

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

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

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**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.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
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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.
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LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
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<i>Vacant</i>	Elmwood	
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 28, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYER

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 204—The Social Inclusion and Anti-Poverty Act

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 204, The Social Inclusion and Anti-Poverty Act; Loi sur l'inclusion sociale et la lutte contre la pauvreté, be now read a first time.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, this bill provides specific targets for the reduction of poverty in Manitoba and provides for the requirement for the Province to produce an action plan and to make sure that we do have a good plan for reducing poverty. It is modelled on legislation in other provinces which is working well in other provinces and shown that it can be done. We have listened to poverty groups during the last several months and we improved the original version of this bill, so it's now a new and improved version that we're introducing this session.

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

### PETITIONS

#### Physician Recruitment—Southwestern Manitoba

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Town of Virden has the last hospital in Manitoba on the busy Trans-Canada Highway travelling west.

For the safety of recreational travellers, long-haul truck drivers, oil and agricultural industry workers and its citizens, Virden, a town of nearly 4,000, requires emergency services at its hospital.

On June 30, 2008, the emergency room at the Virden Hospital was closed due to this government's failure to recruit and retain doctors for southwest

Manitoba and its failure to plan for the departure of doctors whose contracts were expiring.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), to consider creating a health-care environment in which doctors want to work and build their careers in Manitoba.

To request the Minister of Health to consider making it a priority to recruit doctors to southwestern Manitoba so emergency rooms do not have to be closed when they are needed the most.

This petition is signed by Gloria Slater, Barry Brydon, Carrol Forsyth, Bob Chalmers and many, many others.

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

### Education Funding

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

Historically, the Province of Manitoba has received funding for education by the assessment of property that generates taxes. This unfair tax is only applied to selected property owners in certain areas and confines.

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

The provincial sales tax was instituted for the purpose of funding education. However, monies generated by this tax are being placed in general revenue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson) consider removing education funding by school tax or education levies from all properties in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by Jim Smith, Joe Rindall, Alice Denchuk and many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Increased School Facilities— Garden Valley School Division**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition.

The student enrolment in Garden Valley School Division has risen steadily for the last 10 years.

Since 2005, the enrolment has risen by more than 700 students, from 3,361 students to 4,079 students, a 21 percent increase.

Since September 2007, the enrolment has increased by 325 students, an 8.7 percent increase.

Currently, 1,050 students, or 26 percent, are in 42 portable classrooms without adequate access to washrooms.

There are 1,210 students in a high school built for 750 students; 375 students are located in 15 portables without adequate access to bathrooms.

Projected enrolment increases based on immigration through the Provincial Nominee Program reveals the school division enrolment will double in the next 12 years.

Student safety, school security, reasonable access to bathrooms and diminished student learning are concerns that need immediate attention.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson) to consider providing the necessary school facilities to Garden Valley School Division.

To urge the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth to consider providing the Garden Valley School Division an immediate date as to when to expect the necessary school facilities.

This is signed by Susan Funk, John Rempel, Klass Wiebe and many, many others.

#### **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day**

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

Each year in Manitoba, many families experience the heartbreaking loss of an infant through miscarriage, at the time of birth, or shortly thereafter.

During this time of grief, families require support, understanding, and in many cases, the financial means to assume funeral and monument costs for their child. Unfortunately, the cost of a funeral for an infant that has never left the hospital is usually not covered by private insurance plans.

Affording these children a dignified burial can help parents and family members work through their grief. Heaven's Little Angels, a registered charity in Winnipeg, exists to help eligible families fund funeral and monument costs for the infant they have lost.

Building awareness within the greater community of the challenges faced by these families is a positive and proactive means of establishing support and understanding within the community. Each of the 50 U.S. states commemorate Infant Loss Awareness Day annually on October 15.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To encourage the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) to consider establishing Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Manitoba in order to increase awareness, support and understanding of the difficulties faced by families who have lost an infant.

This petition is signed by Marla Snell, Thora Meade, Kerilyn Zielinski and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

\* (10:10)

#### **Manitoba Liquor Control Commission— Liquor Licence Fees**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Manitoba Liquor Control Commission has substantially raised the cost of annual liquor licences for restaurants, cocktail lounges and other Manitoba businesses.

The MLCC justifies this increase by stating that the cost of annual licences is being increased to better reflect rising administration costs.

For some small-business owners, the cost of the annual liquor licence has more than doubled. These fee hikes are a significant burden for business owners.

The decision to increase the annual licence fee, while at the same time eliminating the 2 percent supplementary licence fee payable on the purchase of spirits, wines and coolers, has the effect of greatly disadvantaging smaller businesses. Small businesses, which do not purchase liquor from the MLCC in large volumes, will not receive the same benefit from the elimination of this supplementary fee. Instead, they are facing substantially increased costs simply to keep their doors open.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act (Mr. Swan) to consider working with MLCC to find alternate means of addressing rising administrative costs; and

To request the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act to consider working with the MLCC to revise the decision to implement a significant annual licence fee increase; and

To urge the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act to consider ensuring that the unique challenges faced by small businesses are better taken into account in the future.

This petition is signed by Sharon Samatle, Kathy Whitford, Lydia Malcalm and many, many more Manitobans.

#### **Provincial Nominee Program—90 Day Guarantee**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Reuniting families through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program should be a first priority in processing nominee certificates.

Lengthy processing times for PNP applications causes additional stress and anxiety for would-be immigrants and their families here in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider establishing a 90-day guarantee for processing an application for a minimum of 90 percent of applicants that have family living in Manitoba.

This is signed by H. Samonte, N. Gonzales, C. Eborra and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Michelle Kirkbride, Corey Mohr, Lisa Janke and James Harada-Down, who are the guests of the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Also seated in the public gallery we have Malaika and Sophie Brandt Murenzi who are the guests of the honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

Also seated in the public gallery we have Girl Guides, council members and parents from the Bishop Grandin Area Girl Guides who are the guests of the honourable Member for Riel (Ms. Melnick), the honourable Member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross), the honourable Member for Lord Roberts (Ms. McGifford) and the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick).

Also seated in the public gallery we have Sandra and Andrew Little who are the guests of the honourable Member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald).

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

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Vote Tax**

##### **Government Response**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We were all appreciative of the fact that yesterday the Premier signalled his intention to

flip-flop on the issue of the vote tax. We think it's the right thing to do for Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

We were concerned, however, Mr. Speaker, when he said that the debate over the vote tax was causing him to be distracted, and I'm just wondering if the Premier can highlight for the House what it is that he's working on these days that this debate is distracting him from. He's blaming the federal government for just about everything that's going on. He put out a two and a half page statement on the economy the other day, when the federal government yesterday released a comprehensive 132-page statement.

So Manitobans are curious, Mr. Speaker. What great initiative is he working on that has caused him to be distracted on the vote tax debate?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the distraction lies with members opposite with their not asking questions on agriculture. I think we've had more questions on—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I know we have a lot of Girl Guides in the House, and I think it's important that we behave consistent with that great tradition.

I want to say to members opposite, rather than being distracted, I'm looking forward to buying Girl Guides cookies. I understand from our Healthy Living Minister that they're wonderful products. I certainly want to say that we appreciate their great effort, their great dignity and decorum in this House today.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly will have a discussion about what taxpayers support, what they don't support. I would say, on the statement made by the federal government yesterday, it did deal with a couple of issues we talked about consistently in this House. I know it's not an issue the member opposite's taken a position on in this House. He's been distracted. But on the issue of registered retirement—*[interjection]* Excuse me, there are Girl Guides in the House. Be careful.

Mr. Speaker, we did say to the Prime Minister a couple of weeks ago—and Manitoba took a lead in this issue of having the pension registered retirement savings plan roll over at 71 be a different provision. It will cost the Manitoba Treasury \$3 million. We think that that was appropriate for seniors. We said before it shouldn't be an issue for government

revenue. It should be more for the seniors' revenue and income and security.

We did talk and the member opposite took a contrary position on pension solvency than Minister Flaherty yesterday where he talked about the five-year provision versus 10-year. We'll still do more work with businesses and labour here in Manitoba, but those are a couple of items of public importance, I think, to the people of Manitoba and certainly items we've raised with the federal government.

### **Manitoba Hydro Power Line Government Investment**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, those are backward-looking issues that they've already put on the record, but he suggested yesterday he was distracted by the vote tax debate.

I just want to ask him, in light of the comments made yesterday by the Ontario NDP that the east-west power grid is dead and given the acknowledgment that Ontario, at least presently, isn't interested in buying power from Manitoba, can the Premier get over his distraction for long enough to flip-flop on the west-side power line, take the \$640 million in savings and get on with doing something that's in his control and start the process moving forward of investing in the east-west power grid without waiting around weakly and ineffectively waiting for something to come from Ottawa?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, let not the member opposite put words in our mouth. When we say everything's on the table, it's on the table.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we've always maintained the view that sales should take place east of us, west of us and south of us. We also said when we announced the Wisconsin sale—no, actually when we announced the Minnesota sale, members opposite said it was only on the back of an envelope and it would never happen and that the sky is falling. I remember all his words in this House. Well, actually it did take a little work on the environmental side with the people and regulators in Minnesota, some of whom would have probably been attending meetings under the midwest group that attended a meeting here a couple of weeks ago, and we're pleased that that agreement's in place and proceeding.

We also have announced a similar term sheet with Wisconsin that has to go through their regulatory body. Both of those agreements are very

lucrative for Manitoba. When you have power to sell, you sell it for the best price. Ontario is pursuing a course of renewable energy at a much higher price, wind and solar, than perhaps we would look at. It's also pursuing a course of the nuclear power. It's questionable whether that will be approved or not. So we have discussions still ongoing with Ontario.

I would point out, though, so the public is given straight information, that the issue of the transmission line deals with reliability for the major capital centre of Winnipeg. There are other possible transmissions in the north that would bypass Manitoba's urban centre, but reliability has been recommended to ministers responsible for Hydro for some 25 years. This minister is proceeding with both export sales to increase revenues and reliability, and reliability includes getting approval both on the price and environmental side with regulatory bodies in the United States, including the action proposed by Hydro today.

#### Location

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** He's right about the recommendations from the experts at Hydro to run a bipole line down the east side of the province of Manitoba, which has been on the record now for almost 30 years. The experts didn't even contemplate the possibility of the west-side line that was foisted on them by the politically appointed board some year ago or so.

\* (10:20)

So I'm just asking the Premier: He commented in his last answer that everything is on the table. Is he indicating today that the location of the next bipole line is on the table? Are they considering doing the right thing for Manitobans, reversing the decision to direct Hydro to run the power line down the longer, far more expensive and less reliable west side and having it go down the east side, which is the right thing for Manitobans, will be supported by Manitobans, and which he can be assured will be supported by our party if he's prepared to announce today that that is the new decision?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Well, Mr. Speaker, when I say that everything is on the table, some of this taxpayer partisan advertising is on the table. Let it be very, very clear. The three copies that I received at my house, I'd like to thank the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for wasting taxpayers' money three times over for those mailings. I'm not sure she switched any voters in our house.

