

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	PC
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	PC
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
	Kirkfield Park	
	St. Norbert	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 1, 2011

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Newborn Universal Hearing Screening Program

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

While most other developed countries and many Canadian provinces have a newborn hearing screening program, Manitoba is lagging behind. There are only a handful of screening programs in the province while all other newborns can only be tested if they have a risk factor of hearing loss or if parents specifically request a test.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors to consider implementing a universal

hearing screening program accessible to parents of all newborns in Manitoba.

This petition is signed by D. Poirier, D. Gerrior, D. Ely and many, many other concerned Manitobans.

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

Water Infrastructure—First Nations Communities

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Many Manitobans living in First Nations communities do not have the same access to clean water as the majority of Manitobans.

Manitobans living in First Nations communities with poor sanitation experience poor health.

Lack of access to clean tap water will continue to increase health risks for Manitobans in First Nations communities.

Too little has been done in the last 12 years by the provincial government to ensure all First Nations communities in Manitoba have adequate water infrastructure.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier consider advocating and partnering with the federal government to ensure all First Nations communities have access to clean running water for all their homes.

To request the Premier to consider working closely with the federal government and First Nations communities to address and erase the massive water infrastructure gap that exists on many First Nations communities in Manitoba.

Signed by M. Carriere, A. Moore, L. Martinuzzi and many, many others.

Coulter Bridge

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I'd like to present the following petition.

And this is—the background to this petition is as follows:

During the record flood of 2011, the increased volume of water flowing through the Souris River caused the Coulter bridge to—on Highway 251 to buckle and become unstable in late June.

The Coulter bridge is used by agricultural producers, local businesses and area residents. It is especially important to the region's multi-million-dollar oil industry.

Motorists are now forced to use a lengthy detour on a gravel road not meant for heavy vehicle traffic. The increased presence of industrial vehicles on this gravel road has created considerable safety concerns, especially for school buses. The detour also results in increased costs and lost time for motorists.

The provincial government has indicated it has no plans to establish a temporary bridge and construction of a new bridge is expected to take several years.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to recognize the serious safety concerns and adverse socio-economic impact caused by the loss of the Coulter bridge and to consider making it an urgent priority to restore traffic across the Souris River either by a temporary or a permanent bridge.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is presented by K. Hannah, J. McKinney, R. McGregor, K. Warsada and many, many other Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Special Committee of Seven Persons First Report

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Special Committee of Seven Persons.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Special Committee of Seven Persons presents the following as its First Report—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Special Committee of Seven Persons presents the following as its First Report.

Your Committee prepared the following list of the proportional representation of Members by party to compose the Standing Committees ordered by the House:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

CROWN CORPORATIONS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

HUMAN RESOURCES (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

JUSTICE (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

PRIVATE BILLS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (11)

Government Members: 6

Official Opposition Members: 4

Independent Members: 1

RULES OF THE HOUSE (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 3

Independent Members: 1

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

STATUTORY REGULATIONS & ORDERS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased

to table the following reports: first, the Annual Report of Civil Legal Services Special Operating Agency for 2010-2011; the Legal Aid Manitoba Annual Report for 2010-2011; The Manitoba Human Rights Commission's 2010 Annual Report; and the Annual Report Concerning Complaints about Judicial Conduct of Judges, Masters and Judicial Justices of the Peace for 2010.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have a number of guests with us here this afternoon. We have Madeleine Friesen, who is the daughter of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen). On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

* (13:40)

And also in the public gallery, we have a number of students. We have seated in the public gallery, from École Robert-H.-Smith School, 49 grade 5 and 6 students under the direction of Mr. Ben Carr, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

And also we have from-seated in the public gallery, from Chief Peguis Junior High School, 23 grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Shelley Gabriel and Mr. Lucas Enns. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

QuickCare Clinics Project Status

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last week, through freedom of information releases, it was discovered that more than 20,000 Manitobans left emergency rooms without being seen or cared for over the past 12 months. A year ago, in the face of criticism over their mismanagement of health care and emergency rooms, the Premier rolled out his solution to the problem, which was so-called QuickCare clinics.

On June the 27th of this year, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) promised that the first five QuickCare clinics would open this fall, including a clinic at 17 St. Mary's Road.

Can the Premier confirm today that these five QuickCare clinics are now open, as promised?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

The QuickCare clinics are slated to open in early 2012 in St. Vital, St. Boniface, on St. Mary's Road, as mentioned, Steinbach, Winnipeg's North End, Selkirk. And, in addition, in the election we promised three more at Seven Oaks, Southdale and west Winnipeg. Thanks.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the news release put out by the government dated June the 27th, 2011—now, mind you, this was before the election—but June the 27th, 2011, said that the new QuickCare clinics would be open by this fall, according to the Minister of Health. One of the those clinics is at 17 St. Mary's Road. And I want to table pictures of the so-called QuickCare clinic that were taken at 10:30 this morning, which show a building that has a for-lease sign in the window and it has, on the interior, no evidence whatsoever of any activity except for some bare drywalling and a few pillars.

I want to ask the Premier why it is that he promised to have these clinics open this fall, and yet the one at 17 St. Mary's Road has for-lease signs in the window and not a shred of work being done on the inside?

Mr. Selinger: Yes. I want to thank the member for the photo.

I've driven by the location many times myself and I was pleased to note that progress was being made on renovating this site in order to have a QuickCare clinic, and as soon as—and the photos confirm that. The photos confirm that there's work going on there, and I appreciate that, so that they will be opened in early 2012.

And the member mentioned that there were a number of people that leave emergency rooms before they've had an opportunity to be seen by a physician or a health-care professional. These QuickCare clinics are designed to literally be able to provide service to thousands of people, which will then, in turn, release and relieve the pressure on the emergency rooms, and that is why we moved on this concept in our spring budget. We didn't wait for the election to make a promise to do it. We announced it in the spring budget, and we put the resources in place in the spring budget and now they will be ready in early 2012.

Mr. McFadyen: The promised location at 17 St. Mary's Road, which was to be open as of now, Mr. Speaker, I've tabled the photos showing the lack of progress to date.

The Premier says that work is being done and, yet, on Kijiji this morning that very property is still listed, and it says: 17 St. Mary's Road, retail space for lease, zoned C2. And it says here on Kijiji, and I quote: Fabulous—fabulous—high visibility location, close to St. Boniface Hospital, building ideal for many uses, can be split into two sections.

I want to ask the Premier why it is, when he says work is being done, that as of this morning on Kijiji they're still advertising the space? They say it's a great location, ideal for many uses and can be split into two sections. Will the Premier admit today that instead of being the government of quick care, he's the government of Kijiji listings?

Mr. Selinger: There's so many things that could be said about Kijiji, none of which I will mention in the Legislature.

But I will say this: that I'm glad the member has had the time to do this very thorough research on Kijiji, and he's right, it does say it's available for many uses. The use that we've chosen is a QuickCare clinic in January 2012.

Surgical Slates Cancellation Increases

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, through freedom of information we've learned that hundreds of surgeries in Winnipeg were cancelled over a five-month period. In fact, in just four areas of surgery, 361 surgeries were cancelled, in general surgery, gynecology, plastics and thoracic. Some of these surgeries were likely for cancer.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us: Were these surgeries cancelled because of an acute bed shortage?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I can recall some times recently when the member has used the words "likely for."

Comes—what comes to mind most frequently is that likely the Grace emergency room was going to be closed, which was an expression that she used to frighten senior citizens in west Winnipeg, when in fact what we do see happening at the Grace Hospital, Mr. Speaker, is an access centre being constructed, a brand new emergency room being constructed, an expansion of a number of services.

Mr. Speaker, any time the member from Charleswood gets up and talks about what is likely, we all know by now through a litany of evidence that that means not at all.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, more mind-numbing rhetoric from this Minister of Health, and maybe she could focus on this issue and focus on her likely QuickCare clinics as well that are supposed to be coming.

Mr. Speaker, through freedom of information, 361 surgeries were cancelled over a five-month period. Cancelling surgeries is a very costly and inefficient way to run a health-care system and it's a massive waste of resources, but it also has significant impact on patients and their families.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health: Were these surgeries cancelled because of a nursing shortage? We know that Manitoba has a shortage of 1,300 nurses. Is that why these surgeries were cancelled, or was it because of a bed shortage?

Ms. Oswald: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, these are interesting questions coming from the very member who has called—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. The question has been posed. Please give the minister the opportunity to respond to the question.

Ms. Oswald: Yes, from the very member, Mr. Speaker, who has—and you can read it in *Hansard*—called for the debedding of our medical system and referred to their experiences in those days, those sad days in the '90s, called that—the debedding of the system, and I'm quoting, a good thing.

What I can clearly tell the member is that, from time to time through the system, we know that surgeries will be postponed, and they will be rescheduled as quickly as possible, in cases where a more urgent situation presents itself. Surely, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is not suggesting that those people presenting in a hospital with an urgent—an emergency situation should be left to wait because of a scheduled elective surgery. That's just nonsense.

We know that the way that you work very hard to avoid any sort of cancellations or postponing of surgeries is by building your workforce, Mr. Speaker, which is why we've committed to hire more nurses and doctors every year.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I'd really like to ask this minister to put aside the rhetoric and think about the patients that are going through this.

Hundreds of surgeries have been cancelled, and if we look at history, past history, which this NDP government loves to do, in 2004 we got a leaked report about the WRHA surgery program, and it said that they were looking at drastic cuts to the number of surgeries being done in order to rein in ongoing surgery program deficits. In fact, there was a headline in one of the newspapers: WRHA promising changes in order to reduce debt; could cut surgeries.

* (13:50)

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: Were these 361 surgeries, and probably hundreds of more since, cancelled because of budget cuts in order control the deficit that this government has put in place in this province?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are the government that has invested in health care, and said very clearly in our five-year plan that we would protect front-line services.

We know that surgeries will, from time to time, be postponed when more urgent situations present themselves, or if a surgeon that has been scheduled for that surgery had to do an emergency the night before, had been up all night and it was no longer prudent and safe for him or her to do that surgery the next day.

But we know that we're the ones that have committed to protect front-line services, not during the time—not during a recession time, where very clearly cuts were made to capital expansions, cuts were made to workforce and cuts were made to the medical school.

Mr. Speaker, as recently as the election, when the Tories across the way attempted to convince Manitobans that they cared about health care, they put forward a plan and a budget that really accounted for paying for nurses at 50 per cent off. We know that you fund your workforce by paying for nurses in full and competitively, not getting them out of the discount bins.

