

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

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

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The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stu	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 11, 2007

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

### *PRAYER*

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Portage La Prairie, on a point of order?

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I do believe in conduct of our House rules there are not to be any cameras directly above your seated place, Sir, and I wonder whether or not the cameraman is aware of that.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Portage La Prairie, he is correct. All cameras should be at the doorways, and I will take it up with the press gallery after when I have some time. Okay. But it will be soon.

### **ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

##### **Bill 206—The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that Bill 206, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act; Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels et la prévention du vol d'identité, be now read the first time.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, this bill governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in the private sector. It also establishes a duty to notify, for those organizations to notify individuals who may be affected when the personal information the organization has collected is lost, stolen or compromised.

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

##### **Bill 207—The Elections Amendment and Elections Finances Amendment Act**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I would move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that Bill 207, The Elections Amendment

and Elections Finances Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, this bill ensures that there's more public transparency on investigations that Elections Manitoba is conducting, something which we believe is important because the current legislation prohibits Elections Manitoba from being able to share with the public as to what's happening with investigations. Thank you.

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

### **PETITIONS**

#### **Provincial Trunk Highway 10**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Provincial Trunk Highway No. 10 separates two schools and residential districts in Forrest, Manitoba, forcing students and residents to cross under very dangerous circumstances.

Strategies brought forward to help minimize the danger pose either significant threats to the safety of our children or are not economically feasible.

Provincial Highway No. 10 serves as a route for an ever-increasing volume of traffic, including trucks, farm vehicles, working commuters, campers and the transport of dangerous goods.

Traffic levels are expected to escalate further due to projected industrial expansion.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to act in this situation by considering the construction of a four-lane highway that would bypass around the village of Forrest.

This petition signed by Teresa Campbell, Jean Haslen, Rae Mullens and many, many more, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Lynn Lake Friendship Centre**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Cree Nation Child and Family Service Caring Agency is a provincially mandated First Nation child protection and welfare agency, operated under authority of the provincial Ministry of Family Services and Housing, the mission is to help keep children, families and communities safe and secure and promote healthy citizen development and well-being.

Lynn Lake is located 320 kilometres northwest of Thompson, Manitoba, on PR 391. There is no social worker living and working in the community. The goals of the ministry are implemented from a distance and supplemented with infrequent and short visits from a social worker located in Thompson.

The Lynn Lake Friendship Centre is a designated safe house and receiving home providing accommodations, services and care to children and families experiencing difficulties in a safe environment. The designated safe house and receiving home are forced closed at this time due to outstanding accounts payable due from Cree Nation Child and Family Services Caring Agency.

Failure to have a social worker based in Lynn Lake providing immediate and sustained services and forcing the receiving home and designated safe house to close, children and families experiencing difficulties in Lynn Lake and area have their health and safety placed in great jeopardy.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) to consider restaffing the social worker position in Lynn Lake in order to provide needed services to northwestern Manitoba in a timely manner.

To request the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider mediating outstanding accounts payable due to the Lynn Lake Friendship Centre by Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency in order to allow the designated safe house and

receiving home to resume regular operations and services and continued utilization of these operations and services.

This is signed by Tracy Thomson, Nicole Smith, Harry Merasty and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

\* (13:40)

### **Rapid Transit System**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

For decades, indecision and lack of support by NDP and Conservative governments in Manitoba has meant Winnipeg has been denied a much-needed rapid transit system.

While a rapid transit system has particular benefits for students, for seniors and for those on low incomes, all Winnipeggers benefit from building a quicker, more environmentally friendly rapid transit system.

Rapid transit is one of the major components of building a livable and sustainable 21st century city that decreases dependence on importing gas from other provinces and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Rapid transit is a critical component in moving Winnipeg towards smart growth policies that focus on quality of life instead of decades of dumb growth under consecutive NDP and Conservative governments.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to consider ensuring that Winnipeg has a rapid transit system as soon as possible.

Signed by Bob Kleinmeyer, Cindy Kleinmeyer, Mary Lane and many others.

### **Crocus Investment Fund**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The government needs to uncover the whole truth as to what ultimately led to over 33,000 Crocus shareholders to lose tens of millions of dollars.

The provincial Auditor's report, the Manitoba Securities Commission's investigation, the RCMP investigation and the involvement of our courts, collectively, will not answer the questions that must be answered in regard to the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Manitobans need to know why the government ignored the many warnings that could have saved the Crocus Investment Fund.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to co-operate in uncovering the truth in why the government did not act on what it knew and to consider calling a public inquiry on the Crocus Fund fiasco.

This is signed by S. Bourgeois, P. Bourgeois, A. Bourgeois and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** I'm pleased to table the Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the year ended December 31, 2006.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I'd like to table the following reports: the 2006 Appeal Commission and Medical Panel Annual Report, the 2006 Workers Compensation Board Annual Report and the 2007-2011 WCB Five-Year Plan.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us Mr. Harold Taylor who is a former Member for Wolseley.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Lake Winnipeg Pollution Levels

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, with the arrival of summer many Manitobans, along with many hundreds of visitors to our province, like to enjoy the magnificent beaches along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Many Manitobans, as we also know, have cottages along the lake and spend a good portion of their summer months living along this great Manitoba asset.

We know it has been a major issue in campaigns. We know the government has run major pre-writ taxpayer-funded advertising campaigns related to Lake Winnipeg. After campaigning on a commitment to do something about the appalling state of Lake Winnipeg, we have a report today, only 20 days after the election, indicating that bacteria counts are at dangerously high levels at some beaches along the lake.

My question to the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) is: Why are you putting the health of children, why are you putting the health of Manitobans at risk by failing to take action with respect to Lake Winnipeg?

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his first question ever about Lake Winnipeg since becoming—*[inaudible]*. Perhaps he's changed his position of removing all the water regs in the province of Manitoba.

It's nice to know that the Leader of the Opposition is finally looking at Lake Winnipeg. He'll realize that it's important not only to work on phosphorus but also nitrogen, which is something that has been sorely lacking from what the Tories rather sadly called their water protection plan.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I see, in typical fashion, the Member for Riel planning to leave Cabinet with a bang and not a whimper, and we certainly look forward to seeing some of the new rising stars on that side providing us with some more substantive answers than the ones we get from the minister.

The question today is about bacteria counts that are reaching dangerous levels. The Department of Water Stewardship's own rules state that fecal bacteria counts must be below 200 in 100 millilitres of water in order to be considered safe. The Hnaua Beach recorded a whopping 728 fecal count according to the recent testing that has taken place there.

My question to the Minister of Health is: Why isn't she standing up for the health of Manitobans by ensuring (a) that action is taken to deal with the issue, and (b) that appropriate testing is done, as we know that many of the most important beaches in Manitoba are no longer subject to tests for fecal coliform?

**Ms. Melnick:** Well, in 2004 we brought in the Clean Beaches Program which was launched on May 3.

There is regular testing of some 60 beaches around Lake Winnipeg. We are watching very closely, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's important, as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Department of Water Stewardship, that his reckless tax cuts of over \$800 million would have put at risk and, in fact, wiped out the entire Department of Water Stewardship.

Too little, too late from members opposite, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan for Lake Winnipeg. We have a plan for water in Manitoba and that's why we're on this side of the House.

### **Red River Pollution Levels**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Emerson sewage lagoon has been dumping raw sewage directly into the Red River over the course of this year which is one of the several areas of concern. So, after eight years in government, after eight years of all talk and no action, we've got reports that the lagoon in Emerson neither has the capacity to deal with the amount of sewage that it is supposed to deal with and has deteriorated to the point where it was leaking sewage directly into the river. In fact, the lagoon had to be entirely emptied directly into the Red River in order to accommodate some repairs that were done earlier in the year this year.

This is after eight years of NDP government, direct raw sewage leakage directly into the Red River under this minister's watch. I wonder how this minister can have the temerity to stand up when it's under her direct control, the issue of sewage lagoons, and how they can face Manitobans who are asking serious questions about bacteria in Lake Winnipeg at the same time as we have raw sewage flowing directly into the Red River through the Emerson lagoon.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Well, I see there's been no improvement in the quality of research done by the Conservative government pre-election and post-election, Mr. Speaker. They are wrong again. Our department, the Department of Conservation, has been working with whether it's Emerson or Winnipeg or other communities to make sure that we take every step that is possible to protect the water that we have in this province, whether it's the Red River which will receive an official designation today as a Canadian Heritage River or whether it's working—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Struthers:** And if our Conservative friends along the way had done any research, they'd understand the significance of that designation, but it seems they don't.

Mr. Speaker, our department will work with any community, any municipality that is willing to take this problem seriously.

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

### **Dialysis Services Brandon**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It's unfortunate, but we certainly appreciate the confirmation of the ministers that they are neither concerned about the bacteria count in Lake Winnipeg and are unaware of what's happening in Emerson and the various things that are contributing to the problems in Lake Winnipeg.

I've got a question now to the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. After campaigning on making health a priority and, in particular, dealing with the issues of diagnostic care and various other issues in the health-care system in Brandon, a mere nine days after the election, a letter went out to all dialysis patients in Brandon indicating that, due to a staffing shortage, we're going to be closing the renal unit at 7 o'clock every evening. There are many, many patients receiving dialysis treatments in Brandon who are unable to attend during the day. As a result of cutbacks in the Brandon health-care system, patients are now no longer able, for the summer months, to get treatment. They're unable to get dialysis treatment.

Now, nine days after the election, they've already broken their promise. They're already issuing notices about cutbacks. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Health can explain and justify the gap between the election rhetoric and the nine days after election reality for the people of Brandon.

\* (13:50)

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I find it, you know, very interesting that the member opposite would even wish to raise the issue of the priority of health care in any question that he himself might wish to ask. We know that, prior to the election, some months indeed, the member opposite

made mention in the *Free Press* that health care was no longer his priority and, in fact, that he would be taking, and I'm quoting: a calculated risk with some of his other promises. And we saw what those promises were, Mr. Speaker, from beaches to hockey teams.

We know that when we stand on this side of the House and say that health care is our priority, Manitobans know who they can trust on health care. We're working at it every day, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, it's an amazing achievement to increase a budget in a department like Health and yet be ranked 10th out of 10 in the country when it comes to delivery of health-care services. It is a shameful record of mismanagement and, well, I certainly made comments to the effect that, with the reckless, out-of-control spending on the part of the NDP in health care, we know that they can outspend anybody in the world when it comes to health care.

What Manitobans are looking for are results, and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I have said that we need a government—[*interjection*] The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) is chirping from his chair. I know his days on the back bench are numbered. We look forward to his return to Cabinet, probably by next week, and we hope that he'll be able to do better than what we're getting from the current Minister of Health.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We need a little decorum in here. I'm asking the co-operation of all honourable members.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Given the minister's record of 10th out of 10 provinces in terms of health-care delivery, dead last; we saw a survey come out before the election that more than half of Manitobans surveyed thought health care had either stayed the same or gotten worse under the tenure of this NDP government. So, given the fact that through the election campaign they said time and again their commitment to dialysis care, why, Mr. Speaker, nine days after the election, are they cutting it back?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, imitation being the highest form of flattery, I understand that the member opposite likes to use the word "reckless." He has seen how people react to that.

We know, of course, that in not making health care a priority for Manitobans, in promising \$800 million in tax cuts—unbridled recklessness—we know what that would have been the equivalent of. We know, for example, it would have been the equivalent of the salaries of 10,000 nurses in Manitoba. We know it would have been the equivalent of the amount paid to all Manitoba doctors combined, \$781 million, Mr. Speaker. We know it would have been the equivalent of the annual budgets of the Grace, of Concordia Hospital, of Health Sciences Centre. Reckless, indeed.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I see the minister is picking up on the knack of not responding directly to questions. I know she's had a very good teacher, and we certainly look forward to seeing more of that as her leadership campaign gets underway.

I just want to indicate—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind members that the clock is ticking, and we're trying to get as many questions and answers in.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a minister trained in evading answers to questions, I know the Minister of Health will be pleased to have the Member for Brandon West eliminated from the competition at this early stage.

I just want to ask the minister, I want to ask the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who saw his share of the popular vote drop by almost 20 percent between 2003 and this election, he is still chirping from his chair—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** One last attempt to try to get a direct answer from the Minister of Health. I want to ask the minister why it is nine days after the election that they're cutting dialysis service to the people of Brandon. How about a straight answer?

**Ms. Oswald:** First drawing attention to his lack of concern of having health care a priority and now he's discussing leadership campaigns. Noble and brave indeed, Mr. Speaker.

But, in all seriousness, when the people of Brandon asked us about investments and about our concern for Brandon, we point towards the Brandon hospital which we built, that they didn't touch seven times. When we talk about investments in Brandon, we talk about our investment to the linear accelerator

to ensure that people don't have to travel that highway to get the radiation therapy they need. When we talk about investments in Brandon, we talk about just since February of 2006, the recruitment efforts the Brandon Regional Health Authority has done, including five internal medicine specialists, three GPs, two obstetrics, one surgeon, one pediatrician, one child psychologist. Human resources moving into Brandon every single day, Mr. Speaker. That's our priority, that's our investment.

### **Dialysis Services Brandon**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, for many western Manitobans the ability to get dialysis on a timely basis or not to get it is a matter of life and death to those patients. Three times the minister has had an opportunity today to give a direct answer to a question that is very serious in nature indeed.

The renal unit that operates in the evenings in Brandon hospital is going to be closed for the summer months. Some of those patients are driving hundreds of miles to get that treatment. At the same time, they try to live their lives as normally as they can in those circumstances. We've asked the minister why it is that this unit has to close.

It will take six nurses to run the unit. The government promised 700 nurses. Can we not find six out of the 700 to run this unit?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, the Brandon Regional Health Authority, in consultation with Manitoba Health, works diligently to ensure that people can get access to the care that they need sooner and closer to home. That's why we're working diligently with the regional health authority to make sure that any gaps in service that might exist for dialysis, any gaps in service that might exist in any situation, is taken care of very clearly.

That's why we're committed to ensuring that we add and train 700 more nurses. I might remind the members opposite that during the election campaign, what was the number of nurses that they suggested they would commit to train? Zero, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're committed to do that and Brandon Regional Health Authority will work with Manitoba Health to ensure that patients are getting care that they need.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, the minister's rhetoric is cold comfort to those patients who are watching

Question Period today and are hoping to get some comfort and some answer to the situation that exists for them.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter that was sent out to all of the evening patients, and one of the sentences in the letter says this, and I'll quote: "Unfortunately not all requests may be granted, as we will need to consider travel times and your health status." In other words, not all patients may be accommodated.

I want to ask this minister what answer she has for them when, in fact, they have working jobs during the day. Are they to quit their jobs because dialysis is a life-and-death situation to them?

\* (14:00)

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, certainly what we see quoted from the member opposite is health professionals ensuring that the health status and the safety of individuals is being taken care of. It says very clearly that the Brandon region, that Brandon hospital is working diligently to ensure that it prioritizes, that it does what it can to build its human resources. It's had great success in the past and will continue to do that. But these decisions are decisions that are made by doctors and by nurses, not by politicians.

**Mr. Derkach:** If you cut the resources as a government, then health professionals have no other choice.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that the evening program for dialysis has been cut even though this government said the dialysis treatment was going to be a priority.