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

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Girl Guides are in the Chamber. Please be respectful, I say to honourable members opposite.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have some decorum here.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you. So, as I say, the taxpayers' mailings, once, twice and thrice in my home, I think should be on the table. We'll do that. I'm sure we'll get great co-operation to ban partisan mailings.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue of transmission, the member opposite fails to mention the Farlinger report. The Farlinger report that was tabled in the Legislature talked about the pros and cons of both routes. He did point out that a considerable amount of pressure could be placed on international sales, particularly in markets like the United States. He did point out that it would potentially put any transmission in jeopardy if it did not fail to take into consideration environmental concerns, including international environmental concerns.

I would point out, since that report has been conducted, there have been more and more reports about the undisturbed boreal forest all across Canada, including in Manitoba and on our east side of the lake. It is not the west side of Lake Winnipeg, as the members opposite have put out. It is in the western portion of the province where there is more right-of-way already obtained by Hydro. There's more mining that goes on. There's more forestry that goes on. There's more highway construction through that area—[interjection] Well, the Duck Mountains. I'll get the members opposite a map.

Mr. Speaker, if you can't build a transmission line because sales will be stopped with concerns about Manitoba—and we just went through a year fight. If we didn't have the Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport (Mr. Robinson) involved directly with the Minister of Hydro down in Minnesota talking about Aboriginal people, talking about you cannot look at transmission and hydro development based on the past like the Grand Rapids development, but rather about the future—the new generation of Hydro will have co-operation with people living in the area. It will have training. It will have employment with people living in the area. It will have land-use policies, including ecotourism

with a UNESCO World Heritage Site that eventually we will get on the east side.

We have a long-term vision to sell hydro at a profit for Manitoba to have the reliability here in Manitoba and to protect one of the most beautiful places in the world, the east side of Lake Winnipeg. We can actually do both things together, get more revenue to support transmission and protect our forests, our lakes and our rivers on the east side in a World Heritage Site. That's the long-term goal of this government, and we will always take the long-term view for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the wisest things this Premier has ever said was on November 24, 1989. He said: Over the short run you can be intellectually dishonest, because in a world of 10-second clips you can say one thing one day and you can say another thing another day. That was what this Premier said in the House in November 1989.

And to that point, Mr. Speaker, he announced just last Thursday he's running a great big road through the boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, and now he's up here today saying we're going to protect the forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and have a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if he's going to be intellectually honest, he knows, because the experts have said it, you can run a transmission line down the east side of the province. Even the people at Poplar River say that you can run that line to the east of their traditional territory. All the remaining communities support it. You can do it in partnership with communities. It'll work with ecotourism, save Manitobans \$640 million, protect the environment, create a more reliable power system, allow for a UNESCO World Heritage Site and do what's right for Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans.

So I want to ask—

**An Honourable Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I'm not done.

**An Honourable Member:** How many questions do you have?

**Mr. McFadyen:** That was the preamble. Here comes the question—the preamble which was only one-quarter as long as his last answer.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the Premier is: In his nine years as Premier—and this is a remarkable fact—the only substantive bills he has introduced in this House in his nine years as Premier have been to manipulate election laws. Is he indicating today that he's going to add to his legacy of legislation with a new bill to manipulate election laws consistent with all of the other bills he's ever introduced in this House?

Is that his priority? Is that what is distracting him right now, or is he going to do what's right for Manitoba, for Manitoba Hydro, for the Aboriginal people on the east side, and reverse the reckless and destructive decision to run the power line down the west side of the province?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, just the other day, the former chief electoral officer of Saskatchewan said that Manitoba's leadership in election laws was quite commendable. Further, Democracy Watch and other organizations that comment on these things are very positive, and, thirdly, one of the greatest concerns of members opposite was the whole issue of fixed election dates, and we've gone to set election dates, not fixed elections in Manitoba. I think that's very positive for democracy. We were following the federal model which I know was implemented by the Conservatives in—oh, no, I guess it wasn't implemented in Ottawa. Sorry. Oops, I apologize for that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the member opposite has taken a position to not support our negotiated ban on logging in Nopiming and Whiteshell provincial parks, both of those parks on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

So we have the green team on this side and the mean team on that side. I will take our chances in the next election campaign, Mr. Speaker.

### **Manitoba Housing Government Response to Bedbug Problem**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Back in January 2008, the Minister responsible for Housing put in place a dedicated pest management team to implement a comprehensive plan to attack bedbugs.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister how it's working.



**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, it's very important to remind all members that the challenge of bedbugs is a serious one, actually, all across the world, and it has to be taken very seriously. It can really undo people's quality of life, believe me. It's happening, whether it is in five-star hotels, whether it is in high-rise and expensive condominiums or, indeed, in public housing. It would be wholly wrong to only talk about bedbugs in the context of public housing, whether in Manitoba or anywhere.

Now, given that we are bound and determined in Manitoba Housing to be a model landlord, we have put in place a comprehensive strategy to fight what is a very, very difficult challenge to overcome. It's very hard to kill these bugs. We're making some progress, Mr. Speaker.

\*(10:30)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** But we're talking about the properties where the Manitoba government and the minister is the landlord, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table letters that have been sent to the minister, to the government and to others over the last many, many months, letters from Karen Alway, who is in the gallery today, and she's like many others that live in Manitoba Housing. She's even sent letters to the Premier (Mr. Doer) in her frustration on the lack of action from the minister. Karen Alway has had 15 treatments for bed bugs since July of 2007 with no results. The problem has gotten worse with bed bugs on the toilet paper roll, on her reading glasses, on her coffee table.

Mr. Speaker, how many other residents in Manitoba Housing, where the minister is the landlord, are experiencing the same problems, and can he tell Karen Alway and the many others today what his plan of action is, rather than the rhetoric that he expressed in his first answer?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think we say to Karen Alway that we recognize the frustration that anyone in that situation must feel when you look forward to successful treatments and it is otherwise and, as well, to the advice that she has been providing to the department.

But, Mr. Speaker, first of all, tackling bed bugs, as tackling any challenge in housing, is a dual responsibility. It's a shared responsibility, of course, between the landlord and tenant. I had a call from a

tenant in my riding a few weeks ago who complained to his landlord about bed bugs and he was evicted.

We don't do that in public housing. We go in. We make sure that we have strategies that are state of the art. We now have a 10-person team that has expertise in dealing with this. Ever since DDT was outlawed by the federal authorities because of concerns of health, different ways of tackling this had to be developed and we've been doing that in Manitoba.

### **Economic Statement Tabling of Second Quarter Financials**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** I find it interesting that the biggest distraction that the Premier has is that our householders find their way into his mailbox. I wish his distraction was the economy as opposed to our householder.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (Mr. Swan) tabled the second quarter financials for Manitoba Lotteries.

Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan and Ontario have issued economic updates based on their second quarter financials.

Can the Finance Minister indicate today if his department is in possession of the second quarter financials, and, if so, will he table them in this House before we rise next week?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I have consistently said that the second quarter reports will be published in the normal time frame which is in December. I know the preparation is going on with that right now, and when the preparation is complete and all the work has been done to ensure the accuracy of the report, it will be tabled as per the normal routine in this House.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, this may come as a surprise to the Finance Minister, but we're not dealing in normal times right now. This is not a normal routine situation.

What we're asking, simply, is the minister being so sheltered that he can't recognize that we're living in some very difficult times?

Budgets should be adjusted to actuals and the only way to do that is to know what the actual condition of our finance is. Mr. Speaker, the minister is either incompetent, incapable or indifferent. If the

Manitoba economy is as good as the minister says, please let us know. We need some good news.

Why is he not tabling the second quarter financials? Better yet, what is he hiding?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I've made it clear that we forecast balancing the budget this year. We've already put on the record that the biggest percentage overexpenditure has been in agriculture with respect to issues in the Interlake, and we are putting money in there to support producers.

We know that our economic performance will be in the top three for the country this year. That's been made public. We have stats coming out today on employees and earnings that show that Manitoba in the last 12 months has increased the number of employees in the province. Earnings are up 3 percent. Our unemployment rate is the second lowest in the country. All of this information is available to the member, and I assure the member that when the information is compiled and is accurate it will be put out.

When it comes to hiding things, I just wish the member would come clean on the fact that he said that without public financing there would be a democratic deficit in Manitoba, and I'm wondering if he would just apologize to the House for his complete flip-flop and explain why he did that. Was he bowing down to his leader, or did he just sacrifice all principle to sacrifice and survive in this House by being totally inconsistent?

#### **Western Premiers' Conference 2006 Crown Corporations' Financial Contributions**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** It's obvious that you're not going to get what you ask for, my colleague from Brandon West.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has exposed the fact that four Manitoba Crown corporations were secretly asked to secretly pay more than \$35,000 towards gifts and entertainment for delegates to the 2006 Western Premiers' Conference.

No one is asking the Premier of this province to look cheap when he is hosting other premiers. However, Manitobans are entitled to transparency, and when it comes to the operation of our Crown corporations, the Crowns are supposed to be using ratepayers' dollars to provide services to ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister responsible for Lotteries explain why Manitoba Lotteries made a secret contribution to the conference?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I know that other premiers have had similar criticism. I know that when we went to the Canadian premiers' meeting in Alberta a couple of years ago, there was criticism about some of the investments made in that meeting that Premier Klein hosted and the costs of the meeting.

All those numbers, by the way, have been FIPPA'd and made available. They weren't FIPPA'd before. I would point out the Pan Am Games got close to \$3 million from the Crown corporations. It wasn't made public.

All this stuff is now made public, so there is no secret. We were actually very proud. There were three meetings that took place. It was the Western Premiers' meeting. We also had an international summit with governors from Mexico, the United States, nine out of 10 premiers from Canada, the business community, three ambassadors.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that it was a very good Manitoba event.

**Mr. Graydon:** Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that greed is all-consuming.

Manitoba Public Insurance, Manitoba Liquor Control Commission and Manitoba Hydro also made secret contributions to the Western Premiers' Conference. Manitobans have mistakenly put their trust in the NDP government to manage the Crown corporations in good faith on behalf of Manitoba ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has enjoyed unprecedented transfers from the federal government and, yet, it secretly is asking the Crowns to use taxpayers' dollars to cover costs of their events.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Will he put an end to this secretive practice of asking the Crowns to pay for government events? Manitobans deserve transparency.

**Mr. Doer:** Once in seven years, we host a meeting. Crowns have been involved in the past. I mentioned the Pan Am Games. The only difference now is it's FIPPA'd and accountable, so it's open. It's open-the-kimono now and it was closed in the past in terms of the disclosure that's going on. Mr. Speaker, I would point out I was in Prince Albert a couple of months ago. I got stuff from, I think, SaskTel—I guess it's not

a Crown corporation anymore in Manitoba—in Saskatchewan.

So don't be holier-than-thou on being open. We're fully open on all of these events and we are proud that all the visitors to Manitoba—there was over a hundred media in Gimli with that beautiful Lake Winnipeg featured on many television casts across Canada.

Every seven years, we host. We try to do the best job we can. I want to thank all the community members in Fraserwood and in Gimli, all the volunteers that hosted people, drove them around, helped us pay tribute to the George Johnson school that also got money from this event to have a capital investment as part of the legacy program. I want to thank all those volunteers for making a difference to all the visitors that came from Mexico, United States and Canada to that meeting, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Immigration Branch Employer-Application Process Suspension**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from the Immigration branch of the Department of Labour and Immigration that indicates that the branch has temporarily suspended the employer-application process until further notice to review the employer-application process before implementation of The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, but the act was passed in June.