Brandon University Strike Mediation Timeline

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the minister's attempt to educate the House on labour law last week, the students at

Brandon University continue to suffer through a strike that is now entering its fourth week. I am receiving calls and emails from students, parents, faculty and Brandon University board members. They are all frustrated by the lack of progress.

Mr. Speaker, since mediation talks have now broken down, does this government have a plan? Can they tell us what it is?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I want to thank the honourable member for that question.

Of course, the strike at Brandon University—inconveniencing and frustrating for students. I know that students are very concerned about their future and their education. That's why, when the strike commenced, conciliation began working with provincially appointed conciliator. After conciliation concluded there was a request for mediation. We moved immediately to appoint that mediator.

I'm informed by the mediator that the mediator continues to meet with and talk to the parties. And actually, Mr. Speaker, it's the mediator who decides when mediation is concluded, not the honourable member across the way.

Mr. Helwer: Well, the mediation process was discussed from the faculty, Mr. Speaker.

Students at Brandon University now, who have received scholarships and bursaries have to maintain a certain grade point and average in order to qualify for that support. Having missed three weeks of classes, it's almost impossible for those students to maintain that average. They'll have to take out student loans to repay those scholarships and have to live with that increased debt due to this government.

For the sake of the students, will the minister ask the faculty to return to work during the next step of negotiations?

Ms. Howard: What I don't think is probably constructive to coming to a conclusion and coming to an agreement in this case is for us to speculate on hypotheticals.

I believe that the university will be responsible, will exercise its responsibilities to the students, and everything will be done upon the conclusion of this strike to make sure that students can get the benefit of their education.

Right now that dispute is in mediation. The mediator continues to meet with the parties,

continues to look for a solution. I believe the most constructive things we can do as legislators for the students and for their future education is to allow that mediation process to continue without interference from us. Thank you.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, psychiatric nursing students enrolled in Brandon University finish their term in mid-November, two weeks from now. How likely are they to graduate if they cannot finish their term?

How can this government stand up in this House and brag about their plans to hire nurses when one of their institutions may not even be able to graduate them? Is this the government—is this government now able to take the next step and offer binding arbitration, then ask the faculty, return to teaching?

Ms. Howard: I think, as I responded last week to this question, both parties are aware that binding arbitration is an option. We'd be pleased to assist the parties in helping to find an arbitrator to engage in that process. I think arbitration can be a very helpful process in situations like this. Right now, mediation continues. I believe that's the most constructive path, not to spread fear among the students.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I think, as the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) just outlined, our commitment to nurses is, when we commit to nurses we commit to paying them fully, not paying them halfway, the way the members across did in this past election.

Fatima and Lions Manor (Rossburn) Safety and Maintenance Standards

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): In August, the town of Rossburn held a public meeting to discuss the serious maintenance issues at both the Fatima and Lions Manor. The town council expressed extreme concern with the lack of communication and sensitivity towards the residents in the manor when issues were raised in the past.

In September, I visited the residents at Fatima and Lions 'manitor'—Manor, and was concerned by the neglect by this Province and how the neglect would lead, certainly, to many code violations under The Public Health Act. The Minister of Housing website has her quoted as saying: Good quality housing has an impact, a positive impact, on the health of people in communities. Unquote.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Housing explain why she says she supports good quality

housing when her actions, or lack thereof, speaks to her failure to address the needs of safe and healthy housing for senior residents in the Fatima and Lions Manor?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): I'm excited to stand up and talk about the progress that we've made in Manitoba for housing for all Manitobans. We have seen many success, whether it's for families, seniors, new Canadians, and we'll continue to make those investments. We're making record investments right now renovating, refreshing units across this province. We'll continue to do that.

I can tell the member across the way that we have a request for proposals right now that will ensure that we have over a hundred new units for seniors' housing being built.

Mrs. Rowat: The community of Rossburn is actually in the province of Manitoba, and this minister has failed that community.

Let me share with the House just a few of the maintenance issues Fatima Manor residents have been living with: severe sewer odour when entering the manor, an obvious safe indoor air violation; mobility-challenged residents have no accessibility supports to exit a building, a violation, as no safe means of egress in case of emergency; outdoor window frames have wood rot and are falling away from the window, a violation, as the manor would not be resistant to elements or moisture damage.

All of these issues are a direct violation of the Manitoba Health Protections Unit Safe Housing Program under The Public Health Act. Its website says: Safe housing conditions are essential to good health.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister responsible for Manitoba Housing please explain why she has failed to provide safe housing conditions for the manor residents as is required under Manitoba law, or does she not care about the health of these seniors?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Manitoba Housing is responsible to direct manage units, 35,000 units. We work with many non-profits across this province. I can point to investments that we've made to refresh units across this province, whether it's in northern Manitoba, rural Manitoba or in Winnipeg or Brandon. We're continuing to make those investments. We are committed to ensure that all Manitobans have safe, affordable housing.

I encourage the member to bring these issues to my attention, and I thank her for that. We will be following up, but we continue to work with our maintenance staff and make record investments to ensure that all Manitobans have safe, affordable housing.

Mrs. Rowat: I emailed the minister in September when these issues were raised, and the minister has done very little in response to this, Mr. Speaker. I will table two pages of appendix issues that this minister has—is failing to address. This minister was once the minister responsible for Manitoba seniors, and I know she is quite aware of the Age-Friendly Initiative in this province. What she may not know is that Rossburn, because of its efforts to enhance the health, independence and well-being of residents, has been recognized in Manitoba as an age-friendly community. So, to allow this type of neglect occur under this government, is shame on this government for its inability to manage housing. They are a slum landlord.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors (Mr. Rondeau): Does he condone the lack of interest shown by his colleague, the Minister of Housing, and will he, today, ensure the issues raised by the community of Rossburn are addressed immediately?

* (14:00)

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We were the government—it was the NDP government that built those housing units to start with. We will continue to maintain it. We have made those investments. I ask the members—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I'm having a difficult time hearing the answer to the question that was posed by the honourable member for Riding Mountain.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I ask the members across the way: What have they done in our 12 consecutive budgets? Hmm, voted against them all. What do we continue to do? We continue to build—continue to build—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. Again, I'm having a difficult time hearing the response to the question. Please, we have members of the public here in the gallery here with us today. I'm asking for the co-operation of all

honourable members so we can hear the response to the question.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: What's important for all of the members of the House and the viewing public to know is that we've made record investments; we continue to make those record investments. We are responsible landlords that will continue to work with our community partners to ensure that all Manitobans have safe, affordable housing.

First Nations Communities Apprenticeship Employment Availability

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, the provincial government has explored training opportunities on Manitoba First Nations. Recently, a number of Sandy Bay First Nation students graduated as licensed practical nurses. Unfortunately, they have no local opportunity for employment. There's no nursing station or personal care home on the First Nation. There are seven or eight new LPNs whose skills are going to erode.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Health have a solution to the lack of local job opportunities for these new LPNs?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Yes, indeed, we know that the federal government and the provincial government are working very hard to develop training opportunities, particularly for First Nations people who really want to engage in improving the health status of Aboriginal people. We have had a number of successful students go through programs provincially. There have been a number of students that have successfully completed programs funded by the federal government.

And certainly we are working in concert with those individuals and our regional health authorities to develop as many opportunities as possible. Whether it's in long-term care, whether it's in the development of further roles in our primary care networks, whether we can work in tandem with home care to provide opportunities for these LPNs that have been trained, both by the Province and by the federal government, to secure meaningful employment, that, of course, is the goal, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, two years ago an apprentice electrician's course was offered on the Ebb and Flow First Nation with the same result. There are no local journeymen for the graduates to

work with so their 'nerly' learned skills will be lost. There is a pattern here: LPNs and electricians being trained with no local opportunities for employment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister responsible: Wouldn't it make sense to take the process one step further and assure there will be opportunities for employment and apprenticeships for the graduates so their skills aren't lost?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): One thing that set us apart from the opposition over the last two elections is we're the government that was talking about training opportunities here in Manitoba, and we have been working with a number of different initiatives for First Nations training, and more Manitobans are working than ever before, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of opportunities in Manitoba, and we'll continue to see people who go through that training have those opportunities to apply the skills that they learned here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of our record. We committed to 4,000 apprentices in the '07 election; we delivered on that, and we're going to continue to make training a priority. And that's one thing that sets this side of the House apart from that side of the House, including training for First Nations.

Children and Family Services Agencies Authority Foster Care Responsibility

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) please explain to me why a foster parent cannot care for children from different CFS authorities? I have a constituent who is a child-care support worker and a foster parent of children under the care of the southern authority who has been told she cannot provide foster care for an 11-year-old girl who is under the care of the general authority.

Why can't she provide care for children from different CFS authorities?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Acting Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Of course, I'm not going to comment on an individual case, especially one that is within Child and Family Services. I'd be pleased to get the particulars from the member after question period and pass those on to the minister on his behalf.

I would say when it comes to children in care and taking care of those kids, there's been a

tremendous commitment from this government and from the minister for Child and Family Services to doing that. We have seen, since 2006, a 96 per cent budget increase, or almost \$200 million more, going to the care of those children. And every one of those dollars was voted against by every member opposite. Thank you.

Mr. Graydon: You can throw money at problems all you want, but if you don't have that money managed it isn't accomplishing anything.

It doesn't explain why an 11-year-old girl is in a group home when there's a foster family who would be happy to have her and a bureaucratic rule making it say, no, that's not allowed. Whatever happened to acting in the best interests of the child?

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to speaking to my constituent about this situation? She's very concerned about the well-being of this 11-year-old girl who she strongly feels should not be in a group home.

Ms. Howard: I've already said I'd be pleased to get the particulars from the member after question period, pass those on to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh).

I want to talk a bit about foster families and funding for foster families because, you know, it was this government that restored funding for the Foster Family Network, which was cut in the 1990s. I remember those cuts. I remember walking with others, protesting those cuts, cuts to the Foster Family Network, cuts to friendship centres, cuts to resources for families. I remember that very well.

It's this government that has seen an increase of over 3,000 net new foster and emergency beds by working with foster families and valuing the contribution of those families. Those are achievements that has happened that—those are achievements that have happened by working in partnership with foster families.

We can always do better. We can always do more for those kids, but I believe we're definitely on the right track, a track that stands in stark contrast to the road that was followed by the members opposite when they had the chance.

First Nations Communities Water and Sewer Access

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): During the H1N1 flu epidemic, which severely affected so many

communities in northern Manitoba, I visited Garden Hill and saw first-hand the unacceptable circumstances of so many Manitobans who are living in the community and don't have access to running water.