I want to ask this minister: What type of priority is this when you cut the evening unit for the renal dialysis in Brandon?

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite raising the issue of their record versus our record.

We're committed to expanding dialysis in the province. That's exactly what we've committed to do. We're committed to ensuring that we hire 100 more doctors. We've committed to ensuring that we train 700 more nurses when it comes to dialysis, when it comes to community cancer care, when it comes to diagnostics and when it comes to ensuring that CT scanners, MRIs outside of Winnipeg are available to the people of rural Manitoba. That's our commitment.



The Brandon Regional Health Authority and Manitoba Health will work diligently to ensure that those patients needing dialysis, those patients whose health status is being reviewed, are going to be taken care of, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Grace Hospital Emergency Room Staff Levels**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the ER crisis at the Grace Hospital will soon be getting much worse. In September, 17,000 patients will be without a doctor when the Park West Medical Centre in Charleswood closes down. With no family doctor to turn to when they need health care, many of these 17,000 patients could very well end up at the Grace Hospital ER.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell them if the Grace Hospital ER will be fully staffed and safely staffed with nine ER doctors come September when that clinic closes.

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, and once again, the member opposite is the one in the room that's speaking about the closing of ERs or understaffed ERs. We know that, approximately this time last year, when the member opposite told anyone who will listen that disaster is coming, no ERs in Winnipeg closed. We know that through a variety of incentive programs, through team work and the incredible dedication of our doctors here in Manitoba that that ER will not close. We know that it didn't happen last year, and we know it won't happen this year.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, some of these 17,000 patients who will be losing their doctors are starting to call me. They're very upset and they're very fearful about this situation, especially some of them that have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems and they now don't have a doctor. One of the doctors has already quit. The rest are quitting and leaving in September.

They are also fearful that the Grace Hospital ER, despite the weak comments from this Minister of Health about the ER staying open, they are fearful that this government will be forced to close the ER.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health to tell them: What is she going to do to safely keep the Grace ER open after June 30 when there are only three doctors left there? It doesn't take a brain surgeon to tell anybody that three doctors can keep that place safely open. Everybody knows that except, it seems, the Minister of Health.

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, and I've said to the member before, and I will, for the record, tell the member again that certainly our commitment and our No. 1 priority being health care—I might remind the member opposite—is to hiring more doctors. That's why we've agreed to open the agreement. Negotiations are ongoing and are very fruitful indeed.

We've also committed to ensuring that we hire more doctors broadly. We know we have 200 more doctors today in Manitoba that we didn't have in 1999. We know that we're committed to increasing our training opportunities for ER doctors, making emergency medicine its own faculty and more than doubling the number of seats in it. And, finally, we're committed to ensuring that we hire clinical assists for the first time in Canada to work at the Grace ER.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, rhetoric is not going to make for a safe ER. The critical shortage of doctors at the Grace Hospital has been allowed to grow for two years. The government has allowed the situation to get so bad that there is now not an easy solution. Dr. Brian Postl has stated a number of times that Winnipeg has too many ERs and one should be closed.

I'd like to ask this Minister of Health: Does she and her government have a hidden agenda to allow the Grace ER to get to such a bad situation that it will be forced to be closed? Is there a hidden agenda by this government, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd say once again, I've outlined the comprehensive plan, the multi-pronged plan for the member opposite, but let's just keep it real as they say on *American Idol*. The only party in Manitoba that ever closed an ER in Winnipeg was the Conservative Party, and they closed Misericordia permanently. Furthermore, they thought it was a really good idea to close the ERs during the evening and during the night. Why? I quote one Jim McCrae who said: Because it doesn't make sense to keep them open 24 hours.

This is the thinking of the Conservative Party of Manitoba. It's alarming. We're not closing the Grace ER, not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, not at all.

#### **Health Care Specialist Wait Times**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Wait times in our health care system are outlandish. A southwest Manitoba resident who received a full body scan last

August and a CAT scan in January was told that he'd see a specialist in March, but not March 2007, Mr. Speaker, March 2008, and as an assessment only. This person can barely walk and is living on painkillers because of protruding disks in his spine.

Can the minister tell Manitobans and this patient why he cannot even see a specialist before March 2008?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Certainly our efforts to work on reducing wait times, whether it's in orthopedics, in cancer care, in cataract surgery, in diagnostic services, is a priority of our government.

If the member opposite has some information about a specific constituent, some information that may not, indeed, have already been brought to my attention, I encourage the member to come and see me. We can speak afterwards in the loge. I would be very interested in seeing what we can do to ensure, to help the individual because I presume that's why the member asked the question.

**Mr. Maguire:** I certainly will, Mr. Speaker, but this person is a farmer. Never mind the quality of life that he's enduring. He couldn't even put his crop in the ground this spring. Without help from his two sons who have full-time jobs, it would have been virtually impossible to seed in a timely manner.

Does this minister believe Manitobans with such back problems should be left in pain for this extended time frame? Does she find this acceptable and, if not, what will she and her NDP government do to alleviate this all too-often recurring health crisis?

**Ms. Oswald:** Again, I do encourage the member opposite, if he has some information about an individual case that he would like to discuss with me, I encourage that. I know that other members of the House have had occasion to do that, and we've met those challenges head-on.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that our commitment to ensuring that wait times are reduced when it comes to diagnostics is measurable and it's very real. We know that we have introduced the first MRI, for example, outside of Winnipeg. It was our party that did that. It was nothing that the members opposite ever considered.

We know that CIHI's report of 2007 shows about a 50 percent reduction in the wait time for an MRI, eight weeks. It was 28 weeks in—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, the person has waited for diagnostic tests, waited to see a specialist and will wait even longer for surgery, if required. Obviously this person's quality of life and livelihood are in jeopardy.

There are solutions, Mr. Speaker. As even diagnosis is not available in Manitoba in a timely manner, will the minister recommend that this person and other such patients be allowed to seek relief by sending them to specialists elsewhere in Canada where expertise and relief are available?

\* (14:10)

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, I'll say again that if there are details of a specific case that the member opposite wants to bring to my attention, if they have not been already, I welcome those pieces of information and will do all that we can to assist.

Naturally we have to ensure that doctors, nurses and health-care professionals are working together to make diagnoses, to make assessments along with specialists. It's not the job of a politician to make a medical diagnosis. I would think the member opposite would know that.

### **Health Care Specialist Wait Times**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, this government's record on reducing wait lists is dismal, particularly in rural Manitoba, and I'm very disappointed in the minister's responses to these questions.

Jazmane Guy of Carroll, Manitoba, is an active young woman who enjoys Sea Cadets and cycling. In February, she injured her knee. It took three months just to get an MRI, and even though she was referred to a specialist immediately after her injury she cannot get an appointment to see a specialist until November 2008. That's 20 months after her injury for just an assessment. If she needs surgery, and it is suspected that she will, there will be even a longer waiting period on top of that.

Can the Minister of Health tell this 16-year-old young woman why she is being forced to wait nearly two years in pain to see a specialist?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I'd say to the member opposite, once again, if there are some specific details about a case that she wishes to bring

to my attention, which she hasn't already, I'd be happy to receive that information. Certainly, I can say that our priority in working on wait times has been clear. We've been working very diligently on the federal government's stated big five: on orthopedics, on diagnostics, on cancer, on cardiac, on cataracts. And we've seen a measurable reduction in wait times.

The member opposite makes mention of a wait time for an MRI. We know, Mr. Speaker, that we've reduced that time by 50 percent to eight weeks. We also know that in 1999 the wait for the same procedure was 28 weeks.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Speaker, this is a 16-year-old woman who is wanting to get support so that she can have a quality of life, so she can enjoy Air Cadets, so she can go to grad, so she can enjoy the activities that a normal 16-year-old can have. So if you're listening, Madam Minister, I would pay attention to the issue.

Mr. Speaker, she cannot ride a bike, cannot walk more than 200 metres without experiencing excruciating pain in her knees. This has severely impacted her activities and quality of life.

Can the Minister of Health explain to Jazmane's parents why after nearly eight years in office her government has failed to make rural health care a priority, and why a 16-year-old will be forced to miss out on leadership opportunities like cadets this summer? Mr. Speaker, eight years.

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, I know that every member of this House, regardless of political stripe, cares deeply when a young person is experiencing discomfort and pain, and we want them to get well quickly.

I would also suggest that the member opposite has cited just about the amount of time it takes to graduate a doctor. How many specialists might have been in place had the members opposite not made a decision to cut the seats in medical school from 85 to 70? I've done the calculation. It would have meant some 90 doctors that might have been in Manitoba but not for the reckless decisions of members opposite. Shame on them.

**Mrs. Rowat:** To a 16-year-old woman who is waiting for care, these excuses are very cold comfort for her or her family. Now, why should she have to wait two years to see a specialist for her knee injury? No guarantee of surgery, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the Minister of Health what she will do today to ensure that Jazmane is not forced to live in pain, can enjoy her summer, can enjoy the quality of life that she deserves, Mr. Speaker, and not wait almost two years to see a specialist.

**Ms. Oswald:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to bring specifics of a case to me, if she hasn't already done so, and we'll ensure that all the appropriate processes have been examined so that this person can get the best possible care.

We're clear in our commitment to making health care a priority, Mr. Speaker. We've committed to hiring a hundred more doctors. The members opposite during the campaign, zero. We've committed to training 700 more nurses in our system. How many did the members opposite commit to train? Not even one.

We're committed to ensuring that diagnostics are available outside of Winnipeg; MRI, CT and specialists available in rural Manitoba. How many did members opposite endeavour to do when they were in office? Not one.

### Upper Fort Garry Preservation

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, Upper Fort Garry was a most magnificent and important fort in all of western Canada. It is the site of the birthplace of our province as a province. This site, located between Assiniboine and Broadway avenues and between Main and Fort streets, is on the verge of an opportunity. There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve and build upon this site an interpretive centre and a vision that will create an image for people in the future and for people who come to Manitoba.

I ask the Premier (Mr. Doer) whether he will act today to ensure that this site is available for the wonderful, incredible vision put forward by the Friends of Upper Fort Garry—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living):** As a Manitoban, I also agree in preserving the history. It must be our priority. The north wall and gate should be protected and we've shown that by investing \$16,000 in 2003 and 2004. We want to support this city in attaining two goals: preserving Manitoba heritage and also the redevelopment of downtown.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I'm afraid that \$16,000 on the most magnificent and important fort in all of western Canada over eight years hardly suffices as what needs to be done. Development of a 15-storey apartment building on this site would render impossible the full development of this site in all its magnificence as envisioned by the Friends of Upper Fort Garry.

I say to the Premier (Mr. Doer) or Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk), in no other jurisdiction in Europe or North America would heritage be forgotten like this. At the very least, following the budget vote, will the Deputy Premier support a day of discussion and debate in this Legislature on the future of the Upper Fort Garry site?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** As I've already stated, Mr. Speaker, as Manitobans, we all want to preserve our history and we see the value in that. We've shown our commitment throughout this great province. I think what's also really important is that we work with all of the partners: with the friends of the gate, with the City of Winnipeg, and make sure that this site is accessible to everyone who wants to. We need to work on attaining the two goals: making sure that we preserve the history, as well as making sure that we continue to redevelop the city.

#### **Hybrid Cars Rebates**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Many within the taxi industry have chosen the Toyota Prius as a car of choice. In fact, there has been somewhat of a backlog. We have seen one individual that I'm aware of who has waited for months, had the opportunity to purchase one after putting a deposit, had an opportunity to purchase one in Edmonton, brought the vehicle back and was told that he was not going to be able to get the \$2,000 rebate.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that's a wrong-headed policy given that there was a significant waiting period in order even to get the car here in the province of Manitoba.

My question to the Minister of Finance: Does the staff not have the discretion to allow this individual to be able to be entitled to the rebate, given that he tried so hard to get one here in the province? We're seeing the taxi industry, as a whole, leaning more and more towards this vehicle.

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, since the rebate program has been put in place, we've had about 191 vehicles claim the rebate through the purchases by Manitobans of a purchase inside of Manitoba. The policy was very clear. It was for the purchase of hybrid vehicles within Manitoba. Therefore, the officials, as the member asked, do not have the discretion to go beyond the policy parameters set by the government.

#### **Post-Secondary Education Affordability**

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for St. Norbert, I am proud to have Winnipeg's third largest city, the University of Manitoba, in my constituency. I am also proud to be part of a government that is committed to affordable, accessible and quality education for post-secondary students.

Can the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy please inform the House of any recent data that speaks to the affordability of post-secondary education and shows that Manitoba is a great place for young people to study and live?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** Well, indeed, I can. Only last week the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation released a report which was great news for Manitoba, showing that student loans from 1999-2000 to 2005-2006 have decreased by 26 percent, whilst they have gone up in other jurisdictions. One other piece of good news attached to the report was that students with debt are now graduating at a 30 percent greater rate than previously.

Mr. Speaker, this is a testament to our sound educational policies, to our policy on tuition, to our Manitoba Bursary, to the Graduate Scholarship and to the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation Bursary itself.

#### **Pain Clinic Surgery Spaces**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, today we hear that a shift is taken away from dialysis. We hear that a clinic is closing. We hear that there is a shortage of doctors in the Grace Hospital, in the ER. If this is how this government, if this is how badly they manage their priority, it just proves they can't manage anything.

Jill Laudin suffers from complex regional pain syndrome. Anything touching the skin on her legs

causes her excruciating pain. Her movement and mobility are severely impaired by this devastating medical condition. She's had two surgeries through the Pain Clinic at Health Sciences Centre, and she was to continue having a series of surgeries until her illness was in remission. But, Mr. Speaker, as of March 30, the Pain Clinic is no longer allotted any surgery time. There is not a waiting list; there's just no time.

Can the minister confirm to the House that Pain Clinic patients are no longer allotted surgery spaces and, if so, what does she plan to do about it?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, once again, if the member opposite has a specific case that she wishes to take up with me, if she hasn't already sent a letter to the office that I've not yet seen, I would be very pleased to have a look at that individual case.

Certainly we know that here in Manitoba, in addition to committing to lowering the wait times in the five priority areas of the federal government which I've named previously, we've also addressed our own priority areas: our areas of sleep, our areas of pain and so forth, and certainly, we have worked diligently with specialists, with regional health authorities, to ensure that any time that a person has to wait for assessment or for treatment is going to be reduced. That is our priority, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Rainbow Resource Centre Fundraiser

**Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to attend yesterday's fundraiser for the Rainbow Resource Centre which is marking its 35th anniversary as an important service provider for Manitoba and northwestern Ontario's gay and lesbian communities. The fundraiser was part of this past week's Pride celebrations which were a dazzling display of provincial diversity. The Rainbow Resource Centre is located in my constituency and is the longest continuous centre of this kind in Canada.

The Rainbow Resource Centre is devoted to meeting the needs and challenges of our changing society and has evolved from a small campus student group to a thriving, non-profit organization. This centre offers a number of services to our community including peer-counselling phone lines, drop-in and ongoing counselling and a resource library. These services offer valuable resources of education,

outreach and support to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and two-spirited communities, as well as our friends and families.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the board, staff and all the dedicated volunteers of the Rainbow Resource Centre for their successful 35 years of community building. I know that the important work of the Rainbow Resource Centre has helped to save people's lives. Thank you.