Can the minister indicate why it has taken until now to conduct a review? Why did she wait until it's necessary to suspend the program?

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased that the opposition supported the legislation that is going to protect temporary foreign workers here in Manitoba. That legislation is actually going to change the Canadian landscape in regard to protecting workers.

We've had five other jurisdictions approach us in regard to that legislation because they are so pleased with it. Our branch is probably one of the best branches of any jurisdiction in Canada, and we are always looking at ways to move our immigration file forward. I have every confidence that the strategies that they are using in the department to protect foreign workers is appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

\* (10:40)

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, there just doesn't appear to be any planning here. The program was

suspended. It was very abruptly done. A letter dated November 18, 2008, granted pre-approval for a worker through the employer-direct stream. Yet a letter dated one day later, on the 19th, suspended the program indefinitely. No prior notice was given and there's been no mention of this on the Web site.

So I'd like to ask the minister: Are there specific challenges being addressed at the Immigration branch with respect to the employer-application process and what are they? Why did she suspend the program?

**Ms. Allan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there are no programs being suspended at the Immigration branch. This legislation is very, very important to us because it's a combination of the Employment Standards branch, working with the Immigration branch and we are working in co-operation with employers and the federal government in regard to the labour market opinions in regard to temporary foreign workers that come through Manitoba.

If the member opposite would like to come to my office with my Immigration officials, we could sit down, we can have a discussion about exactly what we're doing to protect workers in Manitoba, which will be a leadership role that we're showing all across Canada. So if she would like to have this information clarified, my door is always open.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, it's not just me that needs the information. I'd be happy to speak to the minister. But there are employers out there that have just had their program abruptly ended. They're the ones that need to meet with the minister. The minister knows that employers rely on recruiting employees through the employer-direct stream and we know that The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act is not going to be proclaimed until April 1 of 2009, so employers are concerned about the removal of this option indefinitely and without any notice.

Can the minister indicate how long this program will be suspended and tell employers how long they will be inconvenienced by this abrupt decision just to suspend the program?

**Ms. Allan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's really unfortunate that the MLA for Morris is once again putting misinformation on the record.

Mr. Speaker, one of the really unfortunate situations here, because of this misinformation that the MLA is putting on the record, is she is making a statement about employers that are being concerned

about the Provincial Nominee Program. The employer-direct stream in the Provincial Nominee Program is the most successful stream because that's what makes our workers come to Manitoba, get employed and participate in our economy.

I would certainly hope that the information she is putting on the record is not a criticism of the staff in my Immigration branch. So I would really look forward to her coming to my office with any of these kinds of concerns and having them sorted out and having the correct information before she puts this kind of information on the public record.

**Dr. Larry Reynolds**  
**Government Response to Termination**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, for the last week, I've had people writing and calling to my office in support of Dr. Larry Reynolds, one of Canada's leaders in family medicine. But many of the people will not leave their names or want to make sure that their names are not passed on to anybody else because they fear retribution from the Premier, his government or the WRHA.

Yesterday when I asked the Premier if he would keep the names of people who wrote in support of Dr. Reynolds away from the WRHA, he refused to indicate that he would. I ask again: Can those who write to the Premier in support of Dr. Reynolds be assured that the Premier will not forward their names on to the WRHA, which may target them?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I said earlier this week I hadn't even heard of this individual that people are allegedly trying to—and no disrespect to the doctor, that it is alleged that something untoward has been developed by the government towards the person's career.

I want to make it perfectly clear. If people are going to write letters to us I would—I'll obviously have to respect privacy and I'll definitely double-check that, but I want to make it clear we do not inform, instruct or legally do anything with the dean of the medical school on the academic independence of the medical school.

This is a position that is funded by the regional health authority and by the university at the medical school. We do not suggest, nor would I even want to, who Dean Sandham should hire, extend, promote, demote or any other action. That is done completely and totally outside of government, and I'm sure the letters that will be from my office will indicate the consistent position of the government and any other

government, for that matter, in terms of a person at the medical school.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day when the Premier doesn't even know such a renowned individual as Dr. Reynolds.

I ask again about the situation where Dr. Reynolds has been relegated to a nil appointment with no compensation, no teaching, no research. Many who admire Dr. Reynolds want to provide to the Premier supporting information, but they're unable to do so because they're concerned that their comments might be used against them by a premier and a health-care system that does not tolerate dissent.

Right now it's impossible to even safely advise people to write to the Premier because we don't know if they could be targeted, if their information could be passed on to the WRHA, which can target them by demoting them, giving them nil appointments or other unseemly things.

**Mr. Doer:** I will talk to my correspondence office. I don't believe that anybody's privacy should be offended, that are writing.

Secondly, it's inappropriate to write us or me on this issue, because we do not hire and fire in the medical faculty at the University of Manitoba.

And, thirdly, the last time the member opposite made an allegation that the government was heavy-handed or something else happened, we referred it to Madam Justice Ruth Krindle, and her evidence, through various means of exploring the evidence and the allegations made by the member opposite, all his allegations fell like a house of cards when that was examined by an independent person.

So (a) we don't hire and fire at the medical school; (b) we don't hire and fire doctors at the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; (c) I didn't mean any disrespect to the doctor when I said I didn't know him. I was just trying to make the point that we had no interest in being concerned about this issue in the sense of the allegation made that we were concerned about criticism that he was making.

We get criticized by people every day, morning, noon and night. That goes with the job and it's not appropriate for us to comment on the hiring and firing of individuals at the medical school in Manitoba, and we won't do it.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it's a pretty odd state of affairs when the Premier says I don't want to hear

from people who might have concerns about what's going on in this province.

People's concerns about the action of the Premier and his ministers are based on real experience. Several years ago, Pat Jacobsen wrote of her concerns to one of the Premier's ministers. The minister gave the correspondence to the WCB chair who then fired her. In spite of the fact that Pat Jacobsen's concerns have been fully validated in the year since, the Premier has never apologized. The Premier has never indicated that he's changed the practice of setting people up to be targeted.

Has the Premier changed the way he and his ministers do business or not?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we will follow the law. The Workers Compensation Act, the employers, the unions and the public interest members of the board hire and fire the CEO. I would point out that the subsequent CEO of the Workers Compensation Board is not hired by Order-in-Council, not hired by Cabinet, not hired by the government. It's hired by business and labour that represent two-thirds of the board.

Secondly, we are not going to hire and fire at the medical school, and so being interested in something has got to be tempered with—I'm not going to provide any false hope that this government or this Premier is going to hire and fire or promote doctors at the medical school at the University of Manitoba. We're not going to do it. We respect the principle of the independence of our academic institutions, and we're not going to fool around with that. I don't care how many times the member opposite asks me to do that.

\*(10:50)

#### **Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Government Contribution**

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Mr. Speaker, as both a graduate of and former instructor at several of Manitoba's post-secondary institutions, I know that this government has a strong commitment to accessible post-secondary education.

Could the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy inform the House of recent steps she has taken to build on this tradition by expanding bursaries and scholarships for students in need?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** The best scholarship and bursary system in the country just got a lot better because today government has committed a

\$15,000 annual championship award to the Helen Betty Osborne foundation. The foundation will award 10 scholarships of \$1,500 each, and, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to say that this year the award will honour Dr. Verna Kirkness, a distinguished Aboriginal educator from Fisher River, Order of Manitoba, also, the person who's responsible for doing the implementation plan for the University College of the North. So, certainly, she well deserves this honour.

#### **Enhanced Driver's Licence Project Status**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for MPI has indicated there will be an enhanced driver's licence to be in place by June of '09. We had been advised that we would be kept informed as to where this program was.

Could the minister for MPI explain to us if a deal has been reached with the United States and where the program is in the queue at this point?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Acting Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** I understand there are some great opportunities that are being planned and are in the works. I understand the identity card, Mr. Speaker, is a priority. We also recognize this will address a need that has been expressed to us by many Manitobans, seniors and others.

Also, I applaud the corporation for all of their work with all of the stakeholders to make sure we can do this in a secure way.

#### **Tabor Personal Care Home Renovation Requirements**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Day after day I read petitions regarding the state of the Tabor Home in Morden. Nothing happens. The minister knows and has agreed that this facility is outdated and is in desperate need of replacement.

What is the Minister of Health doing for those who are aged and in need of a home where they can spend their last years in an environment where they can feel safe?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I can inform the member that, of course, we've been working with the community, have met with them. I acknowledge that the member continues to be an important advocate for the community, that indeed money has been secured for safety and security improvements.

We know that all members of this House have requests for capital infrastructure for their communities. These are important requests that we're working together with communities to prioritize and to ensure that we can continue with our record of newly constructing or renovating over 65 facilities in rural Manitoba and over a hundred in Manitoba as a whole.

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

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to members' statements, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us Mr. Sid Green, who is a former Member for Inkster, and to the loge to my right where we have Mr. Binx Remnant, who is a former Clerk of the House.

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

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Bishop Grandin Girl Guides 20th Anniversary

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and recognize the 20th anniversary of Bishop Grandin Area of Girl Guides of Canada. As a former member of the 65th Brownie pack and the 65th Guide unit, I have experienced first-hand the benefit of this program.

In 1909 a scouting rally was held at the Crystal Palace in London. Eleven thousand boys who had been following Lord Baden-Powell's exercises in *Scouting for Boys* showed up and, to Baden-Powell's surprise, a large number of girls also arrived. They said that they had been practising scouting and demanded entry into the rally. Baden-Powell was impressed and asked his sister Agnes to create a program just for girls. This was the beginning of guiding. By 1910, the movement had reached Canada and by 1912 there were units in every province. By 1917, the Canadian Girl Guides association was considered of such value to the people of Canada that an act of Parliament was passed approving its constitution.

The vision of the Girl Guides of Canada is to make a positive difference in the life of every girl and woman who experiences guiding so that she can contribute responsibly to her communities. Their mission is to challenge all members in their personal

development and empower them to be responsible citizens. Their values are reflected in both the promise and the law, which each Guide adopts as her personal code. Each Guide promises to do her best, to be true to herself, her faith in Canada and to help others. Each Guide also accepts the guiding law which challenges her to be honest and trustworthy, use her resources wisely, respect herself and others, recognize and use her talents and abilities, protect our common environment, live with courage and strength and share in the sisterhood of guiding.

Twenty years ago, Manitoba Council of Girl Guides of Canada realized that Winnipeg area was far too large and decided that Winnipeg would be split into four. Thus began the search for a name to represent the new area of south Winnipeg. The name Bishop Grandin was adopted because Bishop Grandin Boulevard had just been finished and touched on all the visions tying the new area together. Bishop Grandin Area Girl Guides are a valuable resource to our community, delivering many services, including tree planting along Bishop Grandin Greenway—

Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to finish my statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave to finish her statement? *[Agreed]*

**Ms. Melnick:** I thank the House.

—helping to clean the banks of the Seine River and visiting seniors' residences, to name just a few.