People have to haul their water whenever they need water to drink, water for a shower, water to clean their—wash their clothes and their dishes, for any other purpose. The situation, which the current government has let persist for so many years, was a direct contributor to the severity of the H1N1 flu epidemic in northern Manitoba when so many people died. It has contributed in so many other ways and many other issues to northern Manitoba communities like Garden Hill.

Why has the Premier's government, in 12 years, failed to ensure that all Manitobans have access to clean, running water?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): A couple points: First of all, during the H1N1 crisis, there was a very high rate of vaccination in those communities. They did a tremendous job making sure they protected their people, and we were happy to work with them on that.

Secondly, that's one of the communities where this government put a dialysis unit in a First Nations community, an innovative approach to allow people to get access to that treatment closer to home rather than having to fly out on a regular basis at a very—very difficult circumstances for people to have to fly out of those remote communities.

And thirdly, on the matter of sewer and water: I visited those communities with the MLA for the area and the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson). We've worked with those communities to train people to ensure that they can do the work required.

We will make investments in those communities as necessary, but we also need the federal government, who's responsible for First Nations across the country, to pony up the resources to put the water and sewer in place. We will do our share. We will go beyond our normal mandate to ensure that things will be done to hook up those families, and they do need to be hooked up.

And I ask the member opposite: If he's so concerned about this now, why wasn't he concerned about it when he was in the federal Cabinet and he had the direct ability as a member of the federal

Cabinet to fund sewer and water for these communities?

Mr. Gerrard: The fact is that there's a major problem with this provincial government. The government of Ontario, in the 1990s, came forward, made an agreement with Ottawa in 1992 and in 1996 to ensure that First Nations communities in Ontario have running water and that their homes are connected so that people can have water to drink, to cook with, to shower and for whatever they need.

* (14:10)

In December of 2010, the Minister of Northern Affairs was quoted as saying he wasn't even familiar with the Ontario agreement. The fact is that Ontario was there, but Manitoba, whether it was in the 1990s or in the 2000s, has not been there.

This Premier has let the people of northern Manitoba down. He has let them down year after year after year. The fact is that this Premier has come up short.

Why, in 12 years, Mr. Premier, have you not made sure that everyone in northern Manitoba has access to clean, running water in each community?

Mr. Speaker: One sec, please. Before I recognize the First Minister, I have asked co-operation of all honourable members. Please, when you're asking your questions or making comments in the House, please direct them through the Chair.

Mr. Selinger: I think the member should be aware of the investments we've made to serve the First Nations communities on the east side: airstrips provided by Manitoba, brought in by an NDP government; the commitment to the east-side road, a very major project that will connect east-side communities together with ground transportation at a time when winter roads are failing because of climate change issues and shorter seasons; the commitment to H1N1; the commitment to dialysis; and, yes, a commitment to work with the federal government on hooking up sewer and water in those communities.

We think it's a tragedy that it has not been done. We regret that when the member opposite was a member of the Cabinet, he didn't do anything with respect to this. We are prepared to do our share—more than our share to ensure that that gets done. But we also need a federal partner that's willing to put the resources in place so that the 70 per cent is there. If the 70 per cent is there, I can ensure you the rest

will come, and we will train people to do the services essential in their own communities.

Mr. Gerrard: In the 1990s, the federal government was there, but this government, this provincial government, was not there, and this provincial government has not been there for all the 12 years that this provincial government has been in power.

This is a completely unacceptable living conditions for people in northern Manitoba. The *Free Press* has said in its series “No Running Water” that the conditions in northern Manitoba are worse than in a refugee camp in a Third World situation. Surely, this is intolerable.

I ask the Premier: Why has he not done anything in 12 years? I ask the Premier: Is he going to commit today to a rapid solution to this problem and to make sure that it is in place very quickly, in a timely fashion, for all First Nations, because there’s 1,400 homes in northern Manitoba which are still not connected to running water?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I remind the member opposite it was a Liberal government that was in office in Ottawa till 2006 and then it’s been a—subsequently another government, a Conservative government.

Our resources are there. Our resources are there for airstrips. Our resources are there for the east-side road. Our resources are there for dialysis. Our resources are there to train people to do sewer and water hookups and have the skills necessary, and we will commit to doing that.

Unfortunately, we don’t control the federal budget. That’s their decision to allocate those resources. The minute they will do it, the project will proceed. And we’ll help them do it, and we’ll co-operate with the First Nations to get it done.

And when I visited those communities of Wasagamack, Red Sucker Lake, St. Theresa Point and Garden Hill, they are good people trying to do the right thing for their communities, but they need to have the resources in their budget to be able to do it. We’ll do our share; the federal government ponies up, it’ll get done.

Manitoba Career Week Government Initiatives

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, helping young people to choose and prepare for their future careers is an important part of education.

Can the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy please advise us of the exciting events that Manitoba Career Week has to offer Manitobans seeking direction on the variety of career opportunities available to them?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): I was pleased to be at the launch of the third annual Manitoba Career Week yesterday at the Winnipeg Technical College, and it goes on until November 5th. I will let you know there’s a few events that you might be interested in.

Winnipeg Technical College was a perfect place to be talking about Career Week, since it does serve students of all ages and different backgrounds, many who are looking for a second or a new career.

There are seven government departments that put together Career Week, Mr. Speaker, and I want to inform you that the theme this year is “Your Future, Your Way”, which reminds all of us that we need to take control of our futures and our careers and where we want to be headed so that we make informed decisions.

I remind people that for parents who maybe have children who are looking at what they want to do with their lives, there is a forum for parents coming up on this Saturday that they might want to be interested in.

And, of course, tomorrow we’ll probably see this building full of all kinds of students, as tomorrow is the annual Take Our Kids To Work Day here in Manitoba, where grade 9 students get a chance to see what their parents do. Mr. Speaker, it’s a wonderful opportunity for all of us to see if we reach our potential.

Home Care Service Reductions

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, families and home-care workers have been telling us that care has been stripped out of home care with the changes that have been brought in by this government.

During the election, eight families told me that care to their family members was cut back, including for one woman who had MS. Two home-care workers met with me and three others wrote letters, confirming these cuts, even though they were threatened with job loss if they spoke up.

So can the Minister of Health please explain to all these families why care was cut back as part of the home-care changes that they brought in?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I appreciate the opportunity to put some facts on the record. I can tell the member that, indeed, we are working—the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and other regional health authorities are working to create a home-care workforce of permanent full-time staff, which, of course, has been the desire of clients of home care and certainly has been the desire of home-care workers.

We know, of course, that during the transition period from part time to full time we identified some situations that were not of benefit to the client. And so we asked the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to pause the transition so that they could work through some of these challenges. And I can assure the member that the transition will not continue until some of these issues are worked out so that clients aren't experiencing any sort of discomfort with the kind of care that they're getting and the length of time that they're getting.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the reason the government had to pause this whole initiative, because they've made a big mess of what's going on in home care right now. And there are cuts to care.

Mr. Speaker, in Assiniboine south there are approximately 750 home-care clients. Many of them have had the same home-care workers for years. But this government forced every single one of those workers to be removed from those assignments, and everybody was reassigned.

On June 17th there were lots of tears in southwest Winnipeg, including one man, very, very disabled, in a wheelchair, had no ability to speak; he couldn't feed himself, he couldn't do anything for himself. He had three home-care workers for over three years. All three of them were taken away from him; that was his lifeline. And they asked—the family asked, please, can you just keep one of these workers, and they were told no. All appeals were sent to the Minister of Health, and all appeals were denied.

Can she please tell us why she was so heartless in these decisions that were made?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's so many inaccuracies in that rant, I hardly have time to address them in 45 seconds. But I certainly will say this, that the home-care workers have asked for a

permanent, full-time EFT status. We know that by enabling our workforce to make this transition, we're going to be able to recruit more effectively into home care, and we're going to be able to have a more stable workforce.

Now, I will tell you that, indeed, in the early implementation of the transition of home care, we did identify some difficulties by individuals that had had a long-standing relationship with a part-time home-care worker, who wanted to move to full time and, therefore, chose to transition to another environment. We very much want to have stability for our clients, with—no question about that. And we're going to work to ensure that people are able to increase their home care where necessary and make sure that we continue to be the jewel of the nation, not, Mr. Speaker, privatized home care like they tried to do.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this minister needs a wake-up call, and she needs a better briefing about what's going on with home care right now. If there's any inaccuracies, it's what she has just been putting forward with all her rhetoric. This is about patients out there, and patient care has been cut.

* (14:20)

It's also about the home-care workers themselves. Prior to these changes, there were 200 health-care workers and home support workers in Assiniboine south. Only 66 of them got jobs; 134 lost their jobs.

Can this minister please explain what happened to those 134 workers in southwest Winnipeg?

Ms. Oswald: I can say very, very clearly, in ways that are not complicated for the member opposite to understand, we made a commitment in February that, in addition to making a \$200-million capital investment to personal care homes, that we would also go deeper into our home-care investment so that those families that could benefit by an additional couple of hours a day, to enable our seniors to stay in their home, that we would make that investment, Mr. Speaker; to make sure that families could have their loved ones living in their home as long as they so choose. In doing that, we're also going from casual to permanent jobs, which is what our home-care workers have asked for.

We did notice some issues in the transition in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, which is why they paused, to work through those issues, so we can augment home care, Mr. Speaker, augment home

care to families, not cut it and attempt to privatize it, which is the clear agenda every day for the—

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Prior to members' statements, I want to draw to the attention of all members, since, according to the sessional order of the House, we will be rising today, and it is not likely to sit again until the new year, I'm asking that all members empty the contents of their desk before leaving the House today. Members are encouraged to make use of the blue bins that are available here in the Chamber to recycle documents, and any other material that you may have to recycle can be placed in larger blue bins in the two message rooms. I thank all honourable members for their co-operation.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Jake Giesbrecht

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's a pleasure for me to offer, in the Legislative Chamber, a warm thank-you and congratulations to a friend and a constituent, Jake Giesbrecht, who last week officially retired as the operations manager of Eastman Recycling Services in Steinbach.

For members who are unaware, Eastman Recycling offers both residential and commercial recycling services to residents of the southeast, including being the recycling depot for many electronic products.

It is a program of enVision Community Living, formally the Association for Community Living in Steinbach, and, as such, it not only provides a valuable service in recycling but also offers meaningful and fulfilling employment for people living with intellectual disabilities.

As the operations manager for Eastman Recycling for many years, Jake oversaw many changes and the growth of the organization. From its move to new and larger facilities, to the expansion of the kind of recycling done, Jake has given strong and steady leadership and a strong and steady hand as the organization changed. Most importantly, Jake demonstrated a heart for his employees and ensured that they not only knew that their work was valued, but that they themselves were valued as individuals.