##### Sergeant Tommy Prince Memorial

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** On Sunday, June 10, a memorial to a Canadian war hero was unveiled in front of military veterans and officials at Memorial Veterans Park located at the corner of Selkirk Avenue and Battery Street.

The memorial was erected in honour of Sergeant Tommy Prince, who was Canada's most decorated Aboriginal military veteran. The memorial is constructed out of a handsome tablet of black stone that is more than five feet wide. On the face of the tablet are etchings of Tommy Prince's war medals and a caption that reads: "In Honor of the Memory of Sgt. Tommy Prince, Military Medal and Silver Star. Canada's Most Decorated Aboriginal Soldier. October 1915 – November 1977."

This memorial was unveiled more than 30 years after the death of Tommy Prince because of a dedicated and persistent friend found in now 74-year-old Donald Mackey. Mr. Mackey is a retired police officer who felt that his friend's service to Canada was not being properly recognized nor paid tribute to. In particular, Mr. Mackey, upset to see how his friend was depicted in a television documentary as one who had fallen due to personal struggles from his heights of excellent service during the war, set about to set the record straight and to have attention paid to the exemplary achievements of his friend.

Sergeant Tommy Prince joined the Canadian Army at the onset of the Second World War where he served as a member of an elite team made up of the most capable Canadian and American troops. He also served in the Korean War, where he was awarded several medals for valour in addition to a presidential citation.

It took a great deal of work and dedication on the part of Mr. Mackey to bring proper recognition to his friend, but this work has come to fruition in the form of a striking monument.

It is always important that we recognize the truly courageous work of our war veterans, Canadians of all backgrounds, including many Aboriginals from every corner of this land who answer the call of duty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Inner City Social Work Program**

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes today to recognize one of the most progressive social and educational programs in our inner city, the Inner City Social Work Program.

For six years, I have enjoyed working in the Inner City Social Work Program. The last two years the program has been lodged at the beautiful new William Norrie Centre on Selkirk Avenue. The program is an extension of the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Social Work, and though it may not be as well known, the inner city branch of the social work program provides vital and high-quality programming to its students each and every day.

So many inner city students are enjoying a newfound academic success available to them in the Inner City Social Work Program since it has been created. As a part of the provincial ACCESS program, it was designed to encourage and foster the success of students who have traditionally faced barriers in education.

Beyond simply covering course content, professors and instructors in this program seek to help students achieve their academic dreams by addressing barriers such as financial hardship, racism and marginalization. In turn, Mr. Speaker, students are motivated by the prospect of helping to address social problems they themselves have often experienced. The program accepts approximately 40 full-time or part-time new students annually.

Mr. Speaker, students and faculty at the Inner City Social Work Program are a dedicated group. They work together with their communities to achieve positive social change in the core of Winnipeg. Only through a co-operative approach that addresses the roots of poverty and social injustice can our inner city succeed.

I am proud to have been a part of this community of learners and educators and to have been part of a program that makes possible the dreams of so many. I am also proud to be a part of a government that introduced and supports the provincial ACCESS programs which strengthen

communities and support young learners across the inner city and across all of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:30)

### **Lynn Lake Social Worker**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Lynn Lake are very concerned for children who may need to be taken into care because they do not have a social worker living in Lynn Lake. As well, the designated safe house is closed due to a lack of funding. I advised the minister of this situation two months ago. The people of Lynn Lake signed a petition, which they asked me to read in this Legislature and I am doing that.

I've written to the minister, but he has not responded. I have asked questions in the House. He has not seemed overly concerned, but this was two months ago. When I spoke to Lynn Lake people last week, they informed me nothing has changed.

When I wrote to the minister, I asked—I also wrote to the Children's Advocate asking her to please investigate the situation in Lynn Lake. She travelled to Lynn Lake and met with a number of people, and in a written reply to me confirmed my concerns and is working toward a resolution. I want to thank the Children's Advocate for her quick action.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) did nothing, did not answer questions, did not respond to my letter, did not contact anyone in Lynn Lake, did not contact the Children's Advocate. Is he not responsible for children in care in this province? Why is it that the opposition has to do his work for him? Shame on this minister and shame on this government.

People I met with in Lynn Lake said they need a social worker and they need the safe house reopened. Children taken into care are taken out of town and they're housed in hotels. Children are not going to school on a regular basis. Children are being neglected, yet this minister does nothing. I challenge him today. Will he act? Will he see that there's a qualified social worker in Lynn Lake, and will he ensure that funds flow to the designated safe house so it may be available to vulnerable children in care? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Island Lakes Residents Group Spring Clean-up**

**Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of taking part in the Island Lakes Residents Group spring clean-up and barbecue that happened

on June 2. It was the 17th annual clean-up and a remarkable accomplishment that demonstrates how fortunate Island Lakes is to have such an active residents group. The event was a great success and luckily the weather co-operated.

The ILRG was formed in 1989, to act as a liaison between the residents, the developer, the City of Winnipeg, along with the provincial and federal governments. The board is made up entirely of volunteers who generously donate many hours of their time working on different initiatives and issues for the benefit of the entire community. They have been instrumental in obtaining and developing many of the things we take for granted, such as the Island Lakes Community School, Seigneurie Park, Island Shore Park and the Wayfarers/Camirant/Black Pearl shoreline enhancement.

Besides the annual spring clean-up, the ILRG also holds the Christmas lights contest, co-ordinates the annual garage sale. The group takes part in numerous activities designed to enhance our community.

The clean-up began 17 years ago as a solution to an ongoing problem with garbage buildup, and today it's a community-wide family event that begins with coffee and doughnuts and handing out the garbage bags to those who volunteer. After the clean-up, the fun begins with a barbecue, games for the kids and a silent auction.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Island Lakes Residents Group for organizing the clean-up and the barbecue. Without their effort, this could not be possible. I'd also like to thank everyone who took part in the event because not only does it make our community cleaner, it's a great way to meet our neighbours and to make new friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### DEBATE ON GOVERNMENT MOTION

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll resume debate on the government motion that was previously agreed to by leave. The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet has 26 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to completing the debate on the budget motion. I'd sort of like to start where I left off in emphasizing the importance of growth to the province of Manitoba.

A strong economy is a fundamental prerequisite to all of the things that we enjoy as a province and all of the things that we value as a society. It includes quality of life, opportunity, health and social justice. A strong economy is essential for the quality of life and for opportunity here in Manitoba. It's extremely important that we do have a strong economy within the province.

The Province has to show energetic leadership. Leadership is extremely important to create a framework for investment, for growth, both public-sector growth and private-sector growth, and for prosperity of our citizens. This growth has to also be sustainable. But I can tell you sadly, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has been falling behind other provinces in economic growth.

Manitoba's economy is growing at a rate less than the national average overall. As a result, the rate of job growth in Manitoba is lagging behind other provinces. We heard last week just what that meant to the province of Manitoba in terms of job growth, Mr. Speaker, when Statistics Canada reported that 300 jobs, full-time jobs were lost between May 2006 and May 2007. Three hundred full-time jobs lost within that particular year, when thousands upon thousands of jobs were created in other provinces in western Canada.

That's our record. That's our sad record, I think, for Manitoba's economy. It's a sad commentary for the fiscal policies of this government and what they've done to our economy in this province.

The lack of economic performance has resulted in more and more young Manitobans leaving Manitoba for other provinces such as Alberta, British Columbia and, now, even Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I note that the Finance Minister, in his answer to one of the questions last week in Question Period noted that things are "smoking" in Manitoba. Well, the only thing that's smoking in this province are the trails and roads and highways leaving this province, because 35,000, 35,000 young Manitobans have left this province since 1999. That's enough Manitobans to fill the city of Brandon.

Many of these stats don't come as surprises to many of you. It doesn't come as surprises to many of us on this side of the House and, I'm sure, on that side of the House as well. Virtually, not a week goes by within my constituency, and I'm sure it's no different in any other constituency across this province, not a week goes by where constituents, residents phone me and tell me that another relative

or friend has left this province for greener pastures elsewhere, for hope and opportunity that's not here in this province. Mr. Speaker, 35,000 of them have left since 1999, and that's a very poor record.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

The economy of Manitoba, however, in spite of all that, is very diverse. It's always been extremely stable. It very rarely booms and rarely busts. I think that's the advantage that we have as a province, as we have a diverse economic base within the province. We have no single industry that can make or break a fiscal year, unlike Alberta that has a huge energy sector, or Ontario that has a dominant auto sector. We have one of the most diversified economies in Canada, and, therefore, we're more resilient to cyclical forces than most other provinces; not one single-sector dominates. There are substantial diversities, even within each sector in our economy.

We sound like an economist's dream. We have broadly based exports. We have agriculture-based industries. We have manufacturing, hydro-electric power, biotech, aerospace; we have vast natural resources. We have established assets that should provide for a strong foundation for economic development. However, those assets, those advantages are not being realized under this government, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have a lack of leadership in terms of fiscal responsibility in this province. We seem content to continue to hold our hand out to Ottawa for more transfer payments. We spend less and less time trying to grow our economy to ensure that we have the jobs that are here: the long-term, full-time, meaningful jobs that are required of our graduates from our universities and colleges.

We should have reason to be optimistic, but, as long as we're on this economic path, as long as we're on this, the framework, the type of path that the Finance Minister has set for Manitoba, we're not going to be getting there anytime soon, Madam Deputy Speaker.

\* (14:40)

I noticed last week the Finance Minister and the Infrastructure Minister continued to highlight the fact that they believe that they've solved the infrastructure problem with a \$4-billion injection for roads in the next 10 years. However, what the NDP don't say, to a great extent, is more important than what they do say.

First of all, it's not all new spending as they like to point out. It's not all new spending. At best it's an increase of 50 percent in new spending over the next 10 years. It includes existing spending of more than \$200 million annually.

Secondly, the cost of road construction hasn't been addressed, and the minister continues to talk dollars in terms of the amount that he increased in infrastructure spending without talking about results. That's the problem in that infrastructure announcement. The cost of road construction has more than doubled, doubled, in the last five years, yet, nothing has been said about that. Nothing has been said about results. Four hundred million dollars in spending is not new spending. Two million dollars a year, perhaps, would be new spending, and, out of that, I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, because the cost of road construction has escalated over the last five or six years, likely the results are not going to be any different than what we've seen over the last eight years.

The NDP has a habit of lapsing spending, and that story hasn't been told. Over the last seven or eight budgets, we've seen the real dollars. Real dollars have not been put into roads. Sometimes 30, 40 percent of the money that was allocated in each budget for roads and highways was not spent and was used elsewhere.

Fourthly, there's no guarantee how many kilometres of new roadways that this spending will produce, or whether it will even produce any more kilometres of new roadway than the previous year. No guarantee whatsoever; just simply more dollars spent on infrastructure and not necessarily results.

Number 5, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's not how much you spend, but how you spend the dollars that you have. One only has to look at examples that occurred over the last couple of weeks within the constituency of Lac du Bonnet, for example. Provincial Road 315 to Bird Lake, no matter how much money this government seems to spend, the roads continue to fall apart. Provincial Road 315 to Bird Lake was cut off during the recent rains over the last couple of weeks, and this government had an opportunity, they had an opportunity to fix that road and to repair it properly at the place where it washed out last fall. In fact, last fall that particular roadway was reduced to one lane because of rains in the fall, and this government had the opportunity. They said they're spending more and more money on infrastructure. They didn't seize that opportunity, and



now we see the results. They could've repaired that roadway. They could've repaired it at that time in the fall, and we wouldn't have had the problems that we had this spring with Provincial Road 315.

Provincial Road 313 is another example as it goes to Point du Bois. It was completely washed out, and it isolated the entire community. It not only isolated residents that are located there in businesses, we have four resorts that are in Point du Bois, and, as you go further upstream, up the Winnipeg River, they were all isolated during this past week, including all residents and tourists who on the weekend normally go to Point du Bois to vacation and to fish. It's not how much money you spend in infrastructure, it's what you do with it. And are you planning forward? Are you planning for the next five or 10 years, or are you simply just trying to put out fires and trying to deal with our infrastructure that's falling apart not only in terms of roads, but in terms of bridges as we see across this province, Madam Deputy Speaker?

The internal revenue growth, in my view, is much more important. In other words, the revenue growth that we see from taxes like personal income taxes, corporate taxes, sales taxes, that type of internal revenue growth is an indicator as to how our economy is doing. That internal revenue growth is much more important, in my view, than growth in federal transfers. What we've seen over the last eight years is federal transfer payments have increased by more than 50 percent since 1999. Contrast that to the 1990s when we had a Progressive Conservative government, when federal transfer payments actually declined over that decade in the '90s. They declined. Since 1999, though, transfer payments have increased by more than 50 percent. That's not a proud record for this government, Madam Deputy Speaker.

It isn't a proud record because, if you have an increase in federal transfer payments payable to any province, what it means is that we're falling further and further and further behind other provinces relative to other economies in other provinces. We don't get increased federal transfer payments because we're doing well relative to other provinces; we have increased federal transfers because we are doing poorly relative to other provinces, and that's an indicator that this government has to wake up and take notice of because if we have increased federal transfers, we are doing poorly relative to other provinces.

We are currently the only have-not province in western Canada, and we're going to remain there for a very, very long time because, as we've seen since 1999, federal transfers have escalated and increased in this province due to our inability to keep up with other provinces, particularly in western Canada.

Since 1999 we've had an increase in federal transfers of \$1.13 billion, and that's more than half new revenues coming into our province. So more than half of the new revenues that are coming into our province since 1999 are federal transfer payments, and when those federal transfer payments dry up we're going to be in serious difficulty in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Why have federal transfers increased? As I said before, it's because we're doing poorly relative to other provinces. Even Saskatchewan weaned itself off federal transfers. They've done relatively well compared to Manitoba, and why have they done well? It's because they have seriously cut taxes within their province compared to what we've done.

We've just simply tinkered with our tax system. We've done very little to make ourselves tax competitive in this country, and as a result we've seen the results. All we've seen is the Premier and the Finance Minister continuously go to Ottawa with their hands out looking for more handouts. That certainly doesn't speak well for the record of this government and their ability to create revenues internally, for their ability to create new revenues in this province that will be available for services that Manitobans have come to expect and they deserve.

We're the only have-not province in western Canada, and we're the only province in western Canada that has not seriously cut taxes. Tax cuts create economic activity and growth. They're not a loss of revenue as sometimes the Premier and the Finance Minister believe they are, and there's lot of anecdotal evidence to prove that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

In fact, I'm not denying that the NDP have cut taxes to a certain extent within this province. They have reduced rates in certain instances in terms of the rates for middle-income groups and the rate that is applied against small business corporations in this province. But, when you look at what they have cut and then look the next year at the budget in terms of what the projections of revenue will be, what we find is that in spite of the minor tax cuts that they have provided to this province, the next year actual revenues available from those sources have actually

increased. They've increased because what tax cuts do is to stimulate the economy.

Businesses take those tax cuts that are available to them and they invest them. They don't keep them, Madam Deputy Speaker. They invest them in new machinery. They invest them in new equipment. They invest them in higher salaries to attract employees, to try to keep our young people in our province rather than have them leave the province for Alberta, B.C. and even Saskatchewan.