The success of Bishop Grandin Area relies on the dedication of adult volunteers, many of whom have joined us today. I would like to pay tribute to the women who have served this area, namely, Carol Anderson, Thelma Findlay, Maureen Leppington, Irene Muzkya and the current commissioner Marjorie Portman. I would also like to pay tribute to Peggy McPhee who for 18 years has managed the Bishop Grandin Area office.

Mr. Speaker, last spring the MLA History Challenge was launched in some of the Bishop Grandin Area districts. I was delighted to visit my old pack, the 65th Brownies and award them the St. Vital History Challenge. I look forward to awarding our newly created badge, the Environmental Challenge.

Twit, twit, twoo, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### De Salaberry 125th Anniversary

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 125th anniversary of the municipality of De Salaberry. Félicitations pour le cent vingt-cinquième anniversaire de De Salaberry.

#### *Translation*

*Congratulations on the 125th anniversary of De Salaberry.*

Much of southern Manitoba was settled during this time, between 1870 and 1900. Many towns and municipalities have celebrated 125-year anniversaries in the last few years. All had roots in the fur trade or pioneers seeking new farmland and a place to raise their families.

I was happy to attend the celebration dinner on October 18, along with my colleague the Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), where past councils were recognized for their hand in shaping the municipality. I was pleased to present a plaque to Reeve Ron Musick to recognize the 125th anniversary.

De Salaberry was named after Charles De Salaberry, a French-Canadian nobleman who served as an officer in the British army in Lower Canada, now Québec, was renowned for repelling the American forces in the War of 1812 and became a folk hero. Perhaps some of his descendants travelled west with the fur trade or to seek land, or maybe it was others who brought the name of their hero with them who settled here and named the area De Salaberry. The first Métis fur traders created the parish which evolved into the municipality in 1883.

Communities are built by people, and the community of De Salaberry is no exception. The people who came to De Salaberry to build a future must have been certainly hardworking and adventurous. The people who are there today, who live, work and play in De Salaberry, know what community means. Founded on trade and agriculture, supported by family and faith, enhanced by tourism and recreation, the people of De Salaberry have much to celebrate.

De Salaberry is blessed with fertile agricultural land in the Red River Valley, enjoys the natural beauty of the woodlands of the eastern escarpment and the jewel of southwestern Manitoba, St. Malo Provincial Park.

French and Métis culture in music, dance and art is evident in the many festivals throughout the year

for recreation and fun, and the hospitality in De Salaberry is always wonderful.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Manitoba Legislature, I congratulate the community of De Salaberry on the 125th anniversary. May you continue to prosper to make and record history for the next 125 years.

\* (11:00)

### India-Canada Culture and Heritage Association Dinner

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, on October 5, 2008, I had the pleasure of attending the India-Canada Culture and Heritage Association reception and dinner at Fort Garry Place. The gala was established in 2004 and is the celebration of the achievements of members of the Indo-Canadian community in Manitoba. This year's dinner paid tribute to the leadership and to the inclusive nature of a special individual, our Premier (Mr. Doer). As the event followed closely behind the proclamation of Mahatma Gandhi Day, the First Minister spoke to the significance of this great humanitarian figure and to the important historical significance of Mahatma Gandhi's approach to life which serves as an example for other political leaders.

I would especially like to acknowledge constituents of St. Norbert who took part, including Dr. Mohinder S. Dhillon, president of the India-Canada Culture and Heritage Executive; Dr. Madhav Sinha and Ritika Khatkar. Dr. Madhav Sinha was awarded a Distinguished Professional Service Award for his work in the field of quality management. Recognized as an expert around the world, in 2006 Dr. Sinha also participated in an international research project on quality management. Ritika Khatkar is a grade 11 student at Fort Richmond Collegiate, and she received the Dr. Chander Gupta Award.

Mr. Speaker, I was grateful to be a part of this celebration of community and achievements. I would like to thank Dr. Dhillon and the association executive for organizing this event, as well as the board of directors and advisory council.

Manitoba is fortunate to be the home of such a thriving and vibrant community of Indo-Canadians. This week we have witnessed horrific events unfold in Mumbai. We need to keep the people of India in our thoughts and in our prayers.

I want to congratulate the India-Canada Culture and Heritage Association on another successful celebration and our government for being inclusive and for moving Manitoba forward as the home for people from all around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Jack Oatway and Amy Dellebuur**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to recognize two fine members of the constituency of Lakeside. Recently, both Amy Dellebuur and Jack Oatway were recipients of Manitoba Council of Aging Awards for outstanding community volunteerism and their contributions to the well-being of Manitoba seniors. There is a quote from Sherry Anderson which reads: Volunteers do not get paid, not because they're worthless but because they're priceless. Both Amy and Jack have offered their communities priceless service over the years in a diversity of roles.

Amy Dellebuur's extraordinary record involves serving the town of Teulon on many different boards, including current efforts with the executive of the Teulon Women's Institute, the Seniors Club, the Teulon Museum and the Food Bank Committee. She lends her time to the Goodwin Lodge, a personal care home for area residents, where she calls out bingo numbers every Friday night. She also delivers meals to home-bound members of the community through active participation of the Meals on Wheels program. In the past, Amy has offered her talents to the board of the Teulon Hospital, was a keen member of the Kinette Club and showed exemplary citizenship through the work of the Teulon town council.

Jack Oatway is a perpetual volunteer, one whose contributions have made a significant impact towards the betterment of his municipality, his province and the lives of many seniors. As a member of the South Interlake Planning District Board, his tireless efforts were a key factor in the development of many planning documents for the surrounding municipalities in Rockwood, Rosser, the towns of Stonewall and Teulon. Jack has a passion for health-care issues, evidenced by his work to provide primary care to citizens, participation on boards of the Stonewall and District Health Centre, the South Interlake Seniors Services, the Southwest District Palliative Care and volunteering with the Stonewall and District Handivan. He also personally promotes and advocates healthy lifestyles for older members of

the community, leading by example through his many interests and pursuits. Further, his commitment to the South Interlake 55-Plus organization and volunteerism with the South Interlake Seniors Resource Council works to enhance standards of living for all seniors in the community, enabling them to find a co-operative spirit among their peers. The list of Jack's many accomplishments continues, a list too lengthy to recite in its entirety today. He truly personifies an unparalleled level of citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, it is often only because of the contributions of volunteers that many members' organizations are able to function in a rural area. I ask the Assembly to join me in congratulating these two individuals.

#### **World AIDS Day**

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of December 1 being World AIDS Day. World AIDS Day attempts to bring to people's attention the worldwide challenges and consequences of the epidemic, ultimately, halting the spread of HIV and improving the lives of people living with the virus.

The number of people living with HIV continues to rise in every part of the world. There are now more than 33 million people living with the disease, including 1,477 Manitobans, who have tested positive for the virus between 1985 and 2007. While we know much more about the disease than we once did, AIDS is not curable. Unfortunately, cases of HIV are on the rise in Canada among women and those living in poverty.

The theme for AIDS awareness day in Manitoba is "Living Well with HIV/AIDS." Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of attending the Stone Broke Art Auction organized by a grade 12 student from Collège Sturgeon Heights Collegiate, Caitlin MacHutchon, with all proceeds going to the Stephen Lewis Foundation to stop the AIDS pandemic in Africa. This is just one example of the many ways we as Manitobans can address the ongoing challenges of this disease.

The international theme for this year's World AIDS Day is "Stop Aids. Keep the promise." As Canadians and as Manitobans, it is important to remember that there are millions of people around the world living with this disease, many of whom do not have access to the same lifesaving treatments as we do. As students at Collège Sturgeon Heights Collegiate have shown us, we can keep the promise



and stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities at home and around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

##### THRONE SPEECH

(Sixth Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby),

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

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

And the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in the amendment thereto.

Standing in the name of the honourable Member for Ste. Rose, who has 27 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to continue my remarks on the amendment to the Throne Speech. As I said yesterday, it appeared to me to be about 90 percent of rehash of old announcements and about 10 percent, a little bit more smoke screen, on what we may look at in the future and very little attention to the economy.

I want move to some of the specific things that the Throne Speech did address and some of the things it did not address. One of the problems that I am constantly faced with is the concerns that are constantly brought forward by my constituents in my area are the issues surrounding Crown lands. At the north end of my constituency it's almost all Crown land. Crown land is divided into about four different departments that are responsible. There's provincial, there's municipal, there's Aboriginal Crown lands and at least four departments where we have to go to get answers on Crown land, and the sum total of that is we get very few answers at any time.

The municipalities are quite willing to sell Crown land to producers, but it requires approval from, actually, a committee of four deputy ministers now, and it just seems a little onerous. The tradition has been 18 to 20 months to get an answer back on Crown land. People set up their financing and wait

all those months and then have to reset up their financing with a new fee.

Also at the north end of my constituency, and there was very much fanfare about the highways budget and some of the increases that have occurred in the highways budget, but the north end of my constituency is totally ignored. We have market roads and PRs where the water runs over them till the end of June. People are trying to move product, trying to move their cattle, cannot get those things done simply because the roads are in such deplorable shape.

\*(11:10)

The highway into Crane River wears out about two sets of tires on your car in a year without going over it very many times. It's high time that there were some road repairs, some of that highly-touted highway budget went that way.

In the area of education, we continue to see assaults on property tax from education tax. A number of the things that have happened over the years—the university a few years ago, the government took property tax off universities. That just transferred to other property owners, and the Province then took credit for supposedly giving more funding to universities.

Another reliance on property tax is the 10 percent or 20 percent commitment to new health facilities. We've been facing that in our own community right at the present time where a very small area, a very limited number of people, have to come up with a little under \$3 million towards the health facility, and that takes away from the municipalities' ability to provide infrastructure.

A number of years ago, when I was involved with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the federal government removed GST tax to municipalities, and the Province expanded the PST to municipalities by putting it on a number of additional things. I want to, once again, remind the Province that there is only one taxpayer, and when you're putting tax on tax on money that's collected from property tax, you're double dipping. You're putting too much reliance on the taxpayer on those issues.

Another place the Province has been downloading onto property tax and municipalities is on the water licensing and sewer licensing in this province, and it's just another raid on what they see as a tax they can go after. We heard, over the last

few days, at the AMM convention over at the Convention Centre, over and over again, the inability of municipalities to be able to meet their infrastructure needs and their infrastructure costs. It's a—in repeated pleas to the Province to do a little more.

One of the responses from the Province has been to introduce tax incremental financing legislation, and the bill died on the Order Paper in the last sitting of the House. It's been re-presented as Bill 4 now. It's been re-presented and rewritten somewhat, and it has identified some of the concerns we had with the legislation. We're not fundamentally opposed to tax-incremental financing. We just believe it has to be targeted at development that wouldn't have happened otherwise. Any time it goes beyond that, it does become a raid on municipal property taxes because school divisions are going to run short of cash that they should have available.

The minister referred to it as creative financing and, I guess it's creative, but it's financing that has been in place in some jurisdictions in the States for 50 years with varying degrees of success. In some cases, it's been an utter failure; in other cases it has created some additional development.