I've known Jake as a friend for many years. We were first introduced through mutual friends, Jim

Penner and his wife, Bev. And I want to, on behalf of all members of the Assembly, thank him for a service and we wish him and his wife, Tina, all the best as they enter this new phase of their life.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Southdale Dyna-mite Cup Hockey Tournament

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Mr. Speaker, last week the Southdale Community Centre held the 26th Annual Dyna-mite Cup for hockey players aged eight to 10. The tournament has a proud tradition of providing entertainment and competitive hockey, and this year was no exception.

This is a very popular event, one of only two Winnipeg tournaments that take place before the regular hockey season begins, and kids from all over the city look forward to it, and 32 teams were able to participate this year.

The Southdale Community Centre expansion and second indoor rink allow for more games, so the tournament now involves more than 450 players, and they hope to include more than 500 by next year.

The cup is volunteer run and players' families work hard every year to make it happen. In addition to their time, generous individuals and local businesses offer financial support to the tournament, which acts as a fundraiser for both the community centre and local teams.

In particular, I'd like to recognize Jason Thor, a local hockey dad who co-ordinated this year's events and also acts as director of ice sports for the Southdale arena. He and other community members like him help young people get involved in fun, challenging sports that encourage healthy living and teach important lessons in fair play.

I was happy to present the gold and silver medals to the eight-year-old division. Congratulations to the St. Boniface Seals Red team, who won gold, and the St. Boniface Seals White team, who won silver this year. Both teams showed great spirit both on and off the ice, and I was impressed by their teamwork as well as the individual players' hockey skills.

I would also like to congratulate the nine-year-old Seven Oaks White team, who won the gold medal in their age range, and the 10-year-old

St. Boniface Seals White team, who won gold in theirs. I look forward to the upcoming season and to next year's Dyna-mite Cup.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Strathclair Drama Club

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Strathclair Drama Club on marking their 30th anniversary of providing wonderful entertainment to so many visitors over the past three decades. To celebrate this momentous occasion the club will be performing the classic American musical *Ragtime*. *Ragtime* is based on the E.L. Doctorow novel of the same name and explores how the lives of three distinct character groups, the people of New Rochelle, the people of Harlem and the immigrants from Ellis Island, become intertwined in unimaginable ways. It offers its audience a moving, funny and tragic storyline which transcends time and place.

Putting on such a production requires a tremendous amount of work. During the middle of October, producer Clare Benson held auditions and large number of actors, both young and old, turned out in hopes of being awarded a role in the musical. In total, *Ragtime* has a cast of over 80 people with about 70 people helping behind the scenes, with some travelling as far as 60 miles to participate. It is clear that the club's reputation reaches far across the Westman region.

Like so many organizations, the impetus of the Strathclair Drama Club comes from two individuals: Eleanor Marks and Neil Gamey, who saw the artistic potential of their community. Thus, in 1982 the club was born. The first members, however, faced an 'arduous' task, turning the old Bend cinema into a viable theatre house for stage productions. After years of diligent work the old theatre, lovingly referred to as the shack, was transformed into a beautiful place where local talent is shared.

Today the Strathclair Drama Club continues its tradition of a first-rate musical theatre. Since 2006, every production was sold out, meaning that approximately 7,800 people visited the Bend Theatre to watch local performers in that time.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in recognizing this organization and the good work that they continue to do in Strathclair and beyond. I encourage all Manitobans to make the trip to Strathclair for

Ragtime's opening night, April 16th, 2012. It is sure to be a first-rate show.

Naosap Harvest

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the significant accomplishments made by Cranberry-Portage resident Tracy Anderson towards sustainable northern food production in Manitoba. Tracy and her family operate Naosap Harvest, a certified organic wild rice producer based in Cranberry-Portage. They ensure that the product is grown and harvested in a sustainable manner, preserving the environment of the north. Last month Naosap Harvest was the recipient of the Golden Carrot Award, winning in the northern category, handed out annually by the Food Matters Manitoba. Given out this year in advance of the World Food Day, the awards recognize individuals and businesses who are working toward a more just and sustainable food system in Manitoba. Naosap is heavily involved in the Cranberry-Portage community and have sponsored many different events over the years. They have raised the profile of Manitoba wild rice and educated people on its impressive nutritional content, health benefits and versatility. Naosap's delicious wild rice can be found on the menu of many high-profile restaurants and on the dinner tables of families across the province.

All across the constituency of Flin Flon northerners are taking food production and food preservation into their own hands. The price of nutritious food in the north remains a serious challenge for many. Traditional foods such as wild rice are not only healthy, but they can make a major contribution of lowering the cost of living.

The work of Tracy and Naosap Harvest demonstrates what can happen when people produce their own healthy food in a sustainable manner. This government has supported northern food production through the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, working alongside Food Matters Manitoba and other partners. This initiative supports and assists northern Manitobans in food self-sufficiency, availability and economic development efforts that diversify the northern food system.

On behalf of all northerners I commend Tracy and Naosap Harvest on their commitment to sustainable healthy food and to producing wild rice that is the envy of the world.

* (14:30)

The Wellington Retirement Residence

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize The Wellington retirement residence for their dedication to seniors. On October 6th I attended the grand reopening of The Wellington retirement residence after extensive renovations were made. Now more than ever the retirement residence is a prime model for outstanding senior living as it incorporates esthetic beauty with excellent services.

Behind the physical transformation, the residence boasts some of the most dedicated staff, all of whom play an integral part in making seniors feel at home. During the renovations, the staff did an excellent job managing the changes while ensuring that all seniors were still provided with the same quality care and services that they depend on.

Having spoken to many of the seniors, I'm inspired by all of the activities that they take part in, from participating in fitness classes and listening to stimulating presentations to engaging in book clubs, these seniors are truly living life to the fullest. Providing services like these is just one of the ways that The Wellington retirement residence promotes healthy living. The residence also provides seniors a dining room that can adapt to their specific dietary requirements, a fireside lounge where they can enjoy their morning cup of coffee with friends and beautifully landscaped grounds that facilitate relaxing walks around the premises. Indeed, these services and activities all contribute to providing seniors with a healthy, active and rewarding lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, The Wellington retirement residence has recently celebrated their 20th anniversary and, on that note, I'd like to thank all of the seniors and staff for making the residence a truly unique and enjoyable place to live. Congratulations on your grand reopening.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH

(Eighth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers).

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

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us in this First Session of the Fortieth Legislature of Manitoba. The debate is open.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all members of the House for yesterday allowing me to call it 5 o'clock. My son has just started kindergarten this year, and many members who have children the same age or who have had children the same age often warn me that when they start those years in public school that whatever virus is going around, they would bring it home. And, in fact, that's been my early experience already as my son has brought home a couple of viruses and I've caught one and I have one. But I'll do my best to get through this speech because I don't want to disappoint members opposite who I know have waited for a number of days for it.

I first want to begin, as many others have, Mr. Speaker, by congratulating you on your election to your high office. I know that you'll do a good job. It's—whenever I elect a Speaker in this House it's the only time ever that I voted for a New Democrat, and that's just simply how it goes.

An Honourable Member: That's how it starts, Kelvin.

Mr. Goertzen: That's how it starts, but I suspect that's probably how it will end. But I know, Mr. Speaker, that you'll do a fine job. I've been on committees where you've served as the chairman, and I haven't always been at my best behaviour at some of those committees, but you handled it well and I would apologize in advance for any indiscretions I might have during the time that I have remaining in this Chamber.

I also want to congratulate all of the new members who were elected, not only those on our side of the House but all members for the Chamber, including the New Democrats. It's notable whenever anybody gets elected to the Legislature; everybody has a history that they come with, that they've—bring a certain experience to the Legislature, and I believe—and I've said this before, so this isn't new—I believe that everybody who runs for public office does it so for the right reasons. We might have different opinions and different views and different values, but I believe that everybody runs to make their communities better and their constituencies better.

I also want to welcome back the table officers. Our Clerk, who's already corrected me on something

I did earlier in terms of commenting that a piece of legislation had been tabled. In fact, she corrected me to say it had been introduced and not tabled, and that will be the first of many corrections I'm sure that she has for members of this House, including myself. And we always rely on their advice and their expertise to guide us through what are sometimes arcane rules of the Legislature, but rules nonetheless that probably have some meaning and some value that go back before I can understand or before I can make comment on.

Also, all of the staff of the Assembly, and, of course, members of Hansard who do a good job of making sure that our words are recorded here in the Legislature for time 'immemorial.' There will be those in the years ahead who will look back at debates for a variety of different reasons, whether it's research or our own family members, and they will look at those debates and probably wonder sometimes why we said the things that we said and the way that we said them, and I would just offer if my own son is ever looking back at *Hansard* to remember that context is important and it's difficult sometimes to understand the context of the Legislature and what is happening in terms of debate. But that's often one of the reasons that things sound different than you might otherwise expect them to sound.

I want to welcome the pages who are here to serve us, as well as the many interns in the Legislature. I started off my career here in the Legislature as an intern. I think I'm still the only intern to ever be elected to the Legislature. Most of them go on to higher callings than this, perhaps. I've had the opportunity to work with many interns since I was elected, and they're all very distinguished and come with great academic credentials, and I know this year's crop is no different.

I'll also add, like many other members did already about their local campaigns; they took some time to congratulate those or to thank those who helped them on their local campaigns, and I'd like to do the same, Mr. Speaker. I had four co-chairs on my campaign. One was Jorie Morrisseau, who used to be the president of the Southeast Filipino Association in my region. She did a great job of bringing in a number of new Canadians onto my campaign, many Filipinos who have made Steinbach home. In fact, the reputation of Steinbach is probably 10 years behind the reality of it. If you would come to Steinbach, you know it's a very multicultural community, and I was pleased to see many new

Canadians involved with my campaign and in fact, many people who can't vote, who aren't yet Canadians, who wanted to be involved with the political process and who got involved in the campaign in Steinbach. I appreciated their support, and Jorie is a big part of that.

Stan Toews, from the RM of Hanover, was also a member of my campaign team. Stan has been a long-time friend and supporter and brought to me a lot of advice and a lot of sage words in what are often difficult days on a campaign, not just on the local campaign but more broadly on the provincial campaign.

Also Les Magnusson, who's the former mayor of Steinbach, who served as one of the co-chairs on my campaign. He also is a long-time friend, and I've had the opportunity, before he left office as the mayor, to work with him on a number of different initiatives. I want to thank him.