They use that to invest in new equipment and machinery, in new technology. What that does is it increases their efficiencies and, of course, what it does is it also creates more employment growth for the province and creates more opportunities for young people in the province. Individuals take those tax cuts if they are available, and some of them save for retirement. Some put it into RRSPs. Some put it into savings, but, by and large, Manitobans will spend those tax cuts, and they will further drive our economy and create new opportunities for themselves and for their children and grandchildren.

\*(14:50)

So lots of anecdotal evidence to prove that tax cuts don't cost government. In fact, there's lots of evidence in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan where they have seriously cut taxes in their province, and, as a result of that, new investment in business has occurred, new investment in machinery and equipment. There's been lots of evidence across western Canada in particular that, in fact, the economies of those provinces were stimulated as a result of tax cuts, and it didn't result in any loss of revenue to the province. In fact, in all three provinces, what we see is an escalation of taxes that are collected by those provinces as a result of tax cuts that were made there.

The NDP, though, has an aversion to tax cuts, to serious tax cuts. Instead, they want to hold on to every possible dollar they can, fearing that there won't be more later. But they're dead wrong, Madam Deputy Speaker, just as they're wrong in their belief that they know how to spend tax money more wisely than taxpayers of Manitoba themselves.

The NDP are addicted to spending. That's why they won't give Manitobans any serious tax cuts, and they won't create an economy that will keep our young people here in Manitoba. Instead, they're content to hold on to those tax dollars as long as they can, and they're content to see our young

Manitobans, 10,000 at a time graduating from our colleges and our universities in this province, 10,000 new graduates every year coming out, and what we've seen is a loss of 300 full-time jobs over the last year.

What is the Finance Minister, what's the Premier (Mr. Doer) going to say to those 10,000 graduates who are graduating from our colleges and universities? What is he going to say them? Stick around for a tuition rebate? Well, they're not going to stick around for a tuition rebate. That's not their dream. Their dream is a long-term, full-time job with some opportunity. We're not creating those full-time jobs. We're not creating the opportunity in Manitoba to keep young people in Manitoba. I've heard the Finance Minister, the Premier, state, well, they're going to stick around for lost-cost housing. Well, I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the dream of young people in Manitoba is not low-cost housing. Their dream is to have opportunity to have hope for the future. Their dream is to go to an exciting place where there's a possibility of advancement in their job, and they're not seeing that here in Manitoba.

They aren't seeing it here in Manitoba because our economy is not firing on all cylinders, contrary to what the Finance Minister and the Premier have said. Our economy over the last seven of the last eight years, our province, our real GDP growth has fallen behind the national average seven out of the last eight years. I know that the Finance Minister takes great glee in pointing out that in 2006 we finally made it above the national average in this province. But I can still tell him that we're still dead last in this country in terms of our growth under this NDP government.

The NDP claim to have provided a total of \$640 million of tax cuts since 1999. However, what they point out is that—in fact, today, even, they indicated that we've promised almost \$800 million tax cuts. So, somehow, \$800 million is reckless; but their \$640 million isn't. So what is it, Madam Deputy Speaker? What is it? If we're reckless at \$800 million in tax cuts, they're reckless at \$640 million of tax cuts.

They said they have \$640 million of tax cuts, but they prefer not to count the tax increases that have occurred since 1999. They only look at the tax reductions that they've had since '99, but they never look at the tax increases that they've imposed on Manitobans since 1999, Madam Deputy Speaker. During that time, they've increased taxes by at least

\$540 million that we can count since '99 till 2006, and when the 2007 numbers come out, I think we're going to see more tax increases still.

So, on the one hand, they may offer tax decreases, tax reductions to Manitobans; on the other hand, they take it all back through the backdoor. They've increased the application of the provincial sales taxes since 1999 by broadening the impact of the provincial sales tax to many more goods and services that were not previously taxed, including legal and accounting fees, including architectural, engineering fees. Those are not just a drop in the bucket, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just the legal and accounting fees, PST application to those kinds of fees have produced \$35 million a year.

They've increased taxes the sneaky, backdoor way. Not only the sneaky, backdoor taxes have been increased once, but sometimes twice, sometimes three times since 1999, they haven't indexed the tax brackets to inflation, and, therefore, \$18 million every year is going more into the pockets of government, into general revenues than what should be. They haven't protected Manitobans from inflation because they haven't indexed the tax brackets to inflation, or the tax credits to inflation as many provinces have done, so, in fact, we're only one of two provinces now in Canada that does not index our tax brackets and tax credits to inflation.

They also, during that period of time since 1999, forced Manitoba Hydro to fork over an extra \$201 million in 2003 under the guise of a dividend. What I say is a guise of a dividend because, in fact, Manitoba Hydro didn't have the money to pay it, Madam Deputy Speaker. They didn't have \$201 million in the bank that they could simply give to government, write a cheque to government and put in general revenue. They had \$12 million in the bank at that point, and they had to borrow the money to actually pay to the Manitoba government in order to fulfil that request. It wasn't just a request. This government forced Manitoba Hydro to turn over the money.

Since 1999 they doubled the water rental rates for Manitoba Hydro. So they continue to take more and more money out of that cash cow and, as a result, Manitoba Hydro now is farther and farther away from its objective of a 75-25 debt equity ratio, and has a long way to go in order to get there in order to afford building any more infrastructure, more hydro dams within the province other than, of course, they're going to be forced to borrow more

and more money. Then, of course, when they start borrowing more and more money, Manitoba government makes even more, because since 1999 they doubled the loan guarantee fees. So every time Manitoba Hydro goes back for another loan, the Manitoba government increases their fees, or the fees are increased for loan guarantees. The effect, of course, is more and more increases to Manitoba Hydro rates. Of course, that has an effect on consumers.

All of those tax increases, those backdoor tax increases, really have, since the government has indicated \$640 million of tax relief since 1999, many of those backdoor taxes, those rate increases that we've seen in Manitoba Hydro, the increases in the water rental rates, the loan guarantee fees, the \$201 million since 1999 from Manitoba Hydro, the effect really cancels out any or most of the tax relief that has been proposed by this government, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Our personal taxes still are the highest west of Québec. In fact, we've got a long, long way to go before we even become competitive within western Canada. We're not competitive within western Canada. We're not competitive in relation even to the rest of Canada. Most small businesses, and I know that the Finance Minister takes great delight in indicating that he's going to decrease the small business corporate income tax rate to zero percent within the next three years, but I have news for him. Most small businesses are not affected by the small-business corporation capital tax because almost all businesses, 90 percent of businesses within this province are not incorporated. Most small businesses are either partnerships or they are sole proprietorships. They are not affected by the corporation capital tax, the small-business corporation tax reductions that are being proposed since they are not incorporated.

We have among the lowest personal exemptions in the country, the fourth lowest in this country. We are only one of two provinces that does not currently index our tax credits to inflation. So we are in a sorry state when it comes time to personal taxes. Personal taxes, as I say, were the highest west of Québec, and not anytime soon—and when I look at the budget in terms of the plan that the Finance Minister has proposed for personal taxes in this province, even in the next four or five years, I don't see any improvement in Manitoba's rates and where we are as a province in terms of personal taxation. We have a lot further to go.

\* (15:00)

I urge him to take a look at some of our tax plan that we, in fact, proposed during the election, because there is a lesson to be learned there. There is clearly a lesson to be learned. Maybe he can take a page or two out of our book and try to implement those because I believe they would be popular among Manitobans. They would put more money into the hands of ordinary Manitobans. They would allow more people to come off the tax rolls than he's proposed, particularly low-income Manitobans who are working on minimum wages. They deserve a break. We need to reduce the middle-income tax rate—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate among other members of this Legislature.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Thank you very much. First of all, congratulations to you on a very honourable position in this Legislature, Deputy Speaker. Certainly, we all expressed our confidence in our Speaker who was unanimously elected as Speaker, and I think that speaks volumes about his fairness. I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that you have a great deal of respect in this House as well, so we're in good hands.

I also want to thank my constituents, all the eight communities that I represent. I really appreciate the opportunity to represent them again in the Manitoba Legislature, and I do want to commend the other two candidates for running. I must admit I didn't see the Conservative candidate during the campaign, but at least we had one.

I noticed, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Conservative Party couldn't even find anybody to run in the Flin Flon constituency. I guess they must have one of those old highways maps that doesn't include a good part of northern Manitoba. But I want to say, and I won't get into the election. You know, I'm just dying to talk about the election, but I do want to remark that this is probably the most unique opportunity that members opposite will ever have. They had a chance to vote for this budget once before the election. Well, they didn't. They had the opportunity to vote for it last time, and remember last week it actually went through, and we were magnanimous enough to say, well, let's withdraw

that. Let's have the speakers, and let's give them a third opportunity to vote with the people of Manitoba who on May 22 made it very clear that they supported our budget; they supported our priorities as a government. Perhaps there is one more opportunity—third time lucky for the members opposite—to catch up to where Manitobans are. Well, it's already passed. If they want the opportunity to retroactively vote for the budget, I would suggest they may want to consider doing it.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, what is interesting when you look at elections, I think, is how unique this election was. Now, who would have thought that a third-term government would enter an election? You know, the opposition, certainly the Conservatives have been pounding away. I remember just before the election they were pointing at members on the government side, and you know they were just ready for the Premier's office and the government caucus. You know, the architect of their strategy, the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) had the master plan; the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) had the master plan. They were just dying, dying, dying, dying to get into the election. Well, then we saw what that master plan was, and I realize that if the bottom line is if you were to look at it, there's the seventies show on television, but if you wanted the nineties show, it would be starring the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Steinbach.

I mean, I watched as the election unfolded, and I was really proud of our campaign and our focus in on those areas of the province that not only had never voted NDP in terms of elected members, but for many years that the members opposite took for granted. I mean, Kirkfield Park. You know, I like the sound of that: NDP MLA for Kirkfield Park. Now, who was the last MLA in Kirkfield Park? Well, actually, when they had one, it was the former Leader of the Opposition who, by the way, has been going around with a very big smile on his face since the election. Well, he's about the happiest person in Manitoba. I think it's a smile that says, I told you so.

Just a bit of advice to the Leader of the Opposition before he starts, as he did today, throwing those kinds of comments that have become his trademark around the House. My suggestion is in that job, in that caucus, don't turn your back too often to your caucus members, because the former Leader of the Opposition found that out the hard way.

But I then looked at our Premier (Mr. Doer) having a press conference in Southdale. Can I say on the record again that we now have an NDP MLA for Southdale? I won't get into props out of respect for the former member, but I think the people of Southdale knew that they had a dynamic candidate, a person that's going to represent that constituency extremely well. They elected for the first time in history an NDP MLA for Southdale. I think I could repeat that numerous times.

But I looked, by the way, at the Tory master plan because I kept waiting for it to unfold and watched the Leader of the Opposition. Now, he came out within a few days and he said we would not sell off Manitoba Hydro. Now, why would he do that? I mean, I think he repeated it a thousand and one times. What was the master plan in the '90s? It was: We won't sell off MTS. I had a lot of people who, when he talked about we won't sell off Hydro—I talked to somebody who said, wasn't that what they said in the '90s? And what did they do? They sold it off.

But, you know, if I thought this was the '90s all over again, then came the biggest bombshell or the biggest bomb, I should say, of the election, when the Leader of the Opposition stood there with his suit tie underneath and the Jets sweater on top and stood in the empty arena, which, actually, I thought better symbolized their complete lack of support and momentum in the campaign, and said that he was going to bring the Jets back. Well, I remember, Madam Deputy Speaker, Manitobans remember, you know, that was the '95 election. They were going to save MTS and they were going to save the Jets. What did they do? They lost the Jets and they sold off MTS. People didn't believe them anymore in the year 2007 than they did back then.

But it didn't stop there. You want to look at the Conservative campaign. They took another page out of the '90s as well. It kind of filtered out. The Leader of the Opposition talked to the editorial board of the *Free Press*. He said, well, we're going to constrain public-sector wages. Well, that was a real winner in the '90s, Filmon Fridays, wage freezes, civil service layoffs. I talked to a lot of public servants who said, well, here we go again, and I saw the same party as well.

It was interesting, by the way, watching this kind of—you know, there was the campaign they ran in the city. Remember they were against OlyWest? Well, it's interesting, in rural constituencies, they weren't

against OlyWest; they were against the pause in terms of hogs. They were against the water regulations. They went around pounding about that. They talked about the water police. They must have had the former Member for Emerson writing their script.

But, again, the same thing, because in the '90s, the Tories of the '90s did nothing in terms of water quality. In fact, in 1992 the city of Winnipeg wastewater system was supposed to go to Clean Environment Commission hearings. Did it go in 1992 or '93 or '94? Well, I'll skip through all the Tory years. It took the NDP in its first term to send the whole issue of licensing, and we now have in place the first licensing of the city of Winnipeg wastewater treatment facility. We believe in the environment. We believe in protecting water. They don't.

But, if you really want to see how much it was the '90s all over again, you just got to look at the following two things. I was just out in the North End. I was at the North End Community Renewal Corporation's open house. Many community groups were there. I know the Speaker was there, obviously, as the MLA for Point Douglas. The MLA for Burrows was there. The Minister of Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) was there.

You know what? I couldn't resist it. I didn't do it in a partisan way, but I looked at people working to develop the North End and improve our city. They're working really hard and they're having success. They're working with our provincial government. You know what they still remember? The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) talking about turning Point Douglas into the Point, an artificial lake. I mean, we're going to have what, a southern flood agreement maybe.

\* (15:10)

The people of Point Douglas were insulted. They were insulted. Now, I don't know how many visits the Leader of the Opposition made to Point Douglas either in the election or before the election. Maybe he drove by and waved at people. Maybe he actually has kind of seen it on a map somewhere. But, if he gets out and talks to people, he'll find that people in many areas of this province know what development is all about and what redevelopment is all about, and it's not that kind of approach.

I've got to say there was one other thing that really summed it up. This really sums up the difference between the Conservative Party, stuck as

it is, and I'm being generous in saying they're stuck in the '90s. I think they're probably some decades or even a century or so back in terms of their real attitudes.

But, you know, I got this e-mail on a Sunday night in the campaign, and it was the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in Brandon announcing that if they were elected, they would take money out of northern Manitoba and move it into the south. Okay? Now, by the way, just in case you wonder what their definition was, I read further down in the article. It talked about north of Riding Mountain. I mean, north of Riding Mountain. What struck me about it, by the way, is the Leader of the Opposition. I give him credit here, by the way, he came to the north. He went to The Pas. He went to the wrong airport. He ended up going, I think, he went to Tim Hortons, found a relative, and took him there, but he tried. There are two airports in The Pas. You know, they're easy to mix up. His candidate went one way; he went the other.

But you know, he didn't make the announcement about that in northern Manitoba. He made it in Brandon. You know what? He probably thought in the north we don't have fax machines and we don't have e-mail. Well, let me tell the Leader of the Opposition: not only did I get this on my e-mail, I just turned it around rather quickly and faxed it and e-mailed it to everybody I could think of in northern Manitoba.

It's not just being a northern MLA. It's not just being a northern MLA. But this is the way they were in the '90s. Now, if you remember, we had a Minister of Northern Affairs said that northerners didn't vote right, and it was punishment politics. If you were a northerner, you got nailed in terms of cutbacks. If you were Aboriginal, you got nailed in terms of cutbacks. It didn't matter, Madam Deputy Speaker. They took an approach of slash-and-burn when it came to dealing with their budgets.

