south basin of Lake Winnipeg as well. Prior to the redistribution, almost all of Lake Winnipeg—there was one iota around the harbour of Gimli that wasn't in the area—and all of Lake Manitoba. These great lakes of ours were in my constituency, and I now relinquish the south basin to other members of the Legislature. But water issues will continue to be very important to me, the issues of the fishery, something that is a fascinating field of endeavour, but very political, very challenging. I will remain focused on those issues as we go forward.

\* (16:20)

Something that's going to be very important to me, going forward, something that I'm going to

focus a lot of my time on are First Nations issues. I now represent nine First Nations communities in the Interlake, with the inclusion of the Ebb and Flow First Nation on the west side of Lake Manitoba, as well as numerous Métis communities. Of course, obviously, the community of St. Laurent comes to mind. So these issues will be very important to me as I go forward. The challenges on First Nations communities we're all aware of—huge challenges in terms of living conditions, housing, health issues and so forth, not to mention flooding issues. It's a true twist of fate that historically most of these communities have ended up, it seems, in flood plains. And I look to the nine communities that I represent, and pretty much all of them were impacted by the flood event of this year, but unfortunately flooding is nothing new to First Nations people. I only have to look to the communities of Fisher River Cree Nation, the Peguis First Nation. These are communities that have suffered year after year sometimes more than once in one year from flooding. This is one of the greatest challenges that I face as the MLA for the Interlake and I say here that I will focus a lot of my time—this will be my—primary objective will be to try and address these challenges.

I look to the flood that we experienced, are still experiencing here in Manitoba, specifically in the Interlake around Lake Manitoba, and I would like to take the experience forward into subsequent years. The knowledge that we have accumulated in fighting floods, the unity amongst our people, I think that we should not lose this momentum, that I would take this on to communities like Peguis and Fisher River and try and work with our federal counterparts if they're willing to come to the table to see that hopefully we could resolve these issues sooner rather than later as we go forward.

Issues of technical vocational training is also a good opportunity on First Nation communities. So often we're struggling over jurisdiction and the federal government has the fiduciary responsibility to deliver so many of these services, but unfortunately they have been sadly lacking on many of these fronts so I'm very proud to be a member of a government that has taken the initiative. And I acknowledge the member for Kewatinook (Mr. Robinson) for his efforts, in particular in taking it forward that making the point that First Nations people are Manitoba citizens as well as citizens of Canada and if the federal government won't step up to the plate, then we will do so and have done so and will continue to do so.

The flood, of course, has been absolutely catastrophic for the community that I represent, and I'm very heartened that they did re-elect me. I know that members opposite did their utmost to maybe reverse that outcome, and I noticed a great number of them, particularly up and down the east shoreline of Lake Manitoba, doing their utmost to basically fire people up to politicize this event, which was most unfortunate, most unfortunate, and it's unfortunately been the case since the very beginning.

I think back to December and January when we were preparing for this flood, and we knew it was coming. We knew it was coming and we were— we committed a sizable amount of money. We committed \$100 million to put toward preparation, and the reaction of members opposite was, well, why are you spending so much. You're just grandstanding. Talk about lack of foresight, a classic example in that regard, and from that moment forward that was their effort, was to make political hay out of this, a very unfortunate approach to this and fortunately, the people of the Interlake saw through that and saw fit to return me once again to this Chamber, and I will make it my duty over the next four years to see that our government follows through on the substantial commitments that we have made to address this unprecedented crisis.

And make no mistake, this is the flood of the millennium for our province. This is the greatest natural disaster that we have experienced in modern Manitoba history. It eclipses the flood of 1997 by far and there's a lot of work to do and I take my hat off once again to the government of Manitoba for the programs that they have committed to, whether it's to First Nation peoples, whether it's to farmers, whether it's to permanent residents, and above and beyond that, and that's a point that has to be made here as well.

In the flood of 1997, we had something called the JERI program. The federal government of the day acknowledged that this was a major disaster, that more than just disaster financial assistance was necessary and that's certainly the case today here in Manitoba and we continue to wait for the current federal government in Ottawa to acknowledge this, to step up to the plate and start treating this as the disaster that it is rather than a political football. And I can range across the board on this. We could talk about cottagers—cottagers not eligible for disaster financial assistance. We said we were going to step up for cottagers. We continue to wait for Ottawa to acknowledge that.