We heard over at the AMM some of the concerns about conservation districts. It's always been my view that conservation districts are the best area, the best place, to deliver water management and related issues to the province. They have the expertise, but they also have the ability to stretch a dollar and make things work. That being said, they're severely underfunded. There's been an increase in the number of conservation districts in the province and the funding has went up simply because of that increase, but not to individual conservation districts. One of the things we're seeing right now, and there was reference to it over at the AMM, is the new water resources officers that are around the province. We heard in the ministerial forum yesterday that there are 14 additional; I have been told there a few more than that water enforcement officers. The phrase that was used at the mike in questioning at the ministerial forum was, we got rid of most of the Fisheries and Oceans officers, but now we've got the provincial water police and they're far worse.

There appears to have been some mix-ups on how the provincial water police were going to enforce things, what required licensing. There was a directive went out to municipalities and conservation districts—

**An Honourable Member:** They're not police; they're water resource officers.

**Mr. Briese:** Water resource officers. They went out with a directive saying everything required a licence. Now they're backtracking on that and trying to cover up on what actually is required.

*Ms. Jennifer Howard, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Madam Acting Speaker, the Whitemud Conservation District, which is my area, the Whitemud No. 1 Conservation District, first one in the province, is responsible for some 1,100 miles of provincial drain and some 1,200 crossings on those drains. They maintain 1,200 crossings, or they're supposed to maintain those 1,200 crossings with roughly \$600,000 of capital budget. It's a 1-in-100-year replacement scheme and most of that infrastructure doesn't last 100 years.

In the areas of health, and once again, I'll refer to my own area, but in the areas of Health and Healthy Living, the personal care home in my own community has had one entire floor closed for over a year because of a shortage of nurses. I think that is shameful. Things like that should not be happening. I was—well, I was pleased, I guess, but I was a little flabbergasted when the NDP government announced all this supposedly new funding which was mostly rehash; our new personal care home in Neepawa was part of that rehash. The building is literally finished. They're still talking about it as though they're funding it into the future. I laughingly said, it was the ninth annual re-announcement of our personal care home. One of the things that was done with that personal care home was the commitment to supported living. The rationale on cutting down the number of beds in the personal care home in Neepawa from 125 to 100, was that there would be more supported living.

That was three and a half years ago. Well, finally, I think there's been a little bit of movement. I'm not sure it's wise movement. There's an aging Manitoba Housing building in Neepawa called the Yellowhead Manor. Now, Manitoba Housing is spending very close to a million dollars to upgrade nine suites in that building as supported living. What is, in all likelihood, going to happen is, those are going to be nine more beds that should have been in the personal care home as time progresses because there won't be room in the personal care home, so they'll be kept there through heavier care.

\* (11:20)

Just one other thing on the Yellowhead Manor, which is the Manitoba Housing building, they've had a problem with the ramp, the wheelchair ramp, at that facility—a problem that's gone on for over 18 months. They supposedly rebuilt the ramp and rebuilt it at the wrong angle. Then they put a yellow ribbon across and it's been closed for about eight months, with a yellow ribbon across it so that the people, with their walkers and with their canes, have to bypass it, walk on the lawn. There've been falls. There are some liability issues there, and there are personal health issues there. They're still arguing about how they're going to replace this ramp and more importantly, when it's going to be replaced. The engineers, I think, are still trying to design a suitable ramp.

One of the things that I do want to correct on the record, because the Premier (Mr. Doer) is trying to mislead the people. He did it over it at the AMM convention, and he's done it here in the House, is on the social assistance to municipalities. He would lead us to believe that the Province, when they took over social assistance, had taken over the costs of social assistance that the municipalities were paying. That's not entirely true. I was part of that negotiation and the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) was the minister that I was dealing with at the time. What was done at that time was a seven-year average was taken of the social assist cost to the municipalities. A figure was arrived at, and the municipalities since that time are paying that amount to the Province every year. It's somewhere around \$1.1 to 1.3 million.

We were on a downswing on social assistance at the time and it's gone down a little bit more since. When you use seven-year average, what's happening is the Province is actually making money from the municipalities out of that. It was agreement that was made, and a reasonable agreement. Simply to say that you've saved the municipalities a lot of money in that case is simply not true.

The municipalities, as I've said, over the last few days have had their convention and an awful lot of talk about funding for infrastructure and issues surrounding it. One of the things that I think was quite interesting over there was that there is—the framework agreement with the federal government and the Province between them has been signed. But there is a further agreement that must be signed and it hasn't been. It's called the community component. No money can flow to those municipalities, to those infrastructure projects, until the community

component is signed. The infrastructure people were slated to present a seminar on that on Thursday morning, yesterday morning, at the AMM convention. They cancelled. They haven't got an agreement in place. They have nothing to present—

**An Honourable Member:** Whose fault is that?

**Mr. Briese:** I would think it's probably the Province's fault.

What the municipalities are really looking for is predictable, significant funding for infrastructure that will start to make some kind of an impact on the \$7 billion of infrastructure deficit in this province. I think there are a number of things that need to be looked at where municipalities are concerned, and there are no references in the Throne Speech to some of these things. I think we absolutely need to look at the rules and responsibilities of different levels of government. It could be a very painful process but we've worked under a system for the last 50 years in this province that is old and dated and needs to be reviewed. We've got overlaps, we've got grey areas and it becomes a real problem.

The provincial-municipal tax sharing is one of the really good things we have in this province. It goes back years. It is a growth tax that's shared with municipalities, and it is effective. When municipalities need more infrastructure funding, provincial-municipal tax sharing might be a good way to approach that, because the mechanism is already there. You don't have to set up a new committee, a new bureaucracy. It would be very simple and easy to advance money through that.

I found it interesting that the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton) suggested to the municipalities that one of the problems on flowing any money was the balanced budget legislation which he seems to be hiding behind. The fact of the balanced budget legislation—but in another year with the new legislation they passed, he won't have to pay attention to the balanced budget legislation.

The overall funding to municipalities has, as a dollar value, actually gone up over the last few years but, as a percent of the budget, it has gone down.

Something else that, I think, there's very little attention paid to is the impact on businesses, especially small business. In rural Manitoba, small business is king—that some of the decisions this government makes have on those businesses.

A small bakery in Gladstone, the impacts that have happened on that—some of these things had to happen but there should have been offsets that would help out.

For instance, the new holiday in February, that impacts small business. Maybe some forgiveness on some of the business taxes to offset that would have been the appropriate method to follow.

Increases in the minimum wage affect small business more than any other business. What results is it doesn't help in the long run. What happens is there are less summer students getting hired; maybe one staffer is gone and the people that own and operate the business spend more hours doing it themselves.

Just recently, that same bakery received notice that their fees to the Workers Compensation Board were going from 60-some cents to over \$2, literally tripling. That has a huge impact on a small business. Thirty-three percent of every business dollar in this province goes in tax.

Economic development is something that is always a phrase used about Manitoba and really a catch phrase. We, in my area, have one of the—they use the federal riding but they talk about the per capita income. We are fourth- or fifth-lowest per capita income in Canada. It's essential that the Province takes some responsibility, help a little in developing businesses in those areas.

I've been a strong proponent of the Agassiz ski hill, the Agassiz park at McCreary being re-opened. I'm not getting much support from the other side of the House and I would appreciate it, because that is an economic engine that can drive the region. It was closed for a number of unrelated reasons and it still is a viable operation. It could be up and running; most of the infrastructure is still there.

In my own area, we had a devastating fire about three weeks ago in one of our larger employers of my community. There were a hundred people that have received their pink slips. They are going to rebuild it. It's Prairie Forest Products which is owned by the Prendiville family. It has had a devastating impact in my community at the moment. They have made their commitment to the community and they are going to rebuild, but it's quite a number in a small community when you have a hundred people out of work. It does have quite an impact.

\*(11:30)

In health care, I have already mentioned the personal care home and the closed floor at the present personal care home, but something that has happened in the last year in my own family and my own life. My father is now in the personal care home.

We have many staffing problems and problems in those directions, but I can't say enough good things about the actual care workers that are in there. I'm amazed every time I go in there at how well they treat my father and, overall, look after him.

**An Honourable Member:** Four more minutes.

**Mr. Briese:** Four more minutes. Okay.

On ag issues—and ag issues are huge in my area—I heard very little in the Throne Speech pertaining to ag issues. I think what is neglected and what's missed at times is agriculture is a part of the economy in this province, and it's a huge driver in this province. When we see things like the hog moratorium, we're going to see the hog industry probably cut in half in this province. The cattle sector is in trouble. Since BSE, they have never recovered, the results of negative margins in the AgriStability, and they just aren't going to recover unless there is a little bit of help from the government. Those do have impacts on the environment.

Further to looking at ag as part of the economy, we have to look at livestock as part of agriculture. We're limited in this province to some degree with freight rates and costs of moving product and moving bulk product out of this province. The livestock industry allows us to value-add right here in the province and save money on freight rates and create a better climate for grain prices in this province.

There are a number of issues that I would like to talk about. I think I am starting to get a little short of time, so I will move to some closing remarks, but some of the things that I see need addressing—and I brought it up yesterday—are ambulance services in the Ebb and Flow area and a number of those types of issues.

We are rapidly turning into a nanny state. We're being micro-managed to the point where we are incapable of making our own decisions and incapable of taking responsibility for our actions. Over the past nine years, we've watched this government impose their will on a very talented,

hardworking bureaucracy. Bureaucrats have been forced to turn away from services to the people of this province, and they are now micro-managed into only serving their masters, the NDP government. I think that is a very telling thing.

I see my time grows short, so I will thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. Thank you.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** First of all, by the way, I want to say that I really appreciate the opportunity again to speak and debate on the Throne Speech.

First of all, as I always do, I want to thank my constituents for their support and encouragement. I have for a number of elections here been fortunate to be elected as MLA for Thompson. Coming from Thompson like I do and living in Thompson, I've been very proud of Thompson constituency and all eight communities in northern Manitoba. Anytime I get the chance to stand up in this Legislature, I think of the people that supported me and encouraged me. That's why I'm here and I'll make sure throughout this upcoming session of the Legislature that their concerns are brought forward.

Also, if I could as a northern MLA and as a member of this Legislature, I want to take a brief moment, and I know we'll have more of an opportunity to reflect on this later on this session, but to particularly say how much I am going to miss our late colleague, Oscar Lathlin.

One thing that I've had the opportunity to do, and I know the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) reflected on this yesterday, as MLAs we get to know each other in various different contexts, but as a northern MLA I worked very closely with Oscar for 18 years. You know what, I can tell you, I can point to numerous things in The Pas constituency and throughout northern Manitoba that would not have happened if it wasn't for Oscar Lathlin. That is the kind of approach that he typified, and I think it's a reminder to all of us, by the way, because some are more or less active in this House, some are more or less active in the media. You know what, I heard from people after Oscar's tragic passing from throughout his constituency and throughout northern Manitoba and from people who didn't even know Oscar, how much they felt the loss.

So I want to, on the record in this debate on the Throne Speech, say that we will miss Oscar Lathlin, but we will carry on his legacy, which is one very much built on the fact that one of these days northern

Manitoba will find its rightful place in this great province of ours.

Now I want to, in my comments on the Throne Speech today, talk about a tale of two cities, a tale of two governments, a tale of two Throne Speeches. They were delivered a day apart in a country facing challenges, Madam Acting Speaker, a country facing dramatic developments on the international scene in the economy, and I want to indicate just how much those two different approaches and the very different perspective put forward by the parties in this House reflect the real choice ahead in the difficult times.