And Bev Penner, who members of this Chamber—longer term members—might remember is the wife of Jim Penner, my predecessor, and Bev is a good family friend and great supporter of our party and our province, and I appreciate her serving as a co-chair on my campaign as well.

Also my campaign manager, Connie Dyck, who did a good job of organizing the campaign each and every day to make sure I was supposed to be—or trying to make sure that I was where I was supposed to be. She did a good job of that.

Our volunteer co-ordinator, Evelyn Krahn, who co-ordinated the over a hundred volunteers that we had within our campaign. I didn't always know what they were doing, but I knew that they were doing something important because Evelyn made sure of that.

Neil Warkentin, who was the sign chair on my campaign. My riding has grown smaller over the years. Maybe I've grown larger, but my riding has grown smaller over the years, Mr. Speaker, and that means that the campaign team, in terms of signs, is a little bit easier. But Neil and his team, largely made up of members of his family, did a great job of ensuring that there were signs out in the community and out in the rural areas.

I also want to thank Ed Penner, who's the president of my local riding association and has been for a number of years and been a great supporter of mine and my family. He had been the president even

long before I took office, but he's been a steadfast supporter through all the times, and I appreciate Ed and his wife, Lydia, for that.

We had a great group of volunteers, as I mentioned, over a hundred, and, you know, it's a very humbling experience. Many members have already mentioned that. When people come forward and use their own time to try to help you obtain a job, to obtain election in the Manitoba Legislature, they do it on their own time. Most of them are doing other things within their life and yet they come forward and offer you their assistance, and often we don't even know them.

I admit that there are times I'd come into my own campaign office and I wouldn't know the volunteers who were there, and I would have to introduce myself or they would introduce themselves to me. And that's particularly humbling when people who you don't have a close connection with come forward and say, we're going to help you out for a variety of different reasons. And there were a variety of reasons that people came forward and said they were going to help out.

Most especially, of course, I want to thank my wife, Kim, for the support that—*[interjection]* Members on my side must think I'm a difficult person to deal with, Mr. Speaker—*[interjection]* Members on all sides—it's unanimous.

* (14:40)

And you know, there's a grain of truth to the applause that I've heard, not only personally, but I would say it's difficult for a spouse who is in political life. They often suffer the arrows more deeply than we do as individual politicians. We sign up for the job and we expect that it's going to be difficult in terms of some of the public comments that are said or things that go around maybe in a community. But our spouses and our family, they don't sign up for it and they often feel it more deeply than we do. And so Kim has been a great supporter of mine ever since I entered public life, and I want to thank her publicly.

It's a little different now. We've had a son for the last five years and so that has changed things a little bit. It makes it more difficult for her to attend all of the events. Malachi, my son, attends most of the events that he can with us, but that will change, too, I suppose, as he grows a bit older as well, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't have a great perception about what I do for a living, and nor have I tried to invest

that in him yet. I sort of like the idea at this point of him not having a great understanding of what my job is and not being impacted by it. If you were to ask him what I did for a living, he would tell you that daddy works at a computer, because that's what he sees, and that's fair enough. And at some point he'll gain a better understanding of the job I have or that I held, and I hope that he appreciates that we did it for all the right reasons.

I think that it's too bad that, within the public's eye, the role of elected official, whether that's municipal, provincial or federal, has been diminished. And it's been diminished somewhat by our own actions and some of it's been diminished for a lot of other reasons, Mr. Speaker. But I think for our children and for those who are close to us they recognize that it's an important role and that we do it for the right reasons.

During the 'cammons' I want to, again, just say thank you to both my son, who has less of an understanding, and my wife, Kim, who has a great understanding about the sacrifices of public life.

I had the opportunity during the campaign to spend a fair bit of time outside of the riding of Steinbach. Not that I took it for granted, Mr. Speaker. We never do take any ridings for granted, but we thought that we'd done a good job over the last four years and we'd be rewarded for re-election, so I spent a good deal of time in ridings like Dawson Trail, working in that riding. Didn't work exactly the way we'd planned on, but, you know, every election's competitive and every election goes a certain way for different reasons. But it doesn't mean that you don't try and it doesn't mean that you don't engage in the debate and engage in the battle. And so I enjoyed meeting with many people in Dawson Trail and we had a great candidate there, and I know that he'll do well in his own future.

I had the opportunity to do a number of debates during the election, some with the honourable Attorney General (Mr. Swan), others with the member—Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), and met a lot of good people there as well. And it's amazing how many more debates there are in elections than I remember there being even 10 or 15 years ago when I was involved in a different way. But it seems that every interest group wants to have its own debate and wants to have its own forum; that's good for democracy. It can be difficult for candidates, of course, to try to fulfill all of those different requirements, but I enjoyed the five debates

or six debates that I was able to participate in and on behalf of our party.

Also, within my own constituency, I want to thank the two candidates who ran against me, particularly for not winning, but the fact that they ran is an important thing. You put your name on a ballot, everybody who does that, I think, deserves credit. The NDP candidate was Ms. Gutierrez, who didn't actually come to the riding, didn't actually show up in the riding. In fact, I think her statement in *The Carillon* was she wasn't sure if she'd move to the riding if she'd win. But I would encourage her to come, and it's not too late and—to come and see the great people of the Steinbach constituency.

I know the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was having a great oratory flair here in the Legislature a few days ago, talking about how different candidates didn't visit different ridings. But the reality is the New Democratic candidate didn't come to my riding at all, and I think if you talked to other members of the House you'd find the NDP candidate didn't come to their ridings either. And so, perhaps that's a pox on all of our houses, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think that the member for Thompson should be too high on his soap box when it comes to whether people are showing up in the riding. But I do appreciate the fact that she put her name on a ballot and let her name stand.

Lee Fehler, who ran for the Liberals, is a young man who was recruited locally. I had the opportunity to sit down with Lee during the campaign, a good young man. Maybe a little misguided, he was running for the Liberals, but nonetheless a good young man and I think he'll do well in the future, and I wish him well in the future with whatever he looks at.

I want to thank the residents of the Steinbach constituency, both past and present, Mr. Speaker, and starting off with the communities that I lost prior to this election: Grunthal, Niverville, Tourond and Pansy.

An Honourable Member: What do you mean, you lost?

Mr. Goertzen: I didn't lose them in the electoral sense; I lost them in the riding sense, in terms of their boundaries, Mr. Speaker.

But each of those communities, while I had more connections to some than others, over the last eight years my wife, Kim, and I had a good opportunity to meet a lot of people, make friends within those

constituencies, and we're sorry to have lost them prior to the election. We enjoyed getting to know people. It's very humbling when people invite you to their anniversaries, to their birthdays, to different events. All of us have shared that experience here in the Legislature. Some we know closely and some we don't. They simply invite you because of the nature of the position that we hold. And that's a great honour for each of us to be able to do that. And it was an honour for myself and Kim to go to many of the events in Grunthal and Niverville and Tourond. The only thing that I am heartened by is that they've inherited great MLAs in the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), and my loss is probably their gain, because they will do very well with the new representatives they have.

But to the residents, then, of those communities and the current constituency of Steinbach, very fortunate that they've entrusted me for the last three elections. It's not something—members might find this surprising—I never aspired to go into politics, Mr. Speaker. I did aspire to go into law at—for most of my life, and the political thing, sort of, came up almost by accident. Didn't have, and don't have, a great heritage within my immediate family of people running for political office. My father died when I was young, as I've mentioned this before. My mother raised my sister and I as a single mother in government housing, and I was probably the least likely person to be elected into public office if you had looked back at that time.

And so, I feel very fortunate that the residents of the Steinbach constituency, both past and present, have put their trust in me. And I think it's indicative that they are open to people, and are welcoming of people. And I very much appreciate their support. It's a great honour to walk down the street, to have people say that they support what you do, that they are thinking of you, that they are praying for you, and that often happens in a faith-based community. And I very much appreciate the support that they provided me over the last number of years. It was an unexpected honour to have in my life, but certainly one that I've appreciated, and one that I've never taken for granted, Mr. Speaker.

I want to speak briefly about the campaign overall, Mr. Speaker, and I don't want this, because it sometimes happens when you're talking about a campaign that you've lost, that you haven't been victorious in, not in your local riding but on the provincial side. It can sometimes come across as sour

grapes. And that's not what I intend it to be, Mr. Speaker, because the electoral system we have is one that I think is generally a good system. This isn't certainly to be advocating for proportional representation or any sort of different kind of system. We all ran knowing what the rules were. And so I don't want my comments to be taken out of context here, to be misconstrued.

But it is the fact, Mr. Speaker, that this was, in my opinion, and I think in the opinion of many other people who viewed this campaign, the most negative provincial political campaign that's ever been run in the history of our province. *[interjection]* And the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) seems to disagree. Perhaps we'll leave it to historians to decide that point. But I suspect that I'm on good ground when I say that, and that those who will look back at this campaign will say that, and will say, in fact, that this was an extremely negative campaign, and that it had very negative impacts in terms of our democratic system.

What bothered me most, Mr. Speaker, about it wasn't so much that the campaign itself was negative. I mean, we all—we are all grown men and women here, and we run for political office, and we have thick skins, and we can live with those sort of things and debate the merits of that kind of a campaign in a different environment. But what certainly bothered me, was the Premier (Mr. Selinger) coming out after the election and bemoaning the fact that there was low voter turnout, after having run one of the most negative campaigns in the history of our province.

*(14:50)

And those who are involved in politics strategically, maybe not at the elected side, but behind the scenes, and—members opposite have their strategists and they, I'm sure, could talk to them at a time where they were—be willing to talk freely, they will tell you that negative advertising is designed to do a few different things.

But one of the things that it's designed to do is to drive down voter turnout. It's not intended to drive up voter turnout, because it's intended to discourage certain voters from coming out to the polls, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that the NDP did this very strategically and they did it well, and I'm not taking away their electoral victory. They certainly did it from a political perspective; they did it well. But the intention was to drive down voter turnout and they were successful in that.

But then for the Premier to come out and say, well, I'm very upset that there was such low turnout, that so few people came out to vote, that we need to look at a different way of voting and doing politics is simply ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. It's the height of hypocrisy, and I don't use that word lightly, but it's true.

In fact, the issue isn't whether or not it's convenient for people to vote, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that people don't come out every four years and spend 15 minutes going to a ballot box because it's not convenient. They don't come out for another reason and we can debate what that reason is, but certainly one of the reasons in this election was because of the type of campaign that was run by the NDP.