And you know, that's that kind of junior Republican style. It's the formula that Prime Minister Harper seems to be trying to use right now. It's like you don't try and have a broad sense of Canada or of Manitoba. What you do is you divide people. So, if it's good tactically, you pick on northerners one day; then you pick on Point Douglas the next. You pick on public-sector workers.

And you know what? People had a choice, and obviously, in Thompson they chose. They didn't have the opportunity to make a choice in Flin Flon. You

know, even the Liberals had a candidate in Flin Flon. The Liberal leader didn't bother to come up north, but that's another story, but the Liberals at least had a candidate.

But you know what? I think when the people in Southdale and Kirkfield Park and in The Maples and in St. Boniface and in Dauphin-Roblin, you look at the constituencies. There's one thing in common, and that is people voted for a party and a government that's made a real effort to represent all Manitobans.

And you know, when I looked at the initial speeches—by the way, I want to welcome the new members. I know, certainly, one of the Conservative members, the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) from a previous life, and I welcome them here. I want to say how proud I was of the speeches of the new members of the House on our side. Talk about representing Manitoba 2007.

I am so proud in this province, which has a huge history in terms of women. First province in the country in terms of receiving the vote. In fact, the suffragette movement was a key player in this province. To see that we now, thanks to, by and large, our caucus and many of our new caucus members, the highest percentage of women of any Legislature in the country. I daresay, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we're not going to stop, if we have anything to do about it in terms of the NDP, until we have the 51 percent of the population represented.

When I look at the ethnocultural diversity—and, you know, I look at the tremendous words of the Member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) talking about racism and discrimination. I think it was a very powerful moment. I look at the Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), whom I've known personally. My wife has worked with the Member for Wellington so I had some opportunity to know her before her election, and the tremendous comments she put forth, and the Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady). I think I already mentioned that NDP Member for Kirkfield Park; and the NDP Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), who put forward a tremendous vision, I think, for their constituencies and their province, really pointing forward to that. I look at all of our new members in this House, and I look at what you saw in the election.

In the year 2007, a modern political party has to represent all regions, and that's what we have. A modern political party has to make a real commitment to gender equality, and that's what we

have. A modern political party has to represent the true diversity of this province.

You know, we have 100 languages spoken in this province. We have the highest Aboriginal population of any jurisdiction in this country, a much higher percentage than virtually any other, and higher than even Saskatchewan. We see that represented. We have ethno-cultural diversity. You see that represented. And I daresay that, over the next number of years, I look forward to seeing the fact that we, as the second youngest province, will be seeing that reflected here as well.

But, you know, it's a modern political party that says, yes, we have to make decisions. Yes, we have tough responsibilities. But we will never go back to the style of the 1990s, the divisive approach in terms of politics. What we will do is govern for all Manitobans.

We often talk about this being today's NDP. I think, really, we are a modern political party that has learned from its challenges in the past. We have learned to build bridges with Manitobans and work co-operatively. I want to say that, by the way, because I had one big advantage. There was one election where I ended up going from government to third party. You know, that wasn't just getting sort of the wake-up call. That was like getting hit by a semi. We knew we had to listen to Manitobans. We had to say, you know what? Whatever we did, we've got to figure out why it happened. We did that, and our rebuilding started from there.

What I note, by the way, is the dismissive action of the Conservatives. You know, not only do they lose, they shrink the caucus. Despite all the hubris, you know, all the wonderful strategy the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), they were going to just waltz their way in, right? You know, they had it all figured out, the Jets, the master plan. You know, and I notice by the way, how the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), he must lie in bed at night hearing the word "reckless," probably about 15 times in a half-hour period, because he's reeling from it. And you know what? It doesn't work.

Here you saw again the Finance critic. You know, they lost the election. They have a reduced caucus and they're still putting forward the idea that somehow you can just magically make \$800-million worth of taxes disappear and not have any impact on Manitobans. You know what? That wasn't even the Filmon agenda. That was the Mike Harris agenda, and, of course, the Leader of the Opposition, they

went to the best of both. They went back to the Filmon years and the Mike Harris years. I mean, isn't that a scary thought?

But I'm not going to dwell on the Conservatives. I'm not going to dwell on the Conservatives. What I want to put forward is, very simply, that not only is this party and this government very proud and very humbled by the support we received, unprecedented, but we are not only representing the province, I think, in the truest sense in terms of who we are and what we are, but I want to put forward that over the next number of years you're going to see, increasingly, this government and this province playing a huge role nationally and internationally.

I want to put on the record, by the way, that I think one of the reasons we did win—you know, I remember the Tories kept talking about "have" provinces. You know what? We won the election because Manitobans saw us as a hope province because of the NDP, a province with hope for all its citizens.

If we can harness our young population, second only to Alberta; if we can harness all of our tremendous skills of our diversity, our Aboriginal people, ethno-cultural communities that are connecting us increasingly throughout the world, and I know the Member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) talked about the Indo-Canadian community, starting with the very small population in the '70s, now connecting us to the world; if we can do that, we can have a kind of development that I think all jurisdictions would envy, because we also will be doing it with a true sense of understanding about sustainability.

\* (15:20)

I'm proud of the fact that we're a leader in terms of climate change. I'm proud of the fact that, yes, we took a stand when it came to our water. Unlike the Tories who went around talking out both sides of their mouths, we were prepared to go to rural Manitoba, to northern Manitoba and throughout urban Manitoba and say, we've got to do something. We've got to bring in water regulations. We've got to deal with the reality of what's happening. So that's going to be our vision.

Let me make this very clear for members opposite. If they didn't get the message, we will probably on occasion remind them of that, what happened. You know, if they really think that they

just miscommunicated—I remember the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) even with the Jets was saying, well, maybe it resonated with some voters. Why, it resonated all right.

You know, one thing you don't want when you're a Leader of the Opposition is people laughing at you. When I went around my area, and I did volunteer in a couple of other areas as well, people just couldn't believe that, you know, you want to be premier. You know, what summed it up for me, by the way, was an editorial in the *Thompson Citizen*, not known as necessarily endorsing the NDP, and the headline was, and I can't say it directly, it was: Leader of the Opposition doesn't deserve to be premier. And it was because of his divisive approach in terms of highways.

Well, you know what? People had a choice: a party and a government that governs for all Manitobans and a party that's stuck in the past. And I would daresay after this election, if they were stuck in the past before, they're even more stuck.

You know, I've watched them in Question Period the last few days. They're digging themselves in deeper, and that's fine, but I want to put on the record that this was historic in this election. But, unlike many governments that have been successful, I want to make it very clear that the members of the opposition, they want to be an arrogant opposition. I heard the Leader of the Opposition, I mean, you know, "smug" is the word, like smug, you know, oh, you're going to be doing this, you're going to be doing that, you're going to be doing the other. A warning to the Leader of the Opposition, you know, you're in a job in the province that doesn't have a lot of job security. I'll just leave it at that, okay? *[interjection]*

You live in a glass house, don't throw stones, but you know what? They may be stuck in the past. They may arrogantly think that they did nothing wrong in the election. They may even make the mistake here of passing up the opportunity to say: You know, the people of Manitoba were right. They could get up right now. We would let them. We'd have leave to let them vote for this budget, third time, but if they don't, they're stuck in the past. We're a party of not only 2007, we're pushing ahead, 2011 and beyond, and I'm really proud not only to be back here representing my constituents again, but with a really exciting, energized representative caucus, the NDP caucus, the government elected on May 22 for the future.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Member for River Heights. *[interjection]* Sorry. The honourable House leader.

#### House Business

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Yes, on House business, and appreciate the acknowledgment by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Just on House business, I wonder, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you might canvass the House and see if there's agreement for the Legislature to not sit tomorrow morning its normal Tuesday morning time period from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. I wonder if you might canvass the House.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Is there agreement not to sit on Tuesday morning? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Chomiak:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank the House, and just secondly, I wonder if you might canvass the House to see if it's agreed to waive the time frame for its submission and consideration by the House leaders on private members' resolutions.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Is there agreement to waive the time line for consideration for House leaders' resolutions? *[interjection]*

Is there leave for consideration to waive the House leaders' consideration of private members' resolutions?

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** Just for clarification, then, we would agree to the suggestion of the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) with the clarification that we then meet during the break and ensure that the regular process be reinstated for September.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? *[Agreed]*

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**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk briefly about the budget that was reintroduced on Friday. This is what's called the taking-Manitoba-backwards budget, a budget which takes us back towards before the election.

Since the original budget was put forward, we have had an election. We have had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of promises and commitments made, and those promises and commitments aren't reflected in what was in this budget. So it is a big disappointment that the NDP are going to take us



backwards to before the election, behaving as if there wasn't an election and as if they didn't make any commitments.

Clearly, the reintroduction of a pre-election budget doesn't reflect what we were told during the election, and, in our view, it's quite shameful to reintroduce an old budget without any updates reflecting what was committed or promised during the election period. I think there are a lot of Manitobans, including ourselves, who are quite disappointed in this taking-Manitoba-backwards party and taking-Manitoba-backwards budget.

I think I don't need to go through the hundreds and hundreds of commitments which were omitted from this budget, but I will talk about one of the commitments that was made during the election which is not in this budget. That commitment deals with cleaning up Lake Winnipeg. Under the NDP, Lake Winnipeg is in the worst shape that it's been in many, many years. In fact, I think it's clear that it's in the worst shape that it's been in the history of our province. The problems with increasing algal blooms, the problems of increasing levels of E. coli, the problems of changing ecology as Dr. Eva Pip and others have demonstrated. The problem here is that we have been lacking in the expected stewardship by the NDP government.

It perhaps is a reflection of what happened initially during the election. Initially, during the election, the NDP produced a series of what they called key commitments, and, to our amazement, cleaning up Lake Winnipeg was not one of the key commitments. In fact, there was no major outline of their approach to cleaning up Lake Winnipeg during the election, but, fortunately, we had several leaders' debates and, in those leaders' debates, I was able to push our Liberal view that Lake Winnipeg must be cleaned up and that we need to act urgently; we need to act effectively.

\* (15:30)

We put forward a whole series of actions to clean up Lake Winnipeg, but, you know, the NDP decided that this wasn't one of their key commitments or priorities, and so they went on and on about other items. It is sad that there've been eight years of delay, eight years of talk and not very much done.

It is interesting to review the situation and to reflect upon the fact that during the debate the Premier (Mr. Doer) very clearly made a commitment

to an \$800-million investment which would provide for sewage treatment for Winnipeg for both phosphorus and nitrogen, and the Premier clearly came out and said, This is what the NDP government is going to do. Yet it's not in the budget in spite of the fact that the Premier was very clearly saying during the election and particularly in the debate that that's what he was going to do. But it's not there. It wasn't in the Throne Speech. It's not in the budget. Vanishing commitments, vanishing promises. A Premier whose credibility is disappearing.

Perhaps it's worthwhile at this point to go back and reflect a little bit on the MLA for Thompson. It was September 22, 2003, to be precise, that I raised a question in this Legislature. I referred to the fact that the government had said that they were going to be cleaning up Lake Winnipeg in August of 2003, and that they would do this so that within two or three years Lake Winnipeg would be well on its way to recovery. Well, wow, we were all pleased to hear this statement, and the minister who was then the Minister of Water Stewardship—but the problem was that there was never any plan to deliver on that, and that there have not been the actions taken. Now, interestingly, I asked for the specific measures and time lines from the minister to make sure that Lake Winnipeg was indeed recovered, as he promised, within two to three years. What was the action plan? Well, the minister, the MLA for Thompson in his pompous fashion said, ". . . we have already acted." This is a direct quote. The Member for Thompson says, we've already acted, as if there was no need to do anything more.

Just look at what's happened in the time since then. The increased algal growth, the increased content of phosphorus in the lake, the problems with E. coli. But the MLA for Thompson said four years ago: We've already acted. Well, you know, his actions didn't really accomplish very much, and we're just trying to figure out who he was trying to kid then, and why the MLA for Thompson and now the Premier would make these commitments that everything would be fine when, in fact, they have done so little, and they haven't even put this in the budget.

There is not in the budget funding for this \$800-million treatment plant for the city of Winnipeg, the largest point source of pollution and phosphorus, a major, major contributor to the phosphorus and the pollution in Lake Winnipeg, and there was no word in the budget. Yet the MLA for Thompson says we've already acted. Well, we have to balance the

"we've already acted" from the MLA for Thompson with the "commitment to do something" by the Premier. Of course, it's a little bit puzzling exactly where they stand on Lake Winnipeg when they are so reluctant to talk about it. Clearly, the situation as we've seen today with growing levels of E. coli, the problems of being able to swim in Lake Winnipeg, the problems of the situation in Lake Winnipeg with the increasing phosphorus and algal blooms, this is a serious problem which this government should have taken seriously, instead of the MLA for Thompson pretending that we have already acted, that he's already got this under control, instead of the Premier (Mr. Doer) making empty commitments which are not in the Throne Speech or in the budget.

We should have had the clean-up of Lake Winnipeg very clearly specified in terms of the Throne Speech and in terms of the budget. This is a tremendous disappointment. It's not only a disappointment, but it clearly is a situation where the government has been totally irresponsible. The government has been flagrantly making promises and making statements about having acted when they haven't. The NDP have lost credibility. It is one of the reasons why people are cynical about the NDP. It is sad that one of the jewels in Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg, has been so slighted and so treated by this NDP government to have been not included clearly in the budget and clearly when there was such a clear commitment during the election campaign to action.

Now, this is not, of course, the only commitment that was made by the NDP. As I've said, there were hundreds of them. Let me talk about a few other issues: health care. After eight years in which the approach of the NDP is basically to see a problem and then throw some money at it, we would have expected something that was a little better in this budget and in the Throne Speech with regard to where the government is going in terms of health care. But what we saw was more throwing money at this and throwing money at that. You know, there may be some money needed to improve things in health care; indeed there is. We would have expected that the principle of accountability that we introduced would have been respected. We are bringing back—we expect later this week—our bill to ensure that accountability is considered a principle in the delivery of health care in Manitoba. Sadly, it's been a principle which has been badly neglected by the current NDP government.

There is no sign of improvement in terms of the application or the introduction or the use of the

principle of accountability either in the Throne Speech or in the budget. That is interesting, perhaps not surprising, the principle of accountability was suggested by the commission that was headed by Roy Romanow. It was one of the major recommendations that health-care delivery in the provinces operate on the principle of accountability. Yet, in the years since, the MLA for Inkster and I have introduced repeatedly bills to make sure that the principle of accountability was incorporated in terms of how the Province runs the health-care system. Sadly, this government has not seen fit to support the use or the introduction or the application of the principle of accountability in the delivery of health care in Manitoba. So what we have seen time and time again is problems in health care. There is not the accountability that there needs to be.

\*(15:40)

There are still major concerns about whether the Grace emergency room will stay open because nobody knows if this government is really going to be accountable. There are major concerns about all sorts of things, including, for example, hip and knee operations. After all the rhetoric that we have heard from this NDP government and the Premier and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and the Finance Minister as it relates to health care, it comes as quite a surprise when the Canadian Institute for Health Information brings out a major report, as it did in May, and that major report looks at what's happening in the provinces in terms of the waiting time, the delay time, after somebody has a fracture of their hip before they get surgery to repair the fracture.