When I look to the farming community, all of the ranchers that have been flooded out along there to date, to my knowledge all the federal government has committed to cost-share is the movement of cattle to higher ground this spring—no talk about feed or freight assistance, no talk about infrastructure improvements, no talk about forage restoration in subsequent years. It's disgraceful that the federal government continues to sit on its hands and ignore the greatest disaster that we have experienced in modern times, and I could take it further.

I look to the communities around Lake St. Martin, the First Nation communities, and there's four of them that are impacted there, not just three. We've got the Dauphin River First Nation at the end of the Dauphin River. Two years running now they have not been able to fish because 513 has been overtopped with water. A good example of disaster financial assistance doesn't cover off loss of income. They got nothing last year when the road was flooded and they couldn't access the fish station.

This year this government has committed to it. We await participation from Ottawa on that critical front. We await their participation in regard to the community of Little Saskatchewan who bought 15 or 16 quarters of land in the RM of Grahamdale to move to higher ground. They've been waiting as long, or longer, than I've been in office here. More than 12 years they've been waiting for Ottawa to acknowledge that that land should be converted to reserve status. They're still waiting. Where is Ottawa? Why can't they wake up and recognize that people are in crisis here?

The community of Lake St. Martin itself—without a doubt the hardest impacted community across our entire province—the entire community was wiped out and is under water. The community is under total evacuation to this very day. And I know that members of our Cabinet have been working very hard over all of the summer, into the fall, to try and put a plan together to address this. And again we wait and continue to wait for both levels of government to step up and make sure that we can address this.

Let's look to the emergency outlet as another classic example. This is infrastructure that should have been put in place 50 years ago. When the Fairford water control structure was built in 1961, that's when an outlet out of Lake St. Martin should have been put in place and it wasn't. I know it was studied once in 1978 by—oh, it was a Conservative

government in Manitoba at the time. They came to the conclusion that the cost benefit wasn't there. I wonder if would revisit that poor decision today, given the impact around those communities.

So this government is stepping up to the plate. This government is taking the step that should have been done years ago. Like they say, the best time to plant a tree was 30 years ago. The second best time is right now, and that's exactly what this government is doing—a very expensive project, I might add. Estimated cost of it \$100 million, but absolutely necessary, the final link in the chain for waters around lake, around all of our province, and we're doing it.

I'm very proud to be a member of a government that has taken this initiative. Once again we await participation financially from the federal government because this is an emergency outlet. This is necessary to save all of the people around Lake Manitoba and, specifically, Lake St. Martin. If we don't take this action, Lake St. Martin will hit a level of 809. That's nine feet above the maximum range of regulation. That entire region will be even further devastated than it is. So for anybody to suggest that this not an emergency action, that this is not fundamental to the recovery of this flood, I have to say, pull your head out of the sand, so, and on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

\* (16:30)

But I see I've already spoken longer than I should have, but I will have opportunity, I know, over the course of the next four years to address this.

I conclude once again by committing to the people who re-elected me that I will do my utmost to see that the damages that they incurred through no fault of their own, that they are fully compensated for and return to their original state.

Make no mistake, the people who live around Lake Manitoba bore the brunt of this flood for the benefit of all of the people of Manitoba, and now it is incumbent upon all of us as taxpayers, as citizens, to step up to the plate for them and put our tax dollars on the table to see that they are dealt with in a just manner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your election as Speaker. I'm confident you will do a fine job and it is good to see others learning on the job, as I am, but

you have a few more advisers in front of you and they do a great job.

Congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. I feel very privileged to join you here.

My campaign started last December when Rick Borotsik announced he would not be running for re-election in Brandon West. My most important initial discussion was with my lovely wife, Aynsley. We've been married for quite a while, over 26 years, and she's been my patient adviser, very patient for over 30 years.

So, after an encouraging meeting with Rick, I met with a good friend, Mike Leech, and we spent a couple of hours trying to plan how to go about running for the nomination for the Progressive Conservative Party in Brandon West. We engaged a great team of friends and volunteers and proceeded to sell enough memberships and get enough of our voters out to win that nomination, although Terry Jaenen, my opponent, ran a very good campaign and he—she kept us challenged right to the very end.