And let's look at the example, for example, of the Olympic hockey team and I'll—you'll see where I'm going with this, Mr. Speaker. Every four years, there's a winter Olympics and, fortunately, by the nature of the country that we have, more often than not our hockey team, our men's hockey team and our women's hockey team are in the gold medal finals, and 80 per cent of the country, according to statistics, watch that gold medal game every four years.

And Canadians, they get into their vehicle, they will often go to a store and pick up pop or chips or something, go to a place, watch that hockey game for three years, watch some of the announced stats of the game, drive home. They will take six hours out of their day every four years to be involved in that gold medal game, and I don't hear Canadians say, you know what? That Olympic medal hockey game comes up far too often. It's far too inconvenient for us to watch that game.

And yet 80 per cent of Canadians will participate in that and will take six hours out of their day every four years, and yet we're saying here that it's inconvenient for people to take 15 minutes every four years. The reason is they find value; they find something intrinsic in the watching of the Olympic game. But they don't find that same value in voting, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the things that we need to address. It's not an issue of convenience; it's an issue of whether or not Canadians find it valuable and Manitobans find it valuable to vote.

And so for the Premier after the election to come forward and say that he wants to come up with new voting systems to try to get people to vote is ridiculous, because that's not the issue at hand. That's not why people aren't voting, and his own

campaign is symptomatic of one of the reasons why people aren't voting, Mr. Speaker.

I want to turn to a couple of issues regarding the economy with the—and the system of crime that we have left in our—that I have left in my speech, Mr. Speaker, and it relates to the Throne Speech. And I—again, I'm not bemoaning the outcome of the election, but the fact is that 54 per cent of Manitobans didn't vote for this government, which means they gave us a responsibility—and the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) moans from his seat and he doesn't like where I'm going with this.

But just because they won the election doesn't mean that there is not going to be accountability for the next four years from members of this side of the House. And to the victor go the spoils, and maybe members opposite think that this is a victory lap for them and they can take their victory lap, but they shouldn't assume that that victory lap is going to last for four years, Mr. Speaker, that we have a job to represent the 54 per cent of Manitobans who didn't believe in your vision, who didn't think that you were doing a good job on issues around the economy, around crime, around other issues. That is our responsibilities as members of the Legislature, as members of the opposition.

And the Attorney General and others, they can bemoan that and say—and somehow feel that that isn't an important thing, but it is very important, Mr. Speaker. And I know that members of this caucus and members of the—of others, the independent members will take that responsibility seriously over the time that they have left in this Chamber.

And when it comes to the economy, we only have to look around at what's happening in the world. We only have to look around at what's happening on the stock markets today, Mr. Speaker, to see the decline in the stock values, as people worry about what's happening in a country like Greece, the concern that we've had over the debt crisis in the United States. And we are not immune to any of that, and this government is living in a bubble. They believe that they can continue to run up debt, and that it's not going to have an impact, that it's not going to affect our economy, that somehow they can rely on Ottawa endlessly, that those transfer payments are never going to go—come at a reduced level, or never going to be reduced.

Well, that's unrealistic, Mr. Speaker. It's not sustainable, what's happening in the province of Manitoba. I wish it were so. I wished that we didn't

have to worry about those things. As a father of a young child, I wish we didn't have to worry about what could happen to our economy, that we could merrily go along and spend at the rate that this government is spending, and not worry about anything. But it's not realistic, and it's not responsible for us to do as MLAs and as legislators.

And that is missing, clearly, from this Throne Speech. Any understanding of the economic reality that we face in the world, any understanding of the economic reality that we face as a province, any understanding of how we're going to stand on our own two feet as a province when those transfer payments aren't as robust, when the economic tides turn against our country, and nobody wishes that, but we have to prepare for that. This government isn't prepared, and it's not willing to prepare; it's not even willing to speak about those issues, Mr. Speaker.

On issues of crime, and I saw the Attorney General on TV last night, saying that he was outraged, that this was unacceptable, the level of crime in the province of Manitoba. This, from an Attorney General who's represented a government that's been there for 12 years, and he believes it's unacceptable. I wonder if he goes to his own caucus, and preaches that message, and says that it's unacceptable what this government has done for the past 12 years.

And I would challenge not only members of this House, but the media, to ask that question. Well, if you think it's unacceptable, what have you done for 12 years? What have you done to change that? And the Attorney General says, well, we're going to hire more police. Well, that's fine, we need more police because there's more crime. But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, what is he going to do to ensure that we have a safer city, that we have a safer province? He doesn't have a plan. He continues to repeat the same promises, the same rhetoric that he and that his predecessor, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), have spewed out for the last 12 years. And yet the problem gets worse, worse and worse.

And when we compare it to the rest of Canada, and that's the measuring stick we should use, because I recognize that there are issues regarding the Criminal Code, and are issues that rest with Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. But there's a lot of issues that rest with Ottawa that affect the entire country, and yet comparatively to the rest of this great nation, we do worse on issues of violent crime than any other

province in our country. And that falls to the NDP government, who have been there for 12 years, who don't have a solution.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, they won the election; I acknowledge that. There is no secret of that. They can take their victory lap. But we are here to represent the 54 per cent of Manitobans who said it's unacceptable that there's that level of crime. It's unacceptable that people don't feel safe when they walk on the streets of downtown Winnipeg, in the suburbs or in rural Manitoba. It's unacceptable that we're not thinking about what's happening to the economy of our province, that we're not concerned about whether or not transfer payments are ever going to be reduced, and we might not be able to sustain the level of spending that we're having.

Those 54 per cent of Manitobans did entrust us with something. They didn't entrust us with government under the system that we have. You can be proud of the campaign that you ran, to drive down voter turnout. You can be proud of the fact that you said a lot of negative things about a leader who I think would have been a great leader for Manitoba. You can be proud of the fact that you did all of these things from an electoral perspective, but you shouldn't be proud of the fact—you shouldn't be proud of the fact that at the end of the day you're not addressing the issues of crime, that you're not addressing the economy, that you're disenfranchising rural Manitoba. Those are the things that you should be ashamed about.

And, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, in conclusion, because I may not have the opportunity again in a certain forum that we have today, that I've been proud to serve with the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), who's been our leader for five years, or six years. I've known him to be a man of integrity. He has a great sense of humour. He's a caring individual. He makes strong decisions within the context of a caucus, and we've benefited by having him in our caucus and as our leader, for those of us who've been able to serve.

* (15:00)

And, so, the campaign may have been negative, and it may have painted a caricature of an individual, and I think that members opposite in this Legislature, they know as well that that caricature was wrong. But I want to say on behalf of our caucus that I've been proud to serve with the member for Fort Whyte,

I'm proud to have called him our leader, and I think he would have been a fine Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It's always a pleasure to follow the member for Steinbach. I know with his being ill he wasn't at full steam today, but I'll try to conjure up a bit of the energy that he's able to show when he stands up.

Congratulations, first, to you, Mr. Speaker, upon your election. I know there were some long faces. There were some long faces from the board members and the senior executive at Manitoba Public Insurance because, of course, along with you taking the Speaker's chair, you resigned the position you've held as a board member of Manitoba Public Insurance. And I want you to know that, on behalf of MPI and as the Minister for MPI, you did an admirable job, a very good job on a public auto insurance system celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Your contributions are certainly recognized.

It's a pleasure today to rise to—of course on my first chance to speak in a forum like this—to congratulate all of the members of this Legislature, including members on both sides of the House who are experiencing their first days in this Legislature. The Throne Speech debate really is an excellent opportunity to get to know a little bit about the new members of this Legislature, find out some of their reasons for becoming involved in the political process and, indeed, finding out more of their views and their ideas on their own communities, because this is a wonderful province. It's a diverse province and, frankly, every single person who's elected to this Legislature has something to add to the political debate that we have in this province.

Over the next four years there will be much debate, some of it very civilized, some of it perhaps a little bit more animated, and I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, you'll do your best to remind all of us that we were sent here by our constituents to represent their interests, their hopes, and their dreams.

The place to start, certainly, is to thank the people of Minto who have sent me to the Legislature for the third time. It is an honour to represent the West End of Winnipeg. The boundaries changed a little bit. In fact, it may be a little bit more West End than it was before now that I represent the area north of Wellington to Notre Dame. It is a wonderfully diverse community; it's a place of people with just incredible capacity.

And I want to start just for a few minutes talking about young people, some of our newest voters, who became engaged and involved in this election, but future voters as well. And I already had nine schools located in Minto. With the boundary changes I've added three more without having lost a single school, which means I'll be a very busy, busy MLA when it's Christmas concert season, when it's grad season, whenever there's anything good, because I do believe that it's important for members in this Legislature to be out and about and to be available to our communities, including our schools.

Of course, with the new boundaries, I now have St. Edward's School, which is a Catholic school on Arlington Street, which recently celebrated its centennial. I now—I'm proud to represent Principal Sparling School, which will be celebrating its centennial next year, and Technical Vocational High school, otherwise known as Tec Voc, which is the very large school, the castle-looking school which stands at the corner of Wall Street and Notre Dame Avenue.

Adding Tec Voc, certainly one of the most exciting, but maybe one of the most challenging parts of the new boundaries. It's exciting because Tec Voc is a school that's training our students very well for the future. I was proud to join the Premier (Mr. Selinger) there last year for an announcement, and I'm very proud that investments in things like the Technical Vocational Initiative and in our schools generally have meant that there are tremendous pathways for young people from the West End and other areas of Winnipeg School Division who want to pursue careers in the trades. And I know some of our leading manufacturers like Standard Aero, which, of course, is a greatly expanding aerospace firm in Winnipeg, has a direct pipeline for students at Tec Voc who want to pursue a career in the air industry.

Now, there are some challenges, in that I now have two high schools to represent: Tec Voc and also Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute. These, Mr. Speaker, are two of the bigger schools in the province of Manitoba. They're also two schools that have probably one of the oldest and the fiercest rivalries in the entire province of Manitoba, and I now have to keep an even hand and support the endeavours in both of those schools.

In that spirit, I took my first step along that path just two weeks ago, when Daniel MacIntyre and Tec Voc faced off in the football field for the first time

since more than a decade ago. Daniel Mac had lost its team but has it back, and I donated a trophy which will be called the Minto Bowl to the winning team. Daniel Mac won it this year, but the Tec Voc Hornets want us to know that they will be challenging for it next year.

It's always a pleasure to get to know young people. The young people of the West End are creative, they are hard-working and they are talented and they do recognize the benefits of the investments that we made in their education as these young people move forward to truly enjoy all the things that we enjoy in the province of Manitoba. And in the next four years I look forward to meeting and working with so many amazing young people.