I'll start, perhaps, with another Throne Speech brought in by a minority government just recently elected with a new Parliament, and certainly I look forward to working with the new Parliaments, particularly our new MP for Churchill. I mentioned this yesterday. I certainly have a newfound appreciation for the hard work that our members of Parliament do put in, but you have a minority Parliament in which you would have thought with the economic crisis we're facing internationally there would have been an attempt to come together.

Well, what have we seen, Madam Acting Speaker? Well, we saw a Throne Speech initially, but we saw it more recently in an economic statement. You know, the Finance Minister who delivered it is a recycled Mike Harris Cabinet minister. The Prime Minister is a recycled founder and, you know, a driving force in the Reform Party.

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

If anybody doubted that wolf that had been running around in sheep's clothing called a Conservative Party had changed, look at what you have seen in the Throne Speech and the economic statement.

Now let's look at what they targeted because, you know, I want to get to this bunch of Conservatives here that still have that label Progressive and I want to assess whether that really applies anymore. You would have thought that the Prime Minister, who was in Peru talking about economic stimulus, and I'll put on the record by the way that I want to retract everything I said at the AMM about my agreeing with Stephen Harper on the need for economic stimulus. You know why? Well, I agree with his words, but he brought in an

economic statement that does nothing to stimulate the economy, nothing, nothing, nothing.

They talked about expanding infrastructure and accelerating infrastructure. Now let's look at what they targeted. This Reform-Mike Harris reunion. I think they should call themselves that. I mean it's sort of right up there with—I mean I look at the concert scene in Winnipeg this year. Elton John and Bob Dylan and, you know, it's kind of like reunion tours, I think, coming up here. Well, it's like in Ottawa. It's a reunion of the two most negative right wing elements of the 1990s, but what have they targeted?

\* (11:40)

Well, I mean there's some attention on public financing of elections. Now, does anybody think that's got anything to do with budgetary restraint? Madam Deputy Speaker, this is legislated. It comes right after the election in Ottawa. Does anybody think this has got anything to do with the economic circumstances? Of course, it doesn't. It's entirely to do with the fact that, under the guise of a crisis, they want to target the fact that other parties are more dependent on public finance than they are. It's all about political, Machiavellian targeting of political opponents.

But do you know what? When I look at what's happening in Ottawa, what's more instructive than that issue which gets, perhaps, the most attention? What else did the federal government target? I love, by the way, when they said in their Throne Speech that, well, they haven't reduced our equalization payments. They're in the newspaper, doing their spin. Yes, they haven't reduced it yesterday; they just did it two weeks ago. Right after the election, they froze the equalization payments. Again, that was one of the things that happened under the Mike Harris government, that kind of right-wing approach. You download, you put more of a burden on other jurisdictions. They did it.

But here's what they targeted: the public sector, it was like wage and price controls all over again. The right to strike, collective bargaining. You know what? They've got all of their Crown corporations up for potential privatization. Does that sound familiar? They even went so far as to roll back the pay equity settlement that women in the federal public service fought for for decades. Does anybody wonder why that government in Ottawa, in their previous term, took out the term "equality," in terms of the status of women department that they have? They have no

commitment to equality for women, and it's very clear in terms of that.

But what was appalling was the fact that we have a global recession. Everyone seems to get it. Even George Bush has brought in an economic stimulus package. I'm not sure if it's really what I would want to see here in Canada, but even George Bush, the architect of a lot of what we're seeing right now, this, almost a decade of greed that has driven the economic collapse we're dealing with. But you know what? Nothing in there in terms of economic stimulus. All about divide and conquer, and we'll see what takes place over the next number of days because I'm assuming that they made some calculation that, somewhere along the line, one of the parties will duck. They will be able to push forward their very right-wing agenda and govern as if they had a majority.

Well, you know what? I say to our members of Parliament and to the political parties in Ottawa: I don't know what planet they're living on right now, especially the government in Ottawa, but when you're into a crisis, you don't use it to force your ideological agenda through. You try and bring people together.

Now, the 1990s, you know what Mike Harris did, by the way, and this is what this bunch in Ottawa typifies, and I remember their education ministers actually spoke about this, that you have to create a crisis in order to have the dramatic movements that you see.

It's interesting with this group here, the surrogates for the federal Conservative Party, did you notice how their economic statement came out—and they didn't even wait, by the way. In the same question period, they were getting up—it was like the ventriloquist dummies here—on public finance for political parties, as if that is the burning issue of the day. As if that's got anything to do with the challenges we're facing in this province. As if that's not really their having an agenda.

Let's not forget, not that long ago in this province, we had corporate and union finance. We did not have the public finance provisions that have been brought in. They like a world in which the powers, in terms of those that have the money, can buy influence. That is the model that they want. So let them not stand in this House and talk about anything that's got anything to do with the economic circumstances. This is, again, a continuation of that

stale debate that we had that they brought forward, the burning issue of the day.

By the way, they keep using the phrase: vote tax, vote tax. The only reference I hear about vote tax is from members opposite. My constituents are looking at a slowdown in mining. My constituents are concerned about what's happening in the forestry industry. My constituents are seeing what's happening to the value of their retirement savings. They're not talking about the vote tax.

**An Honourable Member:** Want to bet?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, you know what? The Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) says, want to bet? You know, if that's her No. 1 issue, good luck to her because I'll predict in the next election we'll find out what the people of River East have to think about that set of priorities.

By the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, I don't know what the Member for River East thinks by sending three copies of her partisan mail out to the Premier (Mr. Doer). Again, that's another lesson they're learning from their federal counterparts. I think one of the MPs in Winnipeg—I think Anita Neville got about 16 of them sent. Apparently she got re-elected.

I don't care, to my mind, what political persuasion, but that kind of Republican-style attack politics doesn't fit in Manitoba, and you know what? Barack Obama proved it doesn't even work in the United States anymore. So get with the program. Get with the program.

But you know what? Does anybody doubt, by the way—now we see one part of the agenda they have in Ottawa right now. But you know what? Do you remember what they did in the 1990s? Now, privatization—[interjection]—yeah, yeah. Okay, they had that part. What did they do when they faced a recession back in the 1990s? Who did they target first? It was Aboriginal people with funding for Aboriginal people, working people. They had four separate attacks in terms of The Labour Relations Act when they were in government, programs for women in terms of that.

You know what? What we're seeing in Ottawa is the same thing you would see here in Manitoba if these Progressive Conservatives came into government. By the way, did you ever hear any of them disowning anything coming out of the Harper government? You know there must be something they disagree with. Is there anything they disagree

with in what's happening there? It was the Hallelujah Chorus here yesterday. They were all riled up. They were feeling really, really good about what was happening.

We'll watch what happens over the next number of days, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I'll tell you one thing. That style of politics didn't work in the 1990s and didn't work in the first part of this decade. I say, at a time when we're faced with a deflation we haven't seen since the 1930s, a worldwide recession, I don't care how well you do, relatively speaking.

I remember all those hollow words from the Prime Minister during the election about the fundamentals or something. Does anybody in this room, in this House, anybody in Canada now doubt that they know that the Canadian economy was going to be affected by the recession? That's why they broke their own fixed-election-dates legislation and called an earlier election. We know that.

But you know what? You've got two choices in a crisis. No. 1 is what's going on in Ottawa which is, you say, a great opportunity to drive our ideological agenda. We'll just say there's a crisis. So what do we do? We'll decimate all these things we announced in the economic stimulus—[interjection]—right, that economic statement.

No economic stimulus, mind you, but we'll just decimate all these things we would have gotten rid of, if we had a majority. Hey, we don't have a majority, but we could talk about the crisis. Right? And they all stood up, all the trained seals on the Conservative side. You know it was quite the sight, Madam Deputy Speaker, but then I think they must have had a bit of a reality check when they found out that it seems even all three opposition parties there may reject that.

But the other approach is the tale in this city and this Throne Speech, because you know what? When we saw the dark clouds on the horizon internationally, we didn't go around saying, things are great in Manitoba and we don't have to worry about it. We said we're in better position than other provinces because we have a more diverse economy.

**An Honourable Member:** We didn't sugar-coat it.

**Mr. Ashton:** But you know what? We were up front, and you know what we did? We said we needed more money for infrastructure and we brought it in.

I would put on the record, by the way, as a former Minister of Transportation, I wish I had the

funds that the current Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) had in my budget when I was minister. But you know what? I'm not jealous here because I know we have a golden opportunity and I want to put it on the record. I want to see where the Conservatives vote on a historic investment in transportation and infrastructure in this province. That is what we committed to; that is what you need in the case of a recession; that is what you need in the case of an economic slowdown.

\*(11:50)

But, you know, we didn't stop there, not just with that. We have been working with everyone in this province. By the way, have you not noticed the difference between the rhetoric here and the approach that we've taken? We have made it very clear, by the way, this is not going to be like what we saw with members opposite in the 1990s. We are continuing to put money into the needs of Manitobans in terms of health and in terms of education and in terms of social services.

We do have a commitment to each and every region of this province because that's the other thing they did when they were in office, by the way. They got out their maps, actually they didn't use their highways maps to cut out northern Manitoba, because northern Manitoba wasn't on their highways maps in those days. But they took a regional hack-and-slash approach. I'll never forget what happened. But you know what, have you noticed history is repeating itself here. You have a Conservative government in Ottawa, and I know that phrase, Tory times are tough times in terms of Ottawa. They're using the same stale logic, I was going to say of the 1990s, probably more of the 1930s. They just don't seem to get it.

I'm a great believer, by the way, in politics. But you know what, you've got to know where you stand and which side you're on, on the important debates of our time. But I'm also a great believer, by the way, that fundamentally when you're in government, your No. 1 goal, particularly in a crisis, shouldn't be to divide people, it should be to bring them together. And that is the fundamental difference between our Throne Speech and our government and their Throne Speech and their government.

Every single aspect of the Throne Speech that we brought in, not just the words, because the Throne Speech is essentially a document that respects the role of the Crown in our parliamentary system. Essentially though, it's the agenda of the

government. When I look at what we're putting forth, it's creative approaches on different things. I look at my own jurisdiction as minister responsible for working with our local governments, all 198 local governments. I want to say on the record, by the way, that I really value that partnership we've developed.

But even in this Throne Speech, we have, again, a commitment to tax increment finance zones, which is absolutely fundamental to driving some of the dramatic changes we're seeing in terms of our community revitalization. Let's not forget, by the way, that since we were last sitting, we now have historic investment in Manitoba in rapid transit. We have made rapid transit a reality by working with the City of Winnipeg. But it's dependent on tax increment finance. We're providing support. It's depending on tax increment finance. They delayed it from passing last time. Let's see what they do now. Will they stand with us in redeveloping transit in this great capital city of ours or will they block and obstruct as we've seen?

I'd be interested to see what they do in other areas, by the way. Apprenticeship training. You know what, not withstanding the economic slowdown, the big issue in my community right now is lack of skilled and trained workers. I want to put on the record that I'm proud of the fact, in the last election, and as a government, we've committed to 4,000 additional apprenticeship training spaces. They don't even talk about that. Now how do they think we're going to be able to develop our economy for the future or even to build the infrastructure that's out there, unless we do that. That is a historic move forward.