Lee Jebb, one of my good friends and advisers, said the nomination campaign was a great training ground for an election campaign, so that's where we started in next. The organizing for that campaign started immediately, and every member of the nomination team would play a very important role, as would many others that we met and recruited along the way. We knew the election would be a challenge, but we also wanted to make sure that our team had fun while running a respectful campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I like building teams, engaging them, finding the right fit for individuals and then letting them do the work. Lori Dangerfield had been my chair for the nomination campaign, and she did a fabulous job, but while she still wanted to be involved she was concerned that she didn't have the time and was concerned that she didn't have the experience to run an election campaign. Lori always made sure that I was well-grounded, and I did prevail upon her to interview me for her local TV access station and, of course, she was very well prepared.

Bob Harrison came on board as the chair of the campaign, and he proved to be very patient with also a knack for door-to-door campaigns.

Ramona Coey was my scheduler, and she put together a great team to go with me from door to door as we covered just about every door in Brandon

West. Even when the candidate was tired and not really sure he wanted to go out, she knew that as soon as she got me to the first door we'd be ready to go complete another poll.

Now fundraising is an important part of any campaign, and Dale McKay put together a team to go out and get the necessary funding for our plans. They did a great job while Dave Shuttleworth and Matt Bolley made sure we didn't overspend and that we met Election Manitoba's financial reporting requirements.

One area I hadn't thought about very much was signs. I'd always seen them in every campaign but really didn't think about how they were put up or maintained. We were indeed very fortunate to engage the individuals who worked on Rick Borotsik's campaign. George Ranson and Walter Haslett put together a very efficient team who did a great job of getting the signs out in the right places and repairing and maintaining them. We brought on Cal Coey to make sure that they had all the right signs and supplies at the right time, and Cal pitched in putting up signs, helping to make sure that the sign crews all ran smoothly and occasionally attending meetings.

Our campaign office was in the old CKX television station and brought home how little visual media there is in Brandon and in western Manitoba, indeed, outside all of Winnipeg. Now Diane Fotheringham did a great job setting up and running the office, and we had a neat environment to co-ordinate the campaign.

The main day-to-day organizing was done by Chris Kennedy and by my sister, Sherry Helwer. They created a team that enabled me to focus on meeting the constituents in Brandon West and getting ready for the many, many forums that we had to go to. We were invited to well over 15 and we were able to attend 12, some of them on the same day, and we had John Green and John-Jim Green and John Burgess, who guided me through the preparation for those forums.

Sherry made sure that Jeff Harwood and Lois Fowler had a great list of volunteers, over 150 people in total. I was constantly amazed at how much work these volunteers were able to accomplish, and I remain indebted to them and thank them at every opportunity.

Chris organized the database and phoning with the help of Kevin Sumner and Garry Braun. Donna

Shuttleworth showed us how to develop a phone campaign and spent many hours on the phone with constituents. Lee Jebb, who I mentioned earlier, took care of the advertising with the able help of Mike Leech on the creative side, and Lee and NRG Signs put together a design, the design of the signs on my truck, and gave me a moving billboard throughout the campaign to get the message out to Brandon West.

All the while my family was great support. With Aynsley doing whatever needed to be done, her children, Adam, Carolyn, Andrew, Jessica, and Jessica's friend, Nevin Stobbe, all being great support, out knocking on doors, dropping brochures and being there on election day. My mother and father, Ron and Vera Helwer, helped fundraise, knock on doors, run the office and keep everyone fed. They've always been great supporters and they were really a great help during the last 10 months.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things that happen during a campaign that the candidate really doesn't need to know about, and while there are many people who guided me, two really kept the campaign moving forward. Chris Kennedy and Sherry Helwer were those two people who did the most and were probably noticed the least. They made sure all the volunteers and details were taken care of in order that I could focus on meeting the constituents of Brandon West. I really feel like I can't thank all the volunteers enough but will just keep thanking them at every opportunity.

We really feel that one of the keys to winning the campaign was getting out and knocking on doors with a great group. There were many, many people out with me, but the ones who were out the most were Jim McCrae, Murray Blight, Derek Jackson, Gerald Stitt, Kelly Matheson, Greg Crisanti, Cec Foster, Ron Helwer, Frank Thomas, Jeff Harwood, Bob Harrison, and Chris Kennedy. We were very fortunate to have both the leader and Jen McFadyen out knocking on doors with us showing how it was done.

I also had two former MLAs, Jim McCrae and my uncle, Ed Helwer, who were great to walk with, as I could ask them just about any question and get a kind and patient answer. Thank you to many of the current MLAs also here for their patient advice.