The West End of Winnipeg has benefited greatly from the investments of this government, certainly in terms of the physical assets. The northern boundary of Minto stands right opposite the Health Sciences Centre. We all know the tremendous improvements that have already happened at that facility and the very exciting future for the Health Sciences Centre campus as we continue to make major investments in providing better health care in the province of Manitoba.

I look at the investments in the schools. Nearly every school in the West End has enjoyed a substantial improvement over the time that I've been a member of this Legislature and it certainly is appropriate for the tremendous young people in the West End.

I also look at recreational facilities. In the winter, of course, when it gets too cold to run outside, I do my laps inside of the Cindy Klassen recreation centre, where, not only do I meet a lot of my constituents, but I also hopefully engage in the concepts of healthy living, which I think every Manitoban should do.

So there are many, many physical assets, but even more importantly it's the human assets: the investments we've made in our teachers and our teaching assistants, the investment we've made in our health-care workers providing the best health care possible to us and the investments in social services. And those investments have had results. They've resulted in more people coming to the West End. They've resulted in higher house prices as people continue to choose to move into the West End, to fix up their homes, to improve their properties and truly put down roots in a tremendous part of the province.

And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's the knowledge, as I was on the doorsteps in the West End, that the priorities of the people that I represent are the priorities of this NDP government and that's something we can be very, very proud of.

But I didn't just spend time in the West End. Like the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), I did have the opportunity to go a little bit further afield. I was very lucky to spend time in many other parts of the province in the days leading up to and during the election campaign, in communities as diverse and wondrous as Gimli, as Dauphin, as St. James, Kirkfield Park, Tyndall Park, Seine River and Southdale, working with our great incumbents but also working in many cases with some tremendous new candidates who are certainly going to bring fresh new ideas and fresh new energy to an already dynamic caucus. It's been such a treat over the summer to get to know so many people and to see so many different parts of the province.

I expect, Mr. Speaker, given that the size of the callous on my knuckle and the aching in my legs, I had the chance to knock on about 10,000 doors over the course of the election campaign and it's not just in the West End where I can say that priorities of most Manitobans are indeed the priorities of this NDP government. And it's a real pleasure to hit the ground running with every single one of our incumbents returned to this Legislature by the people of Manitoba, but also tremendous new candidates who bring their own experience, their own ideas to this House as we move forward the province of Manitoba.

And the priorities are stated quite simply in the Throne Speech. The priorities are to make our health-care system even better, to expand the opportunities for Manitobans to have the best job possible, to get the best education, the best training opportunities, to entrench Manitoba's affordability advantage, which we already enjoy in so many areas, to make our communities safer and healthier, to protect our environment and, of course, building Manitoba Hydro as a public asset and as a benefit to the citizens of the province of Manitoba.

And I'll spend a few more minutes talking about building safer communities and, of course, given this tremendous and diverse province that we're in, there's many opportunities as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to speak to Manitobans about safety in their own communities. And it's a very diverse set of groups that I'm able to speak to,

whether it's the John Howard Society, whether it's the Chamber of Commerce, whether it's a police graduation or award ceremony, whether it's the Citizens on Patrol Program, whether it's on a First Nation, the message that I can give Manitobans on behalf of this government always has common themes. And that's that building safer communities rely on having the right laws in place.

*(15:10)

It depends upon having support for law enforcement. But it's also about preventing crime from occurring in the first place, because, Mr. Speaker, you can have the strongest and best laws in the world, you can have the best police in the world, which I believe we do, you can have the best Crown attorneys in the world, which I believe you do. The work they do, so many times, is after the fact. And we need to keep working together with our communities, with our partners, on finding ways to turn people away from a life of crime.

And, certainly, in terms of laws, we've done many things within our own ability as a province and, of course, you've heard other members speak about things like The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, which has resulted in over 500 apartments and homes, where there are illegal and disturbing activities taking place, being shut down.

We have The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act that has been used to target organized crime, to target gangs, to target those who use property to commit unlawful acts or who gain property from unlawful acts. I'm very proud of the work that the forfeiture unit has undertaken and, as you've heard earlier in the debate, there's now some \$9 million in the queue waiting to be seized and, we would expect, forfeited.

And, indeed, it was a happy day in the constituency of Selkirk back in July when we were able to announce a number of investments, taking money away from those who prey on our communities and giving that money to our law enforcement for better ideas, for new equipment, for new things they can do to make their jobs safer but to make all of our communities safer.

And in terms of law enforcement, of course, we have been able to make investments year after year after year in more police. I was listening to the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). I'm still not clear whether he agrees or doesn't agree with adding more police. I presume he disagrees because every

time we add police officers in a budget, the member for Steinbach, as do all the other Progressive Conservatives, stand up and vote against those investments.

We've continued to make police officers a priority. We'll be adding 50 more police in the city of Winnipeg. These will be beat cops. They will be police officers working in the field, on the ground, making sure that they get the information they need from good people to keep going after bad people who prey on our communities.

We're also going to expand the very successful Winnipeg Police Service cadet program. We're going to be adding 25 more cadets in the years to come who'll be working in the downtown area to make sure that Manitobans, Winnipeggers, who come downtown for things like professional NHL hockey at the Winnipeg arena, have a good experience coming and going. People who want to come down to shop, to eat, to enjoy the things that we have in downtown Winnipeg will feel as confident as possible.

For the first time ever we're going to introduce a cadet program outside of the city of Winnipeg, and I look very forward to working with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police forces at making sure they get the best use of those cadets as we move forward to put that program in place.

And, of course, and I say perhaps most importantly, crime prevention is important. And it would be hard to find Manitobans, indeed, I found it hard to find Manitobans out on the doorstep who don't believe that preventing crime should be a priority. The only ones who don't seem to believe in preventing crime seem to be grouped together and happen to be sitting over on the other side of the Legislature. Because I know every effort we've made, whether it's Lighthouses, whether it's other programs to keep young people in school, to give them opportunities, to hire recreation directors, to have more employment opportunities and more apprenticeship opportunities year after year after year, every time we bring in these investments into the House by way of our budget, the members opposite vote against every single one of those initiatives.

And I know the member for Steinbach will now give us his revisionist history of the election and I know that's the speaking line, because they just can't accept the fact that, for four straight elections, people

in this province have put their faith in the New Democratic Party. They've turned away from the Progressive Conservative Party. Even people who'd never voted NDP before in this election certainly came over and supported the work that we're doing, and they just cannot stand it.

So, of course, we've heard their—frankly, Mr. Speaker, their lame justifications as they try to rewrite history and now we've heard the new point that, well, 54 per cent of Manitobans didn't vote for the NDP. Yet, at the same time, they will stand mute as Stephen Harper decides to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board without giving prairie producers a vote. Well, how many Canadians didn't vote for Stephen Harper? It's a lot more than 54 per cent, yet, in their own strange world over on that side of the House, that seems to be their way of rationalizing things.

And it's very, very sad, frankly, to hear the moaning from members opposite, the member for Steinbach. Frankly, I was disappointed. He chimed in with what seems to be their speaking line, that somehow the NDP ran a negative campaign. Mr. Speaker, we didn't start the fire. I'm lucky enough to live in the community of Minto where, frankly, the opposition doesn't put much effort at any time, let alone during an election.

But I know that many Manitobans in many communities across this province have had their mailboxes filled with four years of complete misinformation by the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. They've taken a page out of the book of the federal Tories; that's the way they choose to do politics. And when we stood up and we said, you know, we're going to put on the record some facts about what you're really about, then we heard the wailing and the screaming, the complaining and now the rationalization, too long after the fact.

What the members opposite need to do is to accept that things they do in this House—the votes that they make in this House, the things they say in this House—do have an impact on what voters do.

And when the party opposite did their own polling and their own research and they realized, first of all, that this government, this NDP government, was in touch with the priorities of Manitobans, even shortly before the election, what did the Progressive Conservative Party do? Well, they tried to turn the aircraft carrier around. They tried to pretend that they were actually in favour of hiring more doctors and nurses. They tried to pretend they were actually in

support of daycares. They tried to pretend that they were actually in support of a strong education system and a host of other issues. And, Mr. Speaker, they tried to sound like New Democrats, but, of course, with this late conversion, there was no way the people of Manitoba were going to accept that, and, for the fourth time, the people of Manitoba have given the right to govern to New Democrats, for which we are very, very, very grateful.

And, of course, the member opposite wants to speak about justice, and again, we'll look at their campaign. And for four years, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has risen in this House and has told us about his plan, the Conservative plan for crime. He couldn't tell us what it was in the Legislature because it was too top secret. Every year—now, they don't have a convention; they have an annual general meeting because it sounds more corporate. The last year they wouldn't even let visitors, they wouldn't let the media in because what they were doing was just too top secret.

And then, in the early days of the campaign—now, in most areas they followed our announcements. We would announce an MRI; they'd come out three days later and say, we'll have a MRI too. And they did that in education, in health care and a whole bunch of other things. They tried to come out first on the justice front, and out came their big plan and their plan was to do what the NDP has already been doing.

Now, there were a couple of things that we hadn't been doing. Number one—the member for Steinbach, I know, was the architect of this—they said that there should be a Facebook page. And, you know, I've spoken with the chief of police in Winnipeg about that; I'm sure we'll be able to pull a Facebook page together. They also said that there should be better dog kennels. And, you know, that's laudable. It was something the City of Winnipeg was already going to do. But then you looked at the rest of the plan and there was nothing else.

It was, well, we like the NDP. They're hiring more Crown attorneys; we voted against every single one of them, but we think we'd do that. And, you know, we voted against every single police officer, but, you know, now maybe we do support having more police officers. Mr. Speaker, to put—to make it as simple as possible, it rings pretty hollow, and thankfully the people of Manitoba saw through that.

Now, certainly, by way of coming to the conclusion of my comments, I do want to speak

about something, I think, actually—perhaps scary—mirroring the member for Steinbach. I do want to talk about something in the aftermath of the October 4th election.

And, of course, in the last session, some of you may know that we had a concurrence: We had three members of this Legislature from the same graduating class at the same high school. That's myself, the—well, the member-elect for Kirkfield Park and the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen). The three of us, of course, are all from the class of 1985 at Silver Heights Collegiate. Some people would say that's a coincidence. Other people, looking at the remarkable collection of teachers and students, would say, maybe this wasn't a coincidence.

Of course, we're waiting for the MLA-elect for Kirkfield Park to be sworn in and she will serve out a wonderful, wonderful career here in this Legislature.

I know from his comments on election night and from the comments the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) made, the member for Fort Whyte may not remain in this Legislature much longer. It may be that when we reconvene in the spring, maybe the member for Fort Whyte won't be there.