I want to note, by the way, that I'm really proud of the fact that in this Throne Speech we've reiterated again that we are moving ahead. There'll be an announcement on this soon in terms of the University College of the North and the new campus in Thompson and the revitalized campus in The Pas and the many satellite campuses. But I want to put on the record that I want to congratulate the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for the work he has done on the announcement we saw in the Throne Speech for a mining school in Flin Flon, because, again, it shows our commitment to northern Manitoba.

Now, what is the Tory position on UCN? We remember in the 2003 provincial election, they wanted to get rid of it, gone, nothing. They wanted to wipe it off the map. Well, let's talk about other things



they'd like to wipe off the map because I noticed today the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) was making comments about roads on the east side of Lake Winnipeg being inconsistent with declaring a UNESCO site. That is patently false. It's untrue. Is it, perhaps, that the Leader of the Opposition is once again plying the same kind of divisive tactic that he used in the last election, because in the last election, his great contribution, he had to one-up the former leader, who wanted to get rid of UCN. So he said, we'll just slash the funding to highways in northern Manitoba. Well, I want to put on the record, and I said this at the mining conference, and I'll say it here and I'll say it anywhere in Manitoba, building roads on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, building roads into communities like York Landing and Ilford in my area and Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei, building roads into Tadoule Lake, Lac Brochet and Brochet.

You know what? Once we used to have a vision in this province that that was the way to go, to build our province. You know, in northern Manitoba, we've been part of this province since 1912. We're coming up to the centennial year. Don't you think in the year 2008 we should have some ability to say to our citizens in this province, wherever they live, that you will have the most basic of what I consider a human right and that is transportation access? Safe, accessible, air transportation access. In the year 2008, yes, we're building all-weather roads. We're moving into Bloodvein, and I look forward to the day when the vision we're putting forward as a government will lead us to the point where every Manitoba citizen will have road access. It's year 2008, not 1908; it's time we got the job done.

I want to just finish. I know my Whip is urging me on here, and I do want to thank our Whip—by the way, the MLA for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) is undefeated, you know, with every vote here—but for the work that he does. I'm not trying to make up for the occasional time where he couldn't find me when I was supposed to be somewhere.

But, you know, I could talk at much greater length, but there's really a number of things, you know, that we all can bring to this Legislature, that we can all bring to whatever role we play. To my mind, this vision, that's fundamental. You have to have a vision. Then there's strategy and there's tactics and all the day-to-day things that you do. When I look at the vision for our province, it should be based, in my mind, on some very basic, fundamental principles. I put forward, by the way, as a New Democrat, the vision that we should be inclusive. We

should have a vision that extends all the way from the 49th parallel at the U.S. border, all the way to the border with Nunavut. We should have a vision that says it's a tremendous advantage in this province that we're the second youngest province in the country. We have the most diverse population, I believe, in all of Canada, the highest Aboriginal population, and with the success of our immigration, a program increasing diversity. You know what? There are a hundred languages spoken, not just in Winnipeg, but throughout Manitoba. And you know what? We're probably the only jurisdiction in Canada right now where we have an equivalent immigration going to our rural and northern communities as compared to our urban centres. Everywhere else, it's to the main urban centre.

But you know what? I love when the members opposite get up and talk about the need for new schools in southern Manitoba. That's because Manitoba's growing and our immigrants are part of that in-migration. You know what? I love when they get up; they never give the Province any credit for the growth that's taking place in terms of population, but that's part of our vision. The other part of the vision, by the way, that's fundamental to New Democrats is we see a positive role for government. We see government as being part of the solution. It's interesting when you see George Bush and others starting to recognize that as well. We also think, in the year 2008, you can, you can have the vision of social and economic justice for all.

Well, I think I've said enough about Ottawa. We'll see what happens over the next number of days. You know, I think their motto in Ottawa, the current government, is those that have will keep and the heck with everybody else.

I have never seen a more insensitive bunch than what I see in Ottawa, what I see reflected across the way because, you know what? I have seen no evidence that this Conservative Party's any different from the Conservative Party that was in government in the '90s, the Conservative Party that's in government 2008. You know, I always say to members opposite, they have a vision, but unfortunately it's not 2008; it's probably 1908 vintage. Actually, I probably can go back before then. You know, they're not of this century.

\* (12:00)

You know what happens, even the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) who talks a lot when he gets here, you know, look what they've done to

him. In Ottawa he was a Progressive Conservative. He supported public finance of elections. But you know what, even the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) has been muzzled—[interjection]—has been transformed.

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

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Ashton:** I remember when the Member for Brandon West fought the Reform Party. He's joined them in the form of the Manitoba Conservative Party.

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

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ashton:** I realize the Member for Brandon West is very sensitive about that. You know what? He may have been politically re-educated by the Conservative caucus.

You know what? Understand this. There are two very different visions, Madam Deputy Speaker. Our vision is a forward-thinking inclusive vision for this province that says that the diversity that we have in this province is our great strength. Our vision is that there's a role for partnership and co-operation, not just within this Legislature but between the provincial government and our municipalities. Between the provincial government and First Nations, Métis governments and Northern Affairs committees throughout the province. We see the need for partnership with our business community, with the labour movement.

You know what? We have done that in the nine years that we have been in government. Our vision is doubly and triply important in a potential economic slowdown. One thing about New Democrats, we don't shy away from the challenge of dealing with that. So our vision is clear. I sum it up very simply by what I've quoted many times before, which J.S. Woodsworth said many years ago, the founder of the CCF and NDP. I know it's something that we in the New Democratic Party practise every single day, government or opposition, elected or not, what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. That's our vision, not the vision of the Tories in Ottawa and their surrogates here in the province of Manitoba. Not the divisive vision of divide and conquer. We want to unite Manitobans. We've been doing it as a government now going into our third term.

I have every confidence, no matter what fate throws at Manitoba in terms of the economic

circumstances in the next number of years, we'll be there uniting Manitobans, not dividing them. That is the way ahead for this province. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to put a few comments on the record today on the amendments to the Throne Speech that were brought in by my leader just the other day.

I first of all want to start off by saying I'm pleased to be back sitting in the Legislature today and getting down to the business of what needs to happen. So I thank all of those that support us on a regular basis when we're in this Chamber and know that they will continue to, in times of some adversity and the kind of heckling that goes on in this place, continue to serve us in a very respectful and great way. I just want to say that at the outset.

All of us in the House, I think—and everyone has mentioned in their speech the loss of Oscar Lathlin, the Member for The Pas. My relationship with Oscar goes back before he was elected in the Legislature. I was the minister responsible for culture, heritage and lotteries in the days when we were negotiating and signing native gaming agreements. Oscar was the chief of The Pas when we signed our very first native gaming agreement with him in The Pas. I had the opportunity to meet him at that time. He did a good job as the chief of The Pas at the time and went on to serve his constituents in a different capacity as he got elected to the Legislature. So I want to say today that we will miss his input into the process. My condolences to his family and to all of those that knew him and all of his constituents I'm sure that will miss the leadership that he has shown over the years as the representative of The Pas.

I also want to indicate that I will very much miss the Member for Elmwood, Jim Maloway, who has moved on to the federal level. He always created interest and controversy, I guess, not only within his own party, I think, but also within the community. I notice that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton) didn't make comment about Jim Maloway, the former Member for Elmwood, and maybe that's because—and I don't know because I have never seen anything in writing or any questions asked by the Member for Elmwood in this House about the Disraeli Freeway. I know he always had a lot to say about where the City should be, and that the City should be funding six lanes, and the Disraeli should be kept open. Now I do know that I have

supported that position myself as an elected representative for the northeast quadrant of the city of Winnipeg and I've worked pretty aggressively to try to ensure that the Disraeli Freeway is not closed for 16 months while it's refurbished.

I think on that issue Jim Maloway and I would be on the same page, but my position always was that the City of Winnipeg couldn't do it alone and a refurbishment of that magnitude would need other levels of government to support that initiative and that the Province of Manitoba should be involved and be in discussion. Well, I think the former Member for Elmwood, Jim Maloway, thought that the City was the level of government that needed to make it happen and, in all of his petitions, in all of his public discussion, he talked about the City of Winnipeg. Tell your city councillors. Tell the City of Winnipeg. Tell the mayor that we need six lanes and we need the Disraeli to remain open.

Well, I took a different approach. My approach was that all levels of government needed to come together. I was prepared to work with the City of Winnipeg, with the Premier (Mr. Doer), with the government today to see what we might do to ensure that northeast Winnipeg residents were not inconvenienced by a 16-month closure of the Disraeli Freeway, which is the major thoroughfare to get in and out of northeast Winnipeg. I wrote to the Premier. I wrote to the mayor. I indicated that I was prepared to work with them. That was back last July, Madam Deputy Speaker, and heard nothing back from the Premier on that issue until after I raised it here in the House. I did get a letter back from him, and he had indicated that he'd expressed his preference for part of the Disraeli to be kept open and that hopefully the RFPs that come back to the City will allow that to happen. I'm hopeful that that will happen, too, because we cannot have the Disraeli Freeway closed for 16 months while it is repaired, and I think the Premier would agree with me on that. But the Premier and the Member for Elmwood, Jim Maloway, never once, as far as I know, asked the Premier to be a part of that process. He never once asked the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton) to be a part of funding and ensuring that the Disraeli Freeway was done properly.

\* (12:10)

Well, now we see him in Ottawa, and he is now writing to the federal minister saying senior levels of government need to get involved. Before, it was

always the City of Winnipeg. It was never the Province. Now that he's an MP, he's asking the federal government to get involved. Well, when did he write to his Premier and ask his Premier to get involved? When did he write to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to ask him to get involved when he was sitting in the same caucus? When did he stand up in this House, Madam Deputy Speaker, and ask a question about the Disraeli Freeway and what his government was going to do? Never once did he ask the provincial government to become involved. But now that he's a federal MP in opposition, he's going to ask the federal government to get involved. Well, there's a bit of hypocrisy, but that will be certainly pointed out. I do want you to know in all of this discussion that I would like to see all levels of government involved in solving the issue of the closure of the Disraeli Freeway for 16 months. It cannot happen. It should not happen, and I think every level of government, regardless of political stripe, has to stand together and try to find a solution for the citizens of the northeast section of the city of Winnipeg.

Another issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, in my community is the extension of the Chief Peguis Trail, which has been announced by the City of Winnipeg and there's capital dollars to start moving on that extension of the Chief Peguis Trail. I do know that all members of this House would support it. I do know that the legislation that was brought in that sets up CentrePort Canada and the board certainly is going to be looking at infrastructure projects that are going to meet the needs of making us a first-class transportation hub for the country. I'm supportive of the initiative, but I do know that the Chief Peguis Trail, the extension of that Chief Peguis Trail, is the second leg of the inner-city ring road that is supposed to be complementary to CentrePort Canada.