You know, I was always amazed at the door by how much people wanted to meet me and share their stories. I'm humbled by how they put such a high level of trust in me, not only that they were able to

vote for me but also that they would entrust me with their stories and hopes. Crime and personal safety was one issue that came up very often at the doors. People shared many stories of their personal experiences with crime and their frustrations. Many are concerned about the safety of friends and family in Winnipeg. Some of these stories were about property crimes, but there were also the stories about violent crime that is on the rise in Brandon.

Education and taxes were issues that are common and linked. Just over 12 years ago when I was president of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, the budget for the Brandon School Division was just under \$40 million, and class size was the critical issue with the average size being 20.1. This year in Brandon, the budget is just under \$80 million. Class size again remains the critical issue with the average size being 22. Much higher budgets on the backs of Brandon taxpayers with a higher class size is what we currently have in Brandon.

\* (16:40)

This government has a class size of 20 as a target. Is it an understatement that I think that there's a problem? Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College were also topics at the door. The university because of the pending strike that's now entering into its third week and the second strike during the degree for many of those several—of those students.

I know there are several options as to—opinions as to the cause and how to resolve the strike, but I think the plight of the students is the one that gets lost in the discussion. Two or three weeks is an eternity to someone who is a student, and the impact on his or her studies and job prospects is critical. ACC's move to the north campus seems to be stalled, and neither institution warranted a mention in the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, some of you in Winnipeg might have noticed that we had a flood in Brandon and in western Manitoba this spring—just a small one. It comes to be an issue; it continues to be an issue with many people in Brandon. Will it happen again? How can we better prepare for it? Many were forced out of their homes and businesses, and we had an intensive flurry of dike building to prevent major flooding in Brandon. Volunteers and staff did a great job topping up dikes once and again and maintaining them.

I was out sandbagging and I met many volunteers from outside of Brandon that came to help when they heard we needed them. Many from Brandon also showed up as we often sandbagged for hours at a time, with people dropping out of line for a quick drink and then going right back at it. Our community pulled together to prevent a catastrophe, and we were inches from that catastrophe for several days. I have to question the forecasting.

In late March, I drove out to Calgary to visit our son, and I stopped to visit friends in the Qu'Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan. They showed me pictures of all the snow they'd had that year. We had the discussions of how water-sodden the land was from the previous spring, and we looked at all the fields. They were full of water, and all had to drain through Manitoba and through Brandon. They all knew we had more water coming our way than we'd ever seen. Why didn't this government?

Business and farms continued to live with terrible financial impacts of the floods. My wife, Aynsley, our daughter, Carolyn, and I helped over 60 people evacuate the Lady of the Lake restaurant and—restaurant and store, as Stream 'n' Wood evacuated next door. It took us just five hours to load up trailers with everything in the store and restaurant, fridges, stoves, pianos, knick-knacks like you wouldn't believe. It's unbelievable now how much work people are able to do when focused. Bridget Shaw, her partners and employees are still feeling the effects of that flood, as is Warren Murray in Stream 'n' Wood. The mortgage, taxes and suppliers still need to be paid even if there's no income. This was, indeed, Manitoba's rainy day.

I mentioned the farm sector. It may have come to a surprise to you in Winnipeg, but the flood will have an effect on your wholesale and retail sectors in Winnipeg. When there's no money on the farm, they don't buy, they don't spend. That eventually comes around to have an impact on all of Manitoba. Farmers are now hit with income that's deferred from last year, no expenses because they couldn't plant a crop and no revenue from this year, but taxes that still need be paid. This government and the federal government could look at allowing that deferred income to be carried over to next year in light of the flood. Some farms have also—already incorporated to minimize the impact, but then they also face increased legal and accounting expenses for something they really hadn't planned to do and perhaps really did not to be done except in these extreme circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, health care is also an issue at many doors, and the stories I heard were rarely complimentary. Some of you here know that our family has our own health-care story. Just over two years ago my father-in-law, George Horne, was admitted to the hospital in Brandon. He, unfortunately, passed away in there. He often spoke to me about running for political office and would have been very proud at what we have accomplished and would have been a great cheerleader.

At the same time our daughter, Jessica, was told that she would need a kidney transplant and started on dialysis three times a week. We learned a great deal about the health-care system. Dr. Riche and the staff of the dialysis unit showed us how well things could go even in the tougher times. You know, we learned that the nurses and the doctors do a great job; they're caring and engaged. But even they are frustrated by a system overrun with forms, reports and bureaucracy. We seem to have forgotten that it is about the patient.