You would think that, with that kind of a major fracture of the hip, there would be surgery within 24 hours almost without exception. Well, sadly, when you actually have a look at it in Manitoba, and Manitoba has the worst record in this respect of all provinces, the number is only 53 percent of people with hip fractures will actually get their surgery within the first 24 hours or so. That is much lower than other provinces. It is a sad testament to the unaccountability of this government in terms of health care, and to the ineffectiveness of this government in being able to make sure that basic care is there for people of Manitoba. What can be more fundamental than making sure that somebody who has a hip fracture can get that fracture looked after pretty quickly?

But, you know, it's worse yet to come because they looked not only at 24 hours, they looked at

three days, whereas in the other provinces almost everybody has their hip fracture operated on within three days, a quarter of Manitobans with hip fractures have to wait more than three days in order to have surgery to repair their hip fracture.

People are waiting in pain in Manitoba and it is not just a matter of pain. The problem is that there is clear evidence, and the Canadian Institute for Health Information has laid this out in their May report, that when people have to wait longer for surgery after hip fracture, people don't recover as fast. People die more frequently. It's not a good plan to forget about accountability. It's not a good plan to have people waiting for days on end in order to have their fractures operated on and repaired and fixed up. But that, sadly, is the reality of this NDP government.

Let me move now to a little bit of talk about the economy. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) has talked about private-sector investment and some fairly modest increases in private-sector investment in Manitoba as if they were huge increases. Part of the problem here is that we have started with a base which, on a per capita basis, is far behind that of Saskatchewan. So, on a percentage basis, when you start with a smaller base, it may not be totally surprising that your percentage increase looks like it's a little better. In fact, when you actually look at absolute numbers of private-sector investment, we continue to lag far behind Saskatchewan, and that's a pretty sad and sorry testament to the situation in our province where we want to have more jobs and more private-sector investment and business investment in this province so that young people and older people will have job opportunities.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Of course, this is one of the major reasons why, when we got the financial report from Statistics Canada, that it showed—last Friday the report showed that we had lost over the past year some 300 full-time jobs. That's a little bit different from what the NDP have been claiming about all these wonderful large numbers of jobs, and it's a reality check. A reality check that, you know, as much as the NDP can spin, spin, spin like spiders, that they're not doing a very good job when it comes to having job opportunities for young people and older people in our province. That's not a good situation. Indeed, it is a very bad situation.

There are major issues. I see on the other side the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen). The Member for Flin Flon should be concerned that there

weren't the full dollars and 10-year plan to make sure that Sherridon and Cold Lake and Kississing Lake and Lynn Lake were all cleaned up. There are some huge issues as the MLA knows and, yes, there has been some token action and commitments last year, but I think all of us know that we're a long way from what is clearly needed in terms of the clean-up. These are issues which the MLA for Flin Flon knew about when he was first elected in government. There needs to be a multiyear plan and a clean and effective plan to make sure that the problem is cleaned up. It is not just a matter of throwing some money at it. It's a matter of making sure that what you're doing actually gets the job done.

That's the problem which the NDP have. They throw some money at it and it doesn't get the job done. So they come back: Oh, it didn't get the job done; we'll have to throw some more money at it. And five years later: Oh, the job isn't done; we'll have to throw some more money at it, instead of figuring out what's needed to do the job to start with and actually proceeding and getting the job done. It's a real problem. It's a very deceptive spin, spin, spin problem because you can always spin, we're throwing more money at it, but it's really accountability. It's about actually getting the job done.

I move on to the next topic I want to talk about, which is our heritage. We have in Manitoba the site of the most magnificent fort in all of western Canada, Upper Fort Garry, a most important, from a historical perspective, fort. It was there where the birth of Manitoba occurred, but it was also the site of actions which really led to ensuring that western Canada stayed within Canada, that the future of what happened here in Manitoba and in western Canada was determined by some critical actions which occurred particularly when Louis Riel had his provisional government there, that they occurred at that Upper Fort Garry fort.

It is time for all MLAs to have a careful look. I suggest the MLA for Gimli, among others, should have a careful look at what is being proposed by the Friends of Upper Fort Garry, that there is an opportunity which is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make sure that Upper Fort Garry, the site, is properly developed and interpreted for the future for all Manitobans and that that site is available to students from all over Manitoba, that students who drive by on Main Street in Winnipeg will be occasioned to look over there and say proudly that is where the birth of our province as a province

occurred, that people will be occasioned to think about, talk about and dwell on the history and learn about the history of our province.

So I would suggest to the MLA for Gimli that the suggestion of putting \$16,500 into resolving this issue is hardly a commitment for the most magnificent and most important fort in all of western Canada. It's time that the MLA for Gimli and his colleagues take this issue seriously. *[interjection]* No, it's \$16,500. But, you know, \$16,500 into the most important historic site in Manitoba doesn't cut it. Shame on the MLA for Gimli for being part of a government which is not looking after Upper Fort Garry properly.

\* (15:50)

Here is an opportunity, an opportunity to make sure we have for young and for old, for students and for tourists, a site in the middle of Winnipeg that will truly reflect the history and the character of Upper Fort Garry, and that that site will be integrated as part of the adjacent Bonnycastle Park and The Forks site, and that people who are tourists will flock here because they recognize that there is something wonderful and magnificent which has occurred at Upper Fort Garry.

Instead, this government appears to be supporting a 15-storey apartment building, a 15-storey apartment building on the site of Upper Fort Garry. I would suggest to the MLA for Gimli that he should get himself properly informed. He's shaking his head. Yeah, I'd be shaking my head too about this problem of a 15-storey apartment building taking over a major historic site because the MLA for Gimli's government has not appropriately looked after and exerted the provincial stewardship that's needed on the Upper Fort Garry site.

**An Honourable Member:** When your Liberals were government, it got torn down.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I think it was actually 1883, which was under Norquay instead of under Greenway.

The problem here is that we are faced with a situation today that we can make this site a wonderful, wonderful site and a wonderful opportunity for all Manitobans. I believe that the MLAs on the government benches would be well advised to see the presentation and to listen to what the Friends of the Upper Fort Garry are talking about

and would like to do. Because, if this opportunity is lost, then we will lose something very, very precious. We will lose a great treasure and a great opportunity. So I call this to the government's attention: the MLA for Flin Flon, the MLA for Kildonan, the new MLA for Kirkfield Park, and for Southdale, and for Wellington, and the MLA for St. Boniface, and The Maples, and so on, just have a careful look; the MLA for Rossmere, and I think the MLA for Dauphin is there too.

It is important historically. I know the MLA for Gimli has, in times past—I don't know about currently—been concerned about the history, about the history, I think, of trench warfare, as I remember. Well, I think that it would be time for the MLA for Gimli to be concerned about the history of our own province and one of the most important historic sites that there is in Canada. Time to have a careful look at this, I suggest to the MLA for Gimli, because it needs to be looked after. It needs to be looked after with some vision and some forethought, and it should have been included in the budget.

There wasn't any mention in the Throne Speech or the budget of Upper Fort Garry. It seems that the NDP, once again, have forgotten about something which is incredibly important. When they forget about Lake Winnipeg and they forget about Upper Fort Garry, and they forget about accountability in health care, and they forget about measures that will actually bring our private-sector investment up to and beyond the per capita levels in Saskatchewan, then we obviously could not support this budget.

It's a rerun, a repeat, a rehash, a moving-backward budget. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, we certainly will not support this budget because it doesn't do for Manitoba what needs to be done in today's world, in today's problems.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it's a pleasure to be back in the Legislature, re-elected again for the great constituency of Steinbach which, of course, entails not just the city of Steinbach, but also the R.M. of Hanover and the growing town of Niverville. *[interjection]*

The Member for Springfield's (Mr. Schuler) references the tough local campaign. I don't know that I'd exaggerate quite that far, if I'd go that far, but, certainly, there are, no matter what campaign, no matter where you run, whether it's in Thompson or Steinbach or Pembina or Springfield, everybody

makes sacrifices of course, and families make those sacrifices as well.

I certainly want to, first of all, recognize my wife who put up with me for, not just 10 years, but, particularly, for 32 days during the campaign. Also, my son, who is too young to understand what was going on during the campaign, thankfully. It'll be the last time, probably, he doesn't quite understand what's going on in the campaign. But he proved, even at the tender age of eight months, to be a noble campaigner and spent many a day and evening in the carriage going door to door with my wife and me as we renewed friendships among the good people of Steinbach, Hanover, and Niverville.

But, of course, I also want to, as we start a brief session, recognize pages who are back again for this particular period of time; also the newly elected Speaker who comes into the Chair with all the confidence of all members of this Assembly; and the table officers, of course, who are returning for what is expected to be just a short session before a longer period beginning in September, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Within my own campaign, of course, like all members, there are a number of people that you'd like to thank publicly, and I also had a number of people who were supporting my election. We had over 300 volunteers in the course of our local campaign and I'd like to name them all individually but simply wouldn't be able to, but really do thank them for taking the time out of their schedules, whatever schedules they were facing, to come and support our local campaign.

I had a campaign manager. Michael Zwaagstra is a local city councillor who helped out on the campaign and spent the time that he wasn't spending as a teacher he spent in the evenings helping to support—[interjection] I see that he maybe is drawing, all of a sudden, the ire of the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson). I'm certain he would never do such a thing.

Michael Zwaagstra, who did a great job as a campaign manager for my own campaign. Also Pat Gerbrandt, who helped co-ordinate volunteers; Jerry Korman, who worked on the technical side of the campaign; Mike Cancade, who was one of the local office organizers; Randy and Neil Warkentin, who helped with my signs in the rural portion of the constituency; Justin Schinkel, who helped with the sign co-ordination in the urban and the city of Steinbach, and again, the more than 300 volunteers

who helped out on the campaign. I thank them greatly; I am indebted to them. They are responsible for what was a historic campaign, actually, in Steinbach, receiving 83 percent of the vote. They are responsible for that particular accomplishment. I thank them, and that's something they certainly should be proud of.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I also, of course, like the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), want to recognize those who let their name stand in the Steinbach constituency. Similar to the Member for Thompson, I didn't actually see some of the opponents.

The New Democratic candidate, Rawle Squires, I saw a picture on a Web site. Never actually had the opportunity to meet him in person in the great community of Steinbach. I hope that he did, in some way, maybe quietly or in stealth-like mode, find his way into the riding because he would, I think, have recognized that they are a great and industrious people who make up the constituency. If he didn't have the opportunity to come to the riding, I think not only is that sort of a democratic concern for me, but, more than that, I think he would have enjoyed his time meeting those individuals. If he did, then I'm glad for that.

\*(16:00)

I didn't actually see any New Democratic signs in the riding. Perhaps they fell victim, as the Leader of the Liberal Party indicates, to some sort of a scurrilous and nefarious activity, but I doubt it. I suspect that there just simply weren't any New Democratic signs. So the riding was wonderfully decorated with blue and with red through most of the campaign.

Jonathan Thiessen let his name stand for the Liberal Party of Manitoba. Jonathan, I understand, is a young person from the town of Niverville. So I know he does live in the riding and obviously spent some time in the riding, and, while I didn't get a chance to meet Jonathan either, I'm sure that he has future political aspirations, and I wish him well in those future political aspirations. Janine Gibson, who ran for the Green Party in the riding, I'm glad that there was a full representation of candidates within the riding, not to have debates with because weren't sort of a variety of debates but, certainly, to ensure that voters had an opportunity to make a choice.

Certainly, Mr. Acting Speaker, I was proud that there was a number of specific issues that were

raised during the campaign, whether they're related to crime or to law and order or to tax reduction, as the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) has already discussed, other concerns that were raised during the campaign and ideas for change. I would encourage the members opposite not to be too smug, as they sometimes are, to think that just simply because the election result provided them victory within government—and we, of course, respect the wishes of Manitobans—but that there weren't other good ideas that were raised during that campaign. I think all of us, all of us would agree that, regardless of an outcome of a campaign, there probably are good ideas that can be learned from and gleaned from all of the different political platforms that were put forward during that democratic exercise.

I would, in particular, refer to a few of the different things that were brought forward within the Conservative campaign. Some of them related to the pressing concern of auto theft. I had the opportunity to share a political panel with one of the New Democratic members more recently and the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), whom I congratulate on his re-election, just very recently. Unfortunately, the pervasive attitude of the New Democratic member seemed to be that simply because there was an electoral victory for the NDP, that was in some way a validation of their particular approach to law and order. I would suggest that, in fact—*[interjection]*

Ah, I see the new Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) also believes that the people of Winnipeg validated a high-crime rate. In fact, they voted for a significant crime rate, highest auto theft in, well, North America, not just really in Canada, on a per capita basis. One of the highest murder rates, one of the highest victims of assault, those who were victimized with weapons. I would hope that the new member wouldn't take the outcome of the election as a sign that people in Winnipeg are satisfied, that they are happy with the fact that they have these high rates of crime. I'm sure as she travels throughout her constituency now in her role as MLA, and I congratulate her on her victory, that she'll see that many people are still concerned about these issues and are looking for action.

In fact, we did bring forward a number of different suggestions and were really looking to do something other than the status quo. I truly believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we must move beyond in the area of law and order and the area of justice; we must move beyond the status quo. I did hear it from

many, many different people as we went throughout my local riding and beyond, people saying that we really needed to re-examine how the whole criminal justice system worked.

I think that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) probably would agree with me that these are concerns that are out there. In fact, I know prior to the election, two days prior to the election, there was sort of a rushed announcement regarding electronic monitoring—an issue that's been raised not only by members of the Conservative Party, but also members of the Liberal Party over the last number of years—suddenly, two days before an election, I think it was on the Wednesday.

You know, you'd have to sometimes step back and look at the progression of these issues. I remember about a month before, when I raised the issue of electronic monitoring—and I believe that I was supported by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux)—the now and still the Minister of Justice went on the radio and said, well, this wasn't being done anywhere else in Canada, that the experience really wasn't there and there was no way that this was going to be a solution. In fact, I believe his exact words on CJOB radio were that electronic monitoring was too simple of a solution and he didn't want to go down that model.

Not long after, he went onto the same radio station and said that only Saskatchewan was using electronic monitoring, and they weren't using it for youth. So, again, he said that this is an idea that wouldn't work. Now somewhere in between that particular interview and the near election call, Mr. Acting Speaker, somewhere between those two dates, the Minister of Justice obviously either had a personal revelation or somebody came to him and said, this really is a significant issue and if we're not going to actually do something about it, we need to appear as though we're doing something about it prior to the election to try to take some of the steam out of the issue of auto theft.

So it was, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the Minister of Justice made his announcement that he would be teaming up with one of the Maritime provinces that, in fact, had been using an electronic monitoring program, not the passive kind, but the GPS electronic monitoring. Suddenly, there was a realization from the minister that there were other jurisdictions, not only in Canada, but around North America that were doing this.

Now, my concern of course, and all of us—I wouldn't want to contradict myself, so, when I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, that all of us have good ideas and, certainly, if the members of the government want to take those good ideas, we have no umbrage with that. I'm glad, in fact, that the Minister of Justice announced the program. My concern is that it was done in such a way that it certainly leaves one to be sceptical about whether or not there's truly a dedication and a commitment to the program.