Well, 20 years ago, when the plan was first introduced, the plan was that at a residential street, Rothesay, there would be an underpass, because there's a very small amount of land that's been set aside—there are houses in very close proximity—that the underpass under Rothesay would allow for some noise attenuation, but it also would allow for safety for the community so we wouldn't need a traffic light on an 80-kilometre freeway where children would have to cross from one side to the other to get to their schools—that there would be an underpass there, a below-grade underpass, so that it would be a safe

intersection, or there would need to be no intersection at that corner.

Well, the plan has come back now from the City of Winnipeg, and they're recommending that it be a level crossing, and they expand a residential street with houses on it to four lanes and have access onto the Chief Peguis Trail with street lights. It makes absolutely no sense, Madam Deputy Speaker. Members of my community that have supported the extension of the Chief Peguis Trail to get traffic off our residential streets in northeast Winnipeg are saying, what is going on? You know, if we can't do it right the first time, let's not do it at all. Let's ensure that the safety of our community is kept intact. Let's not put street light after street light, one at Henderson Highway, one at Rothesay, one at Raleigh, one at Lagimodiere, on a thoroughfare.

There's a lot of concern in the area. The community itself has gotten together and has developed a petition that talks about putting safety first in our community. Let's not expect our kids to cross over an 80-kilometre freeway to get to school on a daily basis. Let's do it right. The community has gotten together. They have initiated a petition, and we and I am supporting, aggressively, the community's position that the city needs to do it right. I would hope that the Province would agree with me. I do know, because we have inland port legislation, CentrePort Canada legislation, and a board that's going to be set up to look at the infrastructure needs, that that vehicle would be used to rethink what's happening in northeast Winnipeg when it comes to the Chief Peguis Trail.

So those are issues that are very big, and those are issues that my community has real concerns about, and if we're looking at accelerating infrastructure dollars, let's look at using them to their full potential to do what is needed and what is required. I'm not saying these are wants. These are needs in our community, and I believe all members of this Legislature should be supporting that kind of activity.

I've spent a lot of time talking about this in my response to the Throne Speech because these are the meat-and-potatoes issues in northeast Winnipeg. People are concerned about their jobs, but they're also concerned about being able to get from point A to point B in our community and in our city, so that if they do have the opportunity, which I hope they

will, to keep their jobs, they'll have the opportunity to get to and from their workplaces in a safe, secure, and timely fashion, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So I've spent time talking about those issues very important to my community, but I also think it'll be very interesting for members of the federal government today to read the comments of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton). There are many derogatory comments that he put on the record about the government in Ottawa, and yet he's the minister that's supposed to be responsible for brokering and creating good relationships with other levels of government. Yet he had the audacity to stand in this House today and degrade the federal Conservative government and say all kinds of things that I think they'll be very interested in hearing.

We'll make sure they do get his comments, so they will know what this government in Manitoba says in one forum and what he might say that's very different when he gets together with his federal counterparts that are looking to try to work with provinces to make all provinces and our country stronger and better. We'll ensure that they know exactly what the feeling of this government is when they stand in this Legislature and speak about the federal government. With those comments, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will allow others to put comments on the record.

I want to indicate there are many good things in the Throne Speech as there always are in any government's Throne Speech. Not any government does everything right or everything wrong, but there are certain things we will disagree with. That will mean we won't be able to support budgets or we won't be able to support Throne Speeches, but that doesn't mean we don't support the good initiatives.

I know that government likes to go out and say, well, they voted against this and voted against that. I know that within the next hour I'm going to be going over to Concordia Hospital, where there's been an expansion of their emergency department, and I know I am supportive, and my community knows I am extremely supportive, of our community hospital and the activity that goes on in our community.

I would dare the Premier (Mr. Doer) to stand up and say that I voted against the budget that supported the expansion of the emergency because they would look at him, and they would laugh because they know I am committed. He can stand in this House and say that, but he wouldn't dare stand in front of the people that are going to be at the announcement

today, at the ribbon cutting, which the Premier will be at. He would never say that in that kind of public forum because he knows it's wrong. He knows I support our community hospital and our community and some of the good things that have been announced and have been done by this government.

\*(12:20)

But there are some differences. There will be some differences in what—and certain things this government has put forward that we don't agree with, and we will continue to vote against those things we do not agree with. We will not be supporting this government's Throne Speech because it doesn't have the vision and it doesn't show Manitobans, through difficult economic times, what the plan is for our province, so we can't support it.

But, there are things within this Throne Speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we can support, specific initiatives, and I will continue to do my job as an elected official in this province, stand up for my community, speak out for Manitobans that need to be heard in many, many different areas. When I have opportunities again in this Legislature, I'll spend some more time talking about the critic responsibilities that I have, but I needed to put my community, my constituency first, and that's exactly why I spent as much time today speaking about it.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I look forward to this session of the Legislature and the many, many months of debate and activity to come. Thank you.

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** It is a pleasure to get up and speak today about this government's Throne Speech. Just as I was about to get up, I thought: I'm following two pretty sage members of this House, and between the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), I calculate we have almost 50 years of experience in the last two speeches. I'm not saying this to make either member feel bad, I'm just saying that, as one of the newer members of this House, I think all of us can always benefit by listening to what each other has to say. I know sometimes it's difficult to do that over the din in this Chamber, but I pledge, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I will—although I'm not always the best example, either—I will do my best to listen, not only to, certainly, all the good things that our government is doing, but to listen to what my friends on the other side of the aisle may say.

It's, indeed, an honour to represent the area of Minto in this Legislature, an area which, I think, is really representative of the future of the province of Manitoba. Minto is a constituency which has a very, very high proportion of new Canadians. Many of our newest Manitobans first live in Minto. Some stay, some may move on to other areas of the province, but it's always an area which is vibrant, exciting, where one can hear many, many languages being spoken. One can taste the foods of a hundred different homelands, and, truly, people bring with them to Manitoba and to Canada a sense of spirit and a sense of optimism.

Certainly, also in Minto, is a very high number of Aboriginal people, whether third or fourth generation urban Aboriginal people, or, perhaps, people who have come down from northern communities to seek out a new life in the West End of Winnipeg.

There are very exciting things happening in the constituency of Minto. I've been waiting, counting down the days until the Cindy Klassen recreation centre, formerly the Sargent Park recreation centre, reopens. I say that because it's going to be a great thing for the West End, for people to be able to use a great new fitness facility. I say that because my family use the facility. I say that because in my new role as minister, I'm finding it harder and harder to keep in shape with all the various events I have to do. Madam Deputy Speaker, I can't wait to be able to do my runs inside at Cindy Klassen recreation centre.

I also look forward to the Isaac Brock centre, the Valour Community Centre, their improvements being completed. There's a new basketball gymnasium that's going up, and we're hoping that'll be ready in the next couple of months.

I'm very proud the government of Manitoba has stepped in, has provided financial support for both of these projects. Both are city buildings, but the Province has stepped up, recognized the importance of wellness, the importance of keeping our youth engaged, the importance of keeping older Manitobans active and healthy, and has come to the table and is delivering to it, to assist the people of the West End to engage in recreation.

I also want to talk about the young people in Minto. I visit Daniel McIntyre Collegiate as much as I can. I do cross Wellington Avenue, and I'm always interested in what's going on at Tec-Voc as well. Also, the middle schools and elementary schools,

where great administrators, great teachers, and, indeed, great students are working to build a better future.

It's also an honour, Madam Deputy Speaker, to be rising, although it's the fifth time I've had a chance to comment on the Throne Speech, it's my first as a minister of the Crown, and as the Minister for Competitiveness, Training and Trade, I have learned a lot over the past nine months or so since I was appointed a minister. I do want to thank both my political staff and also my departmental staff for giving me good guidance, for providing me with good advice and in helping different issues.

**An Honourable Member:** Scott Smith, don't forget Scott Smith. He gives you pretty good guidance. Don't forget Scott.

**Mr. Swan:** I know the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) wants to put more inconsistencies on the record, so we'll give him his chance later on. But, as I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would hope that members would listen to what others have to say. I know the Member for Brandon West is probably too far gone in that front, but I'll continue on with the positive message that Manitobans want to hear. *[interjection]*

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know the Member for Russell doesn't get to do much anymore. He doesn't get to ask many questions. I'm sure he'll contribute to this debate in due course, but I do want to mention, of course, that it's been very interesting and very informative to get to meet businesses, industries, sector councils across this province to hear what they say, what they want to do to partner with our government, to partner with our young people, to partner with our universities and our colleges to continue to build this province.

Whatever the sector, whatever the business, whether it's in Winnipeg, whether it's in the north, whether it's in rural Manitoba, whether it's in Brandon, the top issue that comes up time and time again in speaking with Manitoba's businesses is the labour shortage. There are businesses which tell us, and we accept wholeheartedly, that they are having a difficulty, and have had difficulty now for some time, in finding enough skilled workers and, in some cases, even unskilled workers to fill their needs.

Companies tell us, and I accept completely, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there are a number of companies which have more work than they can possibly do with the work force they have at this

time. So I am so pleased that this Speech from the Throne outlines a comprehensive strategy on what our government is doing to assist the development of the work force in Manitoba.

Of course, the positives are many. The positives of developing a better work force, of course, are for the workers who can get that first job or who can ladder into better positions, higher paying positions, more opportunities, certainly for the communities in which they live and, of course, Manitoba businesses which are competing on a world stage, which are winning contracts, which are doing very well but need to work with us to make sure the work force is as strong and as agile as possible.

Certainly, Manitoba's education strategy for young people remains the heart of our economic strategy, and that is the case whether the TSX goes up 100 points today or down 100 points tomorrow, whether the Canadian dollar goes up by two cents today or goes down by two cents tomorrow. We are continuing to improve our work force, and I'm very, very excited about what this Throne Speech is going to provide for Manitobans in the year to come.

Continued investment in our skilled trades is absolutely crucial to addressing one of the barriers to growth in Manitoba. More skilled tradespeople are needed in every part of this province. I know even the members on the other side I know appreciate this. It doesn't matter whether you're in Russell or in Winnipeg or in Thompson, there's a shortage of skilled people.

I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, the apprenticeship program is a great way for communities, both big and small, to have young people find a meaningful and a good job, be able to stay in their own communities to receive training and, hopefully, remain in their home communities to continue on as entrepreneurs or working for others in their skilled trade.

I'm very pleased that Manitoba's apprenticeship program has grown significantly. Since 1999, the number of registered apprentices in Manitoba is up by more than 70 percent and indeed we're just getting started. I'm also very pleased that the number of Aboriginal apprentices in Manitoba has more than doubled from 1999. This is an important area of growth for our province.

Now last year, of course, Madam Deputy Speaker, our government committed to a historic expansion of skills in apprenticeship training. We've

targeted 4,000 new placements over the next four years. Since that time in the first year of our strategy 1,100 new placements have been created. In the coming session, I will be introducing legislation to modernize apprenticeship training based on the recommendations of the Apprenticeship Futures Commission.

As well, we'll be looking to designate more apprenticeship trades; we'll be looking to increase the number of course purchases, working with the colleges, working with our good partners, working with employers and finding more ways, more incentives for both apprentices and employers to work together to provide more opportunities.

Of course, there'll also be further capital projects funded by the Province. I'm very excited every time I do travel to Brandon to see the process that's going ahead on the Len Evans Centre.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (Mr. Swan) will have 21 minutes remaining.

The time being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 28, 2008

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