I could tell you many, many stories about our journey, and I'm sure that you have many stories as well. During a late-night session as the election campaign came to a close, one of our volunteers, Derek Jackson, observed that people who think Manitoba health's—Manitoba's health care is okay have never had a loved one in hospital care.

We had many friends come forward to help us during our time when Jessica was ill, great friends, great family, even people we hardly knew offered to be tested to see if their kidney was a match to Jessica's. I took a leave of absence from our company, Shur-Grow Farm Services, as our staff, my father and sister were very able to make up for my absence. Family and friends were again a great help and unlike this government, we had a rainy day fund that we'd saved for a rainy day. This was our rainy day.

In the end, Jessica's friend, Nevin Stobbe, and Aynsley were good matches, and Aynsley ultimately became the donor. When Nevin and I saw Dr. Kouhleck walk into the waiting room at Health Sciences Centre a year ago last June, we knew by looking at him that he had hit a home run and that both Aynsley and Jessica had come through with flying colours. I knew that we still had both Jessica and Aynsley. I'm looking forward to visiting Dr. Riche and the fine staff at the kidney clinic and

the transplant unit this Wednesday when they celebrate their innovation nights.

Our lives now are a little more normal with the exception of the election campaign. As I'm sure you may realize by now family and friends are pretty important to Aynsley and I and we've made many new friends throughout this campaign. As a surprise to me Aynsley arranged to have our four children with us on election night. Adam is at home with us. Jessica and Nevin came from Boissevain, Andrew from Calgary and Carolyn from Vancouver. We're able to move on and now, with the help of many volunteers and Brandon West constituents, I'm able to join you here in the Legislature.

I have one last person to thank and that is Rick Borotsik. He was a great help during the election and we certainly would not have been successful this time around if he had not paved the way in the previous election. I know he was a shy person in the House, but some of you have gotten to know him.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want you to know that I have long been a booster of Brandon, western Manitoba agriculture and business, and I will try to make sure that their voices are heard. If you don't pay attention to us, you might hear from us more than you like. It's your choice. We know it's often difficult to get Winnipeg's attention but that's why those of us from Brandon and Brandon West don't come with problems and complaints; we come with solutions. It's those solutions that we offer in order to continue to build Manitoba. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before we recognize the next speaker, the honourable Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) on House business.

#### House Business

**Ms. Howard:** Mr. Speaker, on House business. Would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave of the House to rescind the wording of the sessional order adopted by the House last Thursday and instead have the wording of the sessional order replaced by the wording as follows with the understanding that the sessional order as reworded is deemed to have been adopted by the House.

\* (16:50)

The following sessional order applied to the fall sitting of the First Session of the Fortieth Legislature despite any rule or practice of this House. The

Throne Speech debate to be concluded November 1st, 2011 (1) if the motion for the address and reply to the Speech from the Throne for the fall sitting of the first session of the Fortieth Legislature has not proceeded to a vote before Tuesday, November 1st, 2011, then that day is to be considered the eighth and final day of debate.

At 4:30 p.m. on that day the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and without seeing the clock, put every question necessary to dispose of (a) any outstanding amendment or subamendment to the main motion for the address and reply to the Speech from the Throne and (b) the main motion for the address and reply to the Speech from the Throne. The interruption is to take place and the required action is to be taken whether or not the orders of the day have been called.

Priority of actions to be taken: (2) If at the specified time a point of order or a matter of privilege has been raised and is under consideration by the House, the point of order or matter of privilege is to be set aside and no other point of order or matter of privilege may be raised until the required action has been taken and all matters relating to the required action have been resolved. After that, and without seeing the clock, the Speaker must deal with the point of order or matter of privilege.

Adjournment: (3) At the conclusion of the action required under paragraph 1 and any action required under paragraph 2, the Speaker must adjourn the House without a motion for adjournment. The House then stands adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan).

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to rescind the wording of the sessional order adopted by the House last Thursday and instead have the wording of the sessional order replaced by the wording as follows with the understanding that the sessional order as reworded is deemed to have been adopted by the House? And to adopt—if there's leave of the House, to adopt the sessional order as is printed versus read. Is that agreed?