The Minister of Justice has indicated that they were going to do this on a pilot basis, on a test basis, and yet we have no indication whether or not there's going to be a public reporting about how successful the program was or whether or not he's in fact dedicated to ensuring that the real resources go into the program to make it successful. That scepticism, I think, is shared not just on this side of the House or this particular party that I represent, but also among the Liberals, I think, in the House, who share some of that same scepticism. So we'll be watching that.

Of course, we've heard during the campaign how the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) came forward and talked about bringing forward a delegation—I think it was called a community caravan; I refer to it as the delegation of deflection—to go to Ottawa, to go to Ottawa again and try to blame all of the problems that we have in crime on Ottawa. It's interesting because prior to the election when the Minister of Justice was back in Ottawa, and I've lost count now how many times he's travelled to Ottawa, but whatever number it was, he was back in Ottawa in March. When he came back from that well-travelled place for the NDP, he said that they had wrestled concessions and that things would now be changing in regard to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. He didn't have the mission accomplished banner behind him, but certainly that was the feeling from his comments that he had done what he had set out to do. Now, after a number of years of lobbying Ottawa, he had finally accomplished what he hoped to.

It was actually reminiscent or reminded me, Mr. Acting Speaker, of the former Minister of Justice who did something quite similar two years ago, coming back from one of his many trips from Ottawa, who said that they had wrestled concessions away and now all things would be well because of changes that were going to be happening in the law. Then we found out later on, of course, that there was no such agreement, and it was all simply a smoke-and-mirror show.

Yet this Minister of Justice, whom I would like to take at his word, of course, and I think all Manitobans would like to, came back from Ottawa and said: Mission accomplished. We've got the concessions that we wanted from the federal government.

Not a month later, he is then saying we are going to take this delegation back to Ottawa because we need to get the concessions that he already said had been promised.

So it seems strange to me, and more than passing strange, to use the vernacular of the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), it seems particularly strange, Mr. Acting Speaker, that you would have the Minister of Justice continuing to go back to Ottawa for concessions that he said were already forthcoming. It's a concern that he's not looking at other jurisdictions that have had success. One of the great, I think, misnomers through this campaign is that the New Democrats tried to convince Manitobans, and perhaps they had a degree of success, that, in fact, no other province was able to get down auto theft as a result of the Criminal Code in Canada.

\* (16:10)

Yet, when we look, Mr. Acting Speaker, when we look at how British Columbia has reduced their auto theft over the last four years from historic highs, from record highs, they've reduced the number of auto thefts significantly in that province even though they are, in fact, under the Criminal Code as well. When we look to our neighbours in Saskatchewan who we've seen, on a number of indicators, are doing better than Manitoba is, regrettably, we see also that they have been able to reduce their auto theft over the last number of years, and they, too, operate under that same Criminal Code that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) says that there's nothing that can be done.

In fact, when you look at the Youth Criminal Justice Act and, certainly, we've said publicly before, this will be nothing new that there needs to be reform within the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Apparently, the Minister of Justice finds that shocking. I would encourage him to look back over the statements over the last two years.

But, even within the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which British Columbia and Saskatchewan have

used to bring down their auto theft rate, you see that those who are convicted of certain thefts, like theft over \$5,000, and are seen to be repeat offenders can, in fact, be sentenced to significant jail time as though they were an adult. That's a particular part of the Youth Criminal Justice Act that this minister seems to ignore.

One of the things, certainly, that we think should be looked at is to ensure that the ask for those who are repeat auto thieves is significant and been brought forward in a way through a ministerial directive. Of course, ministerial directives are, ironically again, used in jurisdictions like Nova Scotia and British Columbia, who've had good success in reducing certain parts of crime. All Manitobans, and all in those jurisdictions in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, they can actually see then what their prosecutors are asking for certain crimes and what the actual sentence recommendations accompanying those are.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

So, again, Mr. Speaker, while democracy has run its course, and while we've come back with the Legislature that Manitobans have chosen the composition to be, we do think that the government needs to look at all the platforms to ensure that those good ideas that were there, brought forward to the campaign, are, in fact, used and not simply stalled for a number of more years and then hastily, all of a sudden, acted upon prior to another campaign which will take place at some time in the future.

**An Honourable Member:** Five more years.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I hope that the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), who is chanting from his seat, uses those five years to build better connections within his own community. Certainly, there was concern that was expressed in terms of his accessibility within the community, and it reflected in some of the loss of vote. I would encourage him to use this time to try to rebuild those connections.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I know that there were a number of other issues that were raised in the campaign. It's really local, even in my own area.

I want to bring to the attention of the House a number of particular things that were raised. One in particular deals with the issue of the Bethesda Hospital in the Steinbach region. For those who are unaware of the Bethesda Hospital here in the Legislature, it is the largest hospital in southeastern Manitoba. The doctors there report that the

emergency room is as busy on a per capita basis as any emergency room in the city of Winnipeg. Over the last two years, there have been a number of cases or times when the emergency room hasn't had a doctor. For a community the size of Steinbach which, I believe, is western Canada's fastest-growing city, to have an emergency room that isn't staffed with doctors is simply unacceptable. The amount of space within the emergency room at Bethesda Hospital also, Mr. Speaker, is not up to what it should be.

I support, and I'm glad that a number of people within the community have raised money for some of the initiatives that have happened at Bethesda Hospital where there's been expansion at that particular facility. It's been largely because of private donations. The government is very reticent to talk about the contributions from the Bethesda Foundation, who, in fact, I believe are paying more than half of the cost of the expansion right now for the CancerCare ward at Bethesda. You know, you talk about a government that doesn't want to have any sort of a private role or private investment in health care, and yet here are private dollars funding more than half of this ward. I'm sure if those private dollars weren't coming forward that that particular facility wouldn't be being built.

But government does need to come to the table to recognize now the challenges that the Bethesda Hospital is facing. I had the opportunity to meet with about a dozen doctors who operate or who work in the Steinbach region early last week, and they raised a number of concerns and really feel that the hospital is near a crisis point, Mr. Speaker. They have asked me to bring forward the need for a greater emergency room, for a greater presence, for more resources, for that particular hospital in what is the largest facility in southeastern Manitoba serving the greatest number of people by far in the region.

I would hope that this government wouldn't continue on its pattern of ignoring certain parts of the province, excluding parts, and I would encourage even the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) to come south of the Perimeter to see the great area south of this particular region. I know there are a lot of New Democrats who think that going south is visiting the fountain in the back of the Legislature but, in fact, if they would go a little further, Mr. Speaker, they would see a great deal.

**An Honourable Member:** I understand you spent a lot of time in La Verendrye constituency.



**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, in fact, I would correct the—well, he used to be the Minister of Water Stewardship. He's moved so many times, I forget. But the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)—I would correct him that I, in fact, didn't spend a great deal of time in La Verendrye. However, I did, in fact, have a lot of people from my area who volunteered, who did spend some time in La Verendrye, and they reported to me that it was a vigorous campaign. Democracy certainly spoke at the end of the day. I would certainly commend the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Lemieux) for his election victory, and I would also commend the other individuals who worked in that riding. Mr. Stefaniuk, who has been acknowledged by the Premier (Mr. Doer) and by also the Minister of Infrastructure as a noble person, ran a noble campaign, and that's how democracy goes.

But, you know, in that light, Mr. Speaker, I do think that democracy also demands that even those areas that elected members who are not members of the governing party aren't simply ignored. I know the current Minister of Justice says that he's visited the Steinbach area to open up parts of the hospital. They were paid half-half with private dollars. I would ask him to ensure that his colleagues around the Cabinet table know that there's a need for greater resources in that particular area, the growing area. I know even though they might not find a fertile ground politically, I also know that the area returns significant tax dollars to the Legislature here.

**An Honourable Member:** I'd be careful; you never know.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, and certainly I hear the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford) telling me to be careful, that one never knows. That's actually not bad advice, and I certainly never take my particular area for granted. I believe I work hard within my region all the time, and I raise this issue because of that desire to ensure that the voices of the residents there are being heard, and the need for the increased resources to that particular area when it comes to health care.

I would challenge the government to do an analysis in terms of the tax dollars that are coming out of the region because of the growth within that Steinbach area and beyond. And there aren't many places you can point to in the province, Mr. Speaker, that are growing at all, let alone at the rate that Steinbach, Hanover, Niverville and some areas beyond are growing. I would suggest to them that,

rather than them taking those areas for granted, the growth of those areas for granted, they turn greater attention to fostering to ensure that that growth continues because it really does benefit all of us here in Manitoba. I can assure the minister's office that I will be a continuous voice for the residents of those areas who certainly deserve to see their fair share of investment within the community from the government to continue growth and to ensure that that growth continues to benefit everyone in the province regardless of the kind of punishment politics I know that certain ministers on that side of the House like to play.

\* (16:20)

We've seen that also with road construction, and I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the need for greater investment in roads. I know the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Lemieux) and I have had this conversation more than once, and I know that he's also spoken to those within the region, whether it's the Town of Niverville, the R.M. of Hanover, the city of Steinbach council, and he's had these discussions about the need for increased investments in the roads. When you go through the community and the constituency, you see, Mr. Speaker, that there are restrictions, road restrictions, really, throughout the riding. In fact, I've talked to some of the businesses who are in the New Bothwell area along the 311 who are essentially being road-restricted out of business. They can no longer get the inputs that they need into their businesses because they cannot have a full load of trucks come into their businesses, and once the product is made or manufactured, they can't get the product out of the factory because the road is restricted so much that they can't get trucks along there. It's just a matter of time, I believe, where, if this situation doesn't change, you will see a business, with people who work in those businesses, close down because they can't actually get product in or get product out as a result of the lack of attention that's happened on certain roads in the area.

I don't say that politically. I don't believe that the Minister of Infrastructure would like to see that. I've worked with him at other times, and I believe he actually would do all that he could to avoid that situation. But I think that it is coming, and I would suggest to him that there does need to be attention paid to the excessive road restrictions because of the lack of attention that's being made to roads in that particular area.

Also, within the city of Steinbach, which is, as I've mentioned more than once now, a growing city, we see along Highway 12 north, which is one of the main accesses into the city, as much traffic as you see down a busy urban Winnipeg road. Perhaps Pembina Highway would be comparable during certain times of the day coming in and out of Steinbach as it is one of the major feeder routes. And I've talked to those in the department of highways who have provided me with statistics that indicate that, for provincial highways of that classification, the Highway 12 north intersection at the beginning or the entrance of town is, in fact, the most dangerous provincial highway intersection in all of the province. I don't think that that's a record that the Minister of Infrastructure wants to see continue the almost if not daily then certainly weekly collisions that happen at that particular corner. It's a matter of time until there's a fatality there, and I know that the minister will heed my warnings and my pleas to ensure that there is attention paid to that before something more significant happens.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again want to say that I appreciate the opportunity to be back in this Legislature, to pose at this point questions to the government, and I would ask that the government not fall to their more basic instincts perhaps to be arrogant or to be smug about how things have turned out within the election. I see a few smug smiles even there now. You know, perhaps the first week it's difficult. Perhaps it's harder to fight those initial instincts, but as we break for the summer and we all go and talk to our constituents, I think that our constituents, all of ours, no matter which side of the House we sit on, would say that we should come here and work for the betterment of Manitoba, that we should come here and show that all of us are striving to improve all areas of Manitoba, regardless of who is representing them in the Legislature. Perhaps, when the government returns, they will come with that refreshed attitude and that new attitude, and I would encourage them again to look at the various platforms they've seen put before them and to know that good ideas can come from other areas of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again congratulate all members of the House for their election. I look forward to working with all members, regardless of which party they're involved with, to ensure that we do advance Manitoba and bring it forward on a number of different issues, and I wish you well in

your deliberations over this next year. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to add comment on a few issues related to the budget and to maybe kind of start things off by—I guess it would be back in 1995, I can remember the leader of the then-opposition when he was talking about elections, and we had just come out of an election and when he was Leader of the Official Opposition, really took exception about "The Filmon Team." That was something which was prominently featured in all the signs, as you might recall yourself. And the leader of the then-opposition was quite harsh on the government because quite often he would say, Here you have "The Filmon Team" plastered all over the signs and so forth. It was all "The Filmon Team." It wasn't the individuals, and so forth.

Well, Mr. Speaker, so much has changed, you know, in this most recent election. We see it's not the Premier's team; it goes even beyond that. You know, wherever you drove in the province, you saw the picture of the Premier (Mr. Doer) on signs and, let there be no doubt—well, maybe one or two of them nod their heads saying, not in my area. Well, if you were a candidate that wanted to be a team member, you were required to put up the Premier's signs which had the feature of the Premier of the province because they wanted to make a very strong message.

Mr. Speaker, this is the reason why I bring it up. The messaging of this government. I give them an A-plus. They know how to send out a message, how to package things together. You know, when I look at the budget and I listened to the Question Period today and my leader brought it up in terms of the Friends of Upper Fort Garry, I think budgets are all about priorities. That's really what it's about. When you spend \$9 billion, you're going to do some good things.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of good things that happen when you spend \$9 billion. But let's not kid anyone. We each have roles to play. If you're in government, I suspect you're going to talk a lot about the wonderful things, and how government's doing this and this and this and that with that \$9 billion. Well, in opposition, you also have a role of pointing out areas where maybe government is being wasteful in the ways in which they're spending the tax dollars.

So I look at the question that the Leader of the Liberal Party put forward today about the importance of Upper Fort Garry. You know, we had a meeting earlier today in which the Friends of Upper Fort Garry made a presentation. It was a fairly impressive list of people that are involved in this group. We have former premiers like Ed Schreyer and Gary Filmon. We have former Mayor Bill Norrie. We have businessmen like Bob Silver. We have federal politicians from the past like Otto Lang. Mr. Speaker, to look at the names of these individuals, it's very impressive.

The Leader of the Liberal Party brings up the question today: well, what's the Province doing? What is the first response the minister gives? Well, we're doing lots. We gave them \$16,500. So, in five or six years, they've been able to muster up that \$16,500.

**An Honourable Member:** That you voted against?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, I started to reflect on priorities—

**An Honourable Member:** You voted against it, Kevin.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I'm going to go about the voted-against issue pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, because I'm going to talk about that, but let's talk about the priorities. They spent \$16,500 on what was, in essence, the beginning of our province, Upper Fort Garry. Get educated. Become more acquainted of what really Upper Fort Garry is all about and what's actually happening on that issue, because then you will see that the lack of attention that the government is giving even the important issues like that is surprising.

Instead, they have no problems. They'll spend a half million dollars on changing our buffalo into a bull, Mr. Speaker. Over a half million dollars, no problem at all. I look at it. You know, one is trying to change the image of the province, change it from a buffalo to a bull. Then, on the other hand, they're discarding our heritage. On the one, \$16,000. On the other, over a half million dollars, and that's just the development.

That's what the budget is all about. It's about priorities, and at times, the government really, really messes it up. This is a good example of just how badly this government, at times, is out of tune with reality and what it is that the public really and truly would like to see. Not necessarily, Mr. Speaker, because again and again—you know, the Member for

Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) talked about arrogance. It's easy to fall in the place, oh well, we just went through an election and we're now a massive majority government of 36. We have a mandate and the public supports everything we're doing. Well, my advice is that they shouldn't fall into that trap, because so much depends in terms of perception in the way in which things are done and dealt with during the election.

\* (16:30)

I want to talk about the issue of perception because prior to the election day, probably about four or five days before election day, I was given this advice: I was told—oh, I can't say my name, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if it's good to say it in third party anyway, but I was advised by someone that the NDP are planning some piece that they're going to be circulating, and it's really a dirty piece and all this kind of stuff. I've got to be advanced on it. Well, would you believe that, as I'm knocking on doors, as I'm sure every candidate did on a daily basis in their constituencies because we don't take our constituents for granted, I hope—but, anyway, as I'm knocking on doors, in one of the mailboxes, true to form as that wonderful volunteer had said to me, there was this so-called nasty piece. It doesn't look very nasty, but it's in the content. It's what you read, you know, and it says, why is—and then I can't say my name, Mr. Speaker—supporting, and it's the Leader of the Official Opposition, with a question mark. So he's asking me why. Well, on that particular note, the NDP have been more supportive of the Conservatives in my history than I have of the Conservative Party.—

**Some Honourable Members:** No, no.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says, no, no, no. I should let the Member for Kildonan, and I have to excuse him because he hasn't been around maybe as long. In 1988 and 1989 the record will show that the NDP voted for the Conservative budgets, but in 1999 the Member for Kildonan also voted for the Conservative budget. You would be amazed on how many times the NDP and the Conservatives worked together. Yet this brochure tries to give the impression that I'm supportive of the Leader of the Official Opposition. Needless to say, most of those votes might have been votes which I requested. So one can say that he was maybe supportive of some of our initiatives. Anyway, this is something from a

lawyer saying this doesn't make sense, I suggest he read *Hansard* and you might be able to make some sense out of it.

Mr. Speaker, then it goes on, and this is really where you start talking about deception. It says, and again it's me, voted against health-care investments like new access to Nor'West Health Centre and improvements to Seven Oaks ER. Well, let's start stretching the truth here now, right. You know what the government could have said. They could have said that I voted against babies being born in hospitals because, after all, I voted against the budget, right? It's the same logic. There are so many things which you can actually say that because a person voted against the budget, in fact, they're against every aspect of that \$9 billion that is being spent.

Mr. Speaker, I will confess I do have different priorities than this government. I do believe, when it comes to health care, that less priority should be given to the regional health care authorities and financing of regional health care authorities. Why? Because I believe Manitobans want more bedside care than bureaucrats behind a desk. That's, in fact, what this government has been doing. So, yes. But this government, these members here, they support the ever-growing bureaucracy.

There are many things within the government. They support the crimes that are being committed in our streets, Mr. Speaker, because they didn't allocate enough resources to be able to fight the crime. I can say that just like you can say this in this brochure. Because you didn't put enough resources in you support it. You support crime on the street. That's the type of logic, but we know that it's not to try to give information or facts to Manitobans. Because if they had to give facts it makes reference to the Seven Oaks emergency room. Well, I believe that the efforts from the Liberal Party back in 1998—I'm not too sure of the exact year when the threat of the Seven Oaks' closure of the emergency room—the fight from the Liberals was just as good if not better than the New Democrats who were the Official Opposition. We were the ones that—[interjection]

Well, in someone's arrogant way. Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry but the truth at times maybe does hurt. Maybe the truth does hurt at times. I would challenge the Member for Kildonan to stand up and say how it is that he defended Seven Oaks. Tell me what more he did than what the Liberals did. We're the ones that did the postcard campaigns. We participated in all

the town hall meetings. We sent the information out and the materials. The Liberal Party was just as strong in fighting for Seven Oaks as they did, as the NDP did back then. The Liberal Party is the reason why we have the Wellness Institute at the Seven Oaks Hospital. That's the reality of it. Again, it's the whole truth hurts, but they don't have a problem trying to imply that I don't support the Seven Oaks Hospital.

Well, again, Mr. Speaker, it says that I'm against personal income tax cuts. Well, why? Because I voted against the budget. Well, in the budget they're collecting income tax, are they not? Do not the budgetary motions allow the government to collect the income tax? So, technically, I don't support the government receiving income tax. How quickly you are to be able to kind of twist things around in order to achieve what it is that you want to achieve, and you're trying to give a perception that just is not true. It's just not true.

You know, one of the ones that really amazed me is it says that I'm against increased immigration targets. Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. I was the first MLA to even talk about the Provincial Nominee Program in the province of Manitoba. The first quote you can pull from *Hansard* is actually from me on behalf of the Liberal Party dealing with the Provincial Nominee Program.

How many questions has this government ever asked when they were in opposition in regard to the Provincial Nominee Program, Mr. Speaker? You don't need hands to count because they didn't ask any questions in regard to the Provincial Nominee Program. They tried to give the impression that it's their program when they had nothing to do with the program. They didn't have anything at all to do with the creation of the Provincial Nominee Program. That was a federal Liberal-provincial Gary Filmon program; it had nothing to do with the NDP. They try to give the impression that it's their program. Anyone can administer a good program; it's the best program on immigration that Manitoba's ever had.

But this particular minister is dropping the ball. There's more that we could be doing on the Provincial Nominee Program. Why do we discriminate against professions to be able to make application in the same way that computer consultants might be able to do, Mr. Speaker? We do it because this minister and this government are fearful of any sort of recourse that they might get from others. That's the reason why this minister

doesn't have the courage, does not have the courage to make the changes that are necessary that will even make the program that much better. This is why when I look at the propaganda, and that's what it was, propaganda trying to tell people in Inkster that I oppose immigration.

**An Honourable Member:** Shame.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I agree with the Member for Kildonan, shame on the government for trying to give that impression.

Mr. Speaker, it says against new community safety initiatives, such as police officers, against water regulations and tough rules on pollution. It's truly amazing, and I think what happened, that when this brochure was being dropped, I conferred with some other people in regard to it. You know what their response was to me? Their response was that no one's going to believe it because it's a bunch of, and I don't want to say anything unparliamentary. It's so bad, they're so out of tune with reality, that they lost anyone that might have had any inclination to believe it. It's so much out of tune, especially when we aggressively work with immigration issues, and this government has dropped the ball time and time again. They still don't do anything in terms of immigrant credentials recognition, Mr. Speaker. We still have doctors that are not practising because of this government's inability to be able to acknowledge the importance of immigrant credentials.

\* (16:40)

So, when I looked and I saw the brochure as I was knocking on doors two days before the election, initially I was a bit fearful until I actually did some consulting with how other people were receiving it. Because of its gross exaggeration people knew, Mr. Speaker, that there was no merit for this type of propaganda.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that, if the opportunity to be able to communicate directly to all Manitobans was there on an equal playing field, this government never would have won 36 seats. They were successful, yes, in winning 36 seats, but just because they won 36 seats does not mean that they have the mandate that they think they have because opposition members are going to hold this government to account for the poor priorities that this government has established time in and time again. Their focus is more on bureaucracy than it is in terms of providing quality services to Manitobans.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I want to make a prediction. I've got a prediction to make. We're going to be able to make a prediction here in regard to Cabinet. You know, when the Premier (Mr. Doer) was the Leader of the Official Opposition, he was critical of then Gary Filmon for the size of his Cabinet, felt that it was too big, suggested that it should be reduced. Well, Mr. Speaker, then after, I believe in the 2003 election, he increased it by one more than what Gary Filmon had. So that was an increase. I suspect—*[interjection]* I'm against an increase in bureaucracy that this government has spearheaded over the last six years. If you don't know how to manage a Cabinet change and changing the portfolios to accommodate what societies in Manitobans want to see, that's your problem. But Manitobans need to be concerned when this government's answer to resolving issues of bureaucracy and trying to prioritize is just to expand, to spend more on paperwork, to spend more on bureaucrats, that's what this government does and does it well. I'll give them that much.

Now we are going to see this Premier increase the size of Cabinet. I believe that that's going to happen, and I'm going to be watching, Mr. Speaker, to see what kind of makeup there is in Cabinet. I was disappointed, you know, in the last—for years, the Premier had two Filipino MLAs and an East Indian MLA, and not one of them was appointed into Cabinet. *[interjection]*

Well, it's a very important issue, is it not? Right? It's a very important issue. You can already sense a bit of sensitivity on the issue, Mr. Speaker. It will be interesting to see with two East Indian MLAs and a Filipino MLA will, in fact, at least one of them be brought into Cabinet?

What sort of a Cabinet is this Premier going to be bringing in, Mr. Speaker? We're going to be watching it. *[interjection]* Why question whether or not it'll be a darn good one as the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) says. I believe that the Premier needs to assess what's happened over the last six, seven years. Some of its greatest failures have been on issues like immigrant credentials, have been on its failure to even make the Provincial Nominee Program a better, healthier program, having been able to bring in courses of cross-cultural awareness into government, into other facilities. I am concerned and will wait and see.

You know, it's interesting that as we pass this budget we will hear of some sort of a Cabinet change

at some point in time, and those ministers are going to be told, well, here's your budget. So we know that the Premier runs a tight ship, that here's your expectations. You might be an individual, but, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day they have to follow what the Premier and the Premier's office is instructing. They need to know that.

Mr. Speaker, one has to ask the question in terms of where is the money coming from. Did you know that today we are suggesting that we spend \$9.2 billion? When this government took office back in 1999 it was \$6.04 billion. That's a huge increase.

You know, how do you try to bring the numbers down so that people could better relate to how much money we are really talking about, Mr. Speaker? I don't have the research budget that the 36-member government has where they might have a hundred-plus employees, not to mention bureaucrats to do their number crunching and to get their spin out and their propaganda, but I can tell you one thing: It's a lot of money. Best I could tell, it's just over \$5,000 per Manitoban, whether you're 90 years old or nine months old. Annually over \$5,000 back in '99. Today that's over \$8,000, I believe.

Has health care improved to the degree in which it should have given the amount of money that has been spent, Mr. Speaker? The answer is, no, it has not, and if you canvas Manitobans as a whole you will get a resounding no. Do you ever wonder why? I believe I know why. It's the issue of priority. *[interjection]* No, no, no. You know, to the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), I never say I know it all. What I do say is I do work with my constituents; I do work with the people that are important to me to make sure that the issues that are important to the province are, in fact, brought to the floor of this Chamber. That's how I'm reporting on what I believe is important to Manitobans.

What I believe, Mr. Speaker, is that Manitobans see too much waste in health-care spending from this government. When you take a look at the issue of crime and justice, again we see huge increases overall since they've taken governance of this province, but have we seen the expected results of these increases?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Again, the answer is no, as the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) points out. You would think with the types of increases that we've received that there would have been marginal

amounts of crime, especially in comparison to other jurisdictions. But where we lead the pack and we always talk about is the issue of automobile theft. You know, I've narrowed it down to, kind of, like a one- or two-liner with this government when it talks about crime. They have a standard answer, a standard response. They are so predictable. It's called talk tough and blame Ottawa. If you have an issue in crime, talk tough, blame Ottawa. It's a standard line. The reality: nothing could be further from the truth in terms of this government's poor performance in dealing with crime.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the auto thefts. You know, this year they are saying, hey, auto thefts are down by 20 percent or whatever the percentage is, and they kind of gloat about it. Well, who do you think brought it up from 5,000 to 14,000 when they are spending all this money, and now they are seeing a cut? Now they are saying, oh, gee, how wonderful things are. By the way, if there's any blame, no, no, no, no, it's not us; it's Ottawa. Got to get tough on those laws.

Well, Mr. Speaker, where do we compare in other provinces? No other province comes even close to us, not even close. In the year we had 14,000, you could have cut it in half, and we're still the leader of the pack when it comes to automobile thefts.

**An Honourable Member:** That's wrong.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** That's not wrong. On a per capita basis—*[interjection]* Well, what else am I going to compare it to? It should be on a per capita basis.

**An Honourable Member:** You want police. Why did you vote against the police then?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, now he's talking about voting against the police. Well, Mr. Speaker, he's trying to sidetrack me here, right? The point is that car thefts are not the huge national problem in comparison to the province of Manitoba, right?

**An Honourable Member:** That's right.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** And the minister says that's right. See, we agree on that point. Manitoba is unique in that sense, right?

So why, then, should we just accept the government at its word when it says that it's not because of us; we need to blame Ottawa; we need tougher Ottawa laws, when other provinces aren't

crying about Ottawa? Nowhere near to the same degree.

Mr. Speaker, we've got to be careful that this government doesn't flood the banks from the crying and the pleading that they do in Ottawa on all the different problems because they don't want to take responsibility for the issues that they have to take charge of and perform on. It's shameful. It's shameful.

I thought Jim Carr had the quote of the day, or maybe even the quote of the year, after the last budget. I think his quote was something to the effect of, everyone should look up in the sky, or something like that, look east and salute the Canadian flag. Mr. Speaker, why did he say that? It's because of the transfer payments.

We beg on our hands and knees, and the government gloats about the amount of money and how effective they are at getting the money, Mr. Speaker. Well, I tell you—and I said this the other day in the Throne Speech—you know, if the economy is doing relatively well through the private sector and the initiative of others, anyone can be a premier in government. Anyone.

The real challenge is how you're spending those tax dollars. How are you spending that \$9.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that this government has failed miserably. When we're going to find out to the degree in which they've failed miserably is when, and there might be some that are naive to believe that Manitoba will never, ever, ever be in a recession or the economy will never, ever, ever slow down. That might be in the minds of some, and, if that's the case, it's even that much scarier. But, at some point in time, there might be a need to spend smarter in health care. You cannot spend as recklessly as you have been in health care and expect that the quality of service is going to get better for the amount of dollars that you're pumping into it.

Mr. Speaker, I'm told I only have a couple of minutes left to go.

Mr. Speaker, I want to leave a couple of thoughts. You know, youth justice committees, I think that we need to better utilize youth justice committees. The other day at McDonald's, I had an individual talk to me about school bullies. Maybe

there is a role for youth justice committees in that sort of an area.

Mr. Speaker, today I brought up the issue of the \$2,000 rebate. Here you have, you know, the taxi industry is trying to lead the way in some of these initiatives, environmentally-sound initiatives, Mr. Speaker, and because the Toyota Prius is not available in the province and he's waiting for months. He has to register his taxi.

They have \$100,000-plus investment in these vehicles through their plates and so forth, Mr. Speaker. You would think that the government would understand that the discretion would be allowed for the individual to bring and purchase the one in Edmonton and get the rebate. Instead, what the government does is it doesn't see positively the benefits of allowing that. Could you imagine what you're telling every Toyota dealership in the province of Manitoba? Don't worry, let the backlog create; if they want the \$2,000, you don't even have to reduce your price. Just stick with your price, we'll give you the \$2,000. Their policy is flawed. There's a flaw within the policy.

The government, you know the Minister of Finance's answer was flippant. He just didn't care. He said here, this is the situation. Tough luck. Mr. Speaker, most inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to be able to address the budget today.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak). Are there any other speakers? No.

**An Honourable Member:** House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** Can we deal with this first? Are there any other speakers? No. Okay.

This concludes the by-leave debate on the budget reinstatement motion that had been agreed to by the House on Friday, and also the budget reinstatement motion was already voted on and passed by the House.

Okay. So this concludes the budget reinstatement motion.

Now we'll deal with House business.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** House business.

**House Business**

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you can canvass the House. I know that the next order on the agenda was to move to Interim Supply, but since there are scant minutes left in the day and rather than

setting up the committee, I wonder if you could canvass the House for the will to see it 5 o'clock.

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

\* \* \*

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



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 11, 2007

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