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I just seek clarification on that, Mr. Speaker. As printed? As read. Okay.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it agreed to give leave to amend the sessional order? *[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** This does look awfully familiar and in a very good way. It is my deep honour, of course, to represent the wonderfully diverse constituency of Wolseley for now my third term. The constituency, unbeknownst to many people, actually includes some or all of six completely different neighbourhoods. These would include West Broadway, where I now live, Wolseley itself, the Spence and St. Matthews neighbourhoods, along with Armstrong Point, and the newest addition, thanks to boundary redistribution, of Assiniboine. Indeed, the Wolseley constituency now not only includes the Legislature itself, so I'll welcome all of you to my constituency, but it also, I discovered while canvassing on Assiniboine Avenue, it now includes the head offices of every single major provincial party in Manitoba except my own. So the—I'm sure those factors all by themselves will lead to some rather interesting casework for the MLA, but that's what we sign up for when we ask for this position, Mr. Speaker.

I know I don't have all that much time before my time will run out, but hopefully I'll be able to squeeze in a few thank-yous and then resume my presentation tomorrow. My starting point, of course, as it is for most if not all of us, is with the people that know us best, when we're at our best and when we're at our worst and that, of course, is our family.

And the Altemeyer family tree is an interesting one. Technically speaking, my brother is also my nephew as my parents have adopted one of their grandchildren, I want to thank by thanking my two amazing little kids and my partner and her child and my parents, all of them for their amazing patience and understanding during a ridiculously hectic campaign which all of us have just come through. Also, thanks are owed to my kids' mom and to her parents throughout all of this.

And my campaign team was, as it always has been, just simply incredible. You know things are going well, Mr. Speaker, when you've opened up the campaign office and put the signs on the window. And then you come back from canvassing one day a few weeks into it and the signs are gone because you've run out. And the lawn signs are needed on people's lawns.

For the third time in a row, Mr. Speaker, I'm so honoured, but our team together we won every single poll in every single of those—one of those six neighbourhoods that I'm proud to represent. And we increased our vote for the third time as well, and I just cannot say enough about the collective efforts of people like Boyd and Harry and Joann and Donna and Marjorie and Miles and Ryan, Will, Louis, Marion, Carlos and Liz and hundreds of other incredible people who quite simply left me speechless on election night.

For these folks and for everyone else—and MLAs probably know this, regardless of our political stripe better than most people in our society—but for these people to donate what is literally thousands of hours of their lives for a cause which is larger than themselves, larger than their own narrow self-interest so that you can be their representative in the hope that you will carry their banner and their issues and their hopes and dreams and make a positive difference in their lives through the amazing opportunities we have here in government at the Legislature, is just about the most humbling experience, other than perhaps the birth of your own children, that a person can experience. And I just hope that someday I manage to figure out a way to thank those individuals in way that feels like I have fully captured the significance of my gratitude for what they have done. And for the third time in a row I think I failed in doing that. But with any luck there will be future opportunities to have a chance to do that.

These remarkable people came from every single parts of the amazing Wolseley constituency. They also came from outside of the Wolseley constituency, personal friends and people that I'd never met before but who believed in our government's message and in what we were looking to accomplish, and they got involved. And there's one thing I've learned, Mr. Speaker, in my previous two terms here in this Chamber is that folks in every single one of those neighbourhoods are passionately committed to and engaged in renewing their communities. And when I was on the doorstep, without exception, in each area people expressed their enormous gratitude for the efforts that our government has already brought into place.

The changes that have already occurred in their neighbourhood that they now see when they walk down their street, when they take their kids to school, when they're able to drop their children off at a daycare centre which didn't exist a few years ago but now exists because of the collective work that our government has done with community groups and child-care providers, when they're able to walk past a new community garden that didn't use to exist, when they're able to go to a new recreation facility or new affordable housing in my constituency that didn't exist—all of these things, Mr. Speaker, are recognized by the remarkable citizens of Wolseley. And it's just such a treat to be able to see that magic happen when the resources and the political commitment of government is brought together with the concerns and passions and legitimate needs of local citizens to make a difference not just for themselves, but for everyone who lives in their neighbourhood and for everyone who's going to live there for years to come.

That type of experience, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, makes it very, very easy for me to wake up in the morning with fire in the belly and looking forward to working at the community level with individuals and with my remarkable colleagues here at the Manitoba Legislature. So I will close off my comments there, and we can resume this remarkable presentation in a little while.

Someone's telling me I have to keep talking so—how about—how about them Jets, Mr. Speaker? You know, it's kind of nice to be able to say that. We couldn't walk downtown and ask that question not too many years ago either.

I've had the privilege of attending a Jets game. It was their first victory at home—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley will have 22 minutes remaining.

And the time being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 24, 2011

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