* (15:20)

And I do want to put a few words on the record because I've known the member for Fort Whyte for close to 30 years. I added it up and got a little bit scared about that. We've been friends, frankly, Mr. Speaker, for close to 30 years, which is not something that either the member for Fort Whyte or I have widely advertised. And this friendship obviously has been strained given the nature of our jobs, given the work that each of us were sent here to do.

It's a little known fact—I know we criticize the member for Fort Whyte about his anti-worker views, but it is true that the member for Fort Whyte has been to the Union Centre, and I know that because he came to my wedding reception.

And, Mr. Speaker, it should be also noted for the record that I did attend his wedding reception, which was at the mansion that his wife's family used to own. So we have a true dichotomy, perhaps, of the two political sides in this province. I also had the chance to attend the member's swearing in as a member of the Legislature. I actually didn't know it was on but I was walking down the hall and his brother, Scott, known to us for unknown reasons as

Beeb [*phonetic*], invited me to come along and join him. And I was glad to see his mom, Leyah, his dad, Ralph, and his brother, Ian—again, who we know as Juan [*phonetic*—on that day.

And I know the member for Fort Whyte and I were speaking to each other and having a great talk until a photographer for one of the local papers came around as if he was going to take a picture. We quickly shook hands and went our separate ways because, frankly, Mr. Speaker, that wouldn't have done either of us any good.

I'm not going to give any political advice to the member for Fort Whyte. It would be tempting to say any one of a number of things about the member for Fort Whyte. Perhaps it's easier to take the high road when you're on the winning side. But that's where I'm going to remain. I just want to give the member a bit of personal advice.

The member, like myself, has two children and for any of us with children the view that your kids have of you really isn't tied to how many seats you win or how many votes you get or any particular thing you say in this Legislature or in a speech, whether it's at the community centre or whether it's at the Chamber of Commerce or whether it's the convention centre. In fact, it's not tied to anything related to this Legislature or politics in general.

The view your kids have of you is what you do away from politics, and above all, I hope the member for Fort Whyte will take that to heart. And I may not have the chance to speak to him in this House, but I'm sure I will have chances in the future. I do wish him well. Our paths will cross, perhaps not fishing in Nopiming Park, perhaps not climbing Mount Royal the hard way, in the middle of the night, in Montreal. But I will certainly have a chance to speak to him again.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand in support of the Throne Speech. I'm proud to stand with my NDP colleagues who represent the north, who represent rural Manitoba, who represent the suburban areas of Winnipeg, who represent the downtown areas of Winnipeg and the inner city, who represent Brandon. We've earned the trust of Manitobans, plain and simple, as I said earlier, because the priorities of Manitoba families, the priorities of Manitobans are the priorities of those of us who sit on the NDP side of this Legislature. And it's a tremendous honour to be able to represent those people. We represent all Manitobans. Clearly, it is a true honour to be able to stand in this Legislature to

speak about the progress that we can make together and to continue to do the best we can to move Manitoba forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today to put a few words on record on the Throne Speech delivered by our Lieutenant-Governor on the opening of Manitoba's 40th general assembly.

It's an honour, Mr. Speaker, to be here among 57 members, representing our respective constituencies of this great province, Manitoba. It's, indeed, a big, big responsibility bestowed upon each of us by our fellow citizens on October 4th, 2011.

I like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, to have won the most honourable position of the Assembly and occupying that chair which has and shall carry tremendous respect and responsibility in presiding over this Chamber's functions and session. Knowing you very closely, Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will carry your duties to the best of your capabilities. I know you are a man of high character and, as such, I have full faith in your abilities to manage the business of this Legislative Assembly in the toughest situations.

Also I'd like to congratulate all returning members and the new members from both sides of the House. Talking to some of our new members and colleagues, I am much more positive that collectively we will build our province to be one of the best and most prosperous provinces in Canada.

I'd like to congratulate our Premier (Mr. Selinger) and our central campaign team for the fantastic job by facilitating the victory of our party by one more seat. I know our Premier had worked very hard and he did a remarkable job in canvassing in most of the ridings, including that of mine. Mr. Premier, you did a remarkable job during the election, seen by a lot of people. I must share with you, Mr. Speaker, that the comments I got about our Premier was he's a genuine man who stands for all, but specifically for those families in need. And I thank the member from Kildonan and the member from Thompson for their time spent with me at the doorsteps. It did make a difference.

I'd like to congratulate the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), who also ran a good campaign and worked very hard in target ridings, including that in Radisson. I know the member from Fort Whyte and all members of the House, from this

side and that side, have worked hard and they deserve a big applause for keeping the democratic process on.

I echo the sentiments of the members. In fact, the member from Steinbach said, and I agree with him, and also the member from Fort Whyte, that all candidates who put their name to run as a candidate in this election deserve a big applause and a big thanks, because it takes a lot of work during the election. It's hard work on themselves and their families to keep supporting and working hard during the election. It's—*[inaudible]* it may be disheartening, but I call all of them winners because they participated in keeping our democracy going. If there were no candidates participating, it would be disheartening, but I think that we encourage them and we applaud them for putting their names on the ballot paper. Win or lose, I call them all winners.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that we are talking about making democracy work. It's unfortunate that there was not a great turnout of voters, and I think there are ways by which we can improve upon. That is one of the challenges I think we all have, and we should try to see how we can make that work. I thank all of the people who supported these candidates and worked hard with them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I need not convince you of my values, as you know, when I took the decision to run in 2003, why I entered politics. On our values, I recall the discussion we had with the member from Fort Whyte at an event in Transcona, the L'Arche Walk. He mentioned to us that—about Tommy Douglas and he proudly said that he has some connections with the founder of our party, the CCF, in a very, very honourable way—the man who brought a new dimension of Canadian identity in the world, health care to be the fundamental right for all citizens, and yet he was a great advocate for fiscal responsibility.

I have stated it many times in this Chamber that social justice must not and is not a monopoly of a party. Like religion, this is the faith serving humanity: to install an equitable society is sacred and it is very pure. I have no doubts in my mind that members across also believe the sufferings of human beings must end, that we all want to work towards building a better world, Mr. Speaker. What separates us, between us and them, is the approach, how to do that, how to go about it. What are the values? What are the priorities? And that separates us.

So I have no doubt we all want to build. But let us look at the records, how we have been doing for on the world, the entire world. Social democracy is prevailing because people are rejecting the crude capitalism that at one time was supposed to be the only way to make a society prosperous. So I must say, Mr. Speaker, that looking at what has happened in the past, here and in the rest of the world, I don't have any doubt that people realize that we have to be doing social justice.

* (15:30)

We have also to be looking at social-fiscal responsibilities, and I'm sorry to share this with the members that, at the doorsteps when people were talking about fiscal responsibility, somebody asked me, are you sure that you are going to balance your budget in 2014. I said, absolutely, yes, because our Premier has given 10 years of balanced budgets as the Minister of Finance, and therefore, I have full faith in his capability as a Premier that he will be leading us to a fiscally responsible end of this term. But we will not compromise on the social programs that our party has been elected for. So we will continue that, and I think that the member from Steinbach is right in saying that, yes, we need to look at the books because it's the future. But sorry to say that their party said they will balance in 2018 and that was something that some of the voters did not really think that was a great idea to say we will cut, but we will also not balance in 2014.

That was a very wrong strategy, Mr. Speaker, but I recall that it's really something that—I don't know how else to say, but looking at the world today when the financial crisis is going on all over, societies are looking, including President Obama when he says that, no, I think it's not an attack on the rich, it is an attack on building an equitable society. So when President Obama talks about let rich pay, it is perhaps put in the wrong connotation by the others to say he is going to destroy the society in terms of freedom. It's not that; it is about talking about how to build just a household. You can go and look in a household, you see there are some who are not well-to-do and there are some who have a lot of, you know, assets. You have to see how do you balance that, and that's what we are talking about.

So here to those members—new members of the Chamber, let me briefly state: before I entered politics, I was a businessman. I had reasonably been successful in my business ventures here in Manitoba and internationally. I was perhaps too comfortable to

enjoy a life of the upper middle class family where I could have enjoyed the material wealth and sooner or later I would have left the world with a very sad inner soul.

My late brother, Dr. Shashi Shekhar Jha, was a professor of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg. He was instrumental in inviting me to Manitoba. Just before I was to leave for New York for my getting admission into the University of Columbia for post-graduate in engineering, he invited me to Winnipeg. Then he took me to attend an event at the Centennial Hall and the chief guest was no other than the Edward Schreyer, who was the premier of the province at that time. Mr. Schreyer's speech and talk that day really got me very, very excited. I was very kind of curious to know how the social democracy will work in a country like Canada and his speech made me to realize that I must stay and be here, part of the solution, because we must work together. My personal passion, Mr. Speaker, I will share with you privately in my past few years, that we must work together to eradicate the worst disease from the face of the earth, that is hunger and poverty. Hunger and poverty is the worst disease that the human race faces and we must wipe that.

I'd like to share my deeply felt emotions as a child, and this is a story I have shared in this Chamber earlier, but I request my new members from both sides to listen to this because it may be something that I've repeated here. As a nine-years-young-old boy growing up in the middle class neighbourhood in a town of Bihar, India, while walking to my school I witnessed a terrible scene. I saw a young woman beating a-her four-year-old child. He was screaming loud with pain and anger. I just stood in front of the hut where the poor couple lived with their six children. I asked the woman to stop. She yelled back to me loud and said, I fed him only yesterday and he needs food again, why can he not control his anger? Mr. Speaker, and the fellow members, that pain still is in my heart and mind. Suffering of that hungry child whose crime was he was hungry, still is in my soul. And it will be till I leave the world because that is not the fault of that child who had hunger. It is the fault of the world who has not seen that the hunger can be solved. Hunger is a disease. We can solve that. We can cure that. But this is our will.

It is strange, Mr. Speaker, that some small things get so deep in our chest it is difficult to part with. For those who ask me, why did I join the party-well, this party, my answer is very simple. My inner voice

guided me to follow the work towards the message given by the-you know-my-the speech by Ed Schreyer on that particular evening, when I studied and found out that the founder, Tommy Douglas, talks about those issues that I grew up as a child, with the values I was taught in my family.

So this is-I call this is a movement. It is a mission towards building a better world. This is one of the reasons why I joined this party. People talk about economy, people talk about other things. We are doing everything, Mr. Speaker, that is valid. Still we are not parting with our priority, and that is to look after people who are not well-to-do.

Mr. Speaker, when I won the election, I remember when I was door knocking with my own work in the Windsor Park area, and also in Transcona, I have seen some of the people who have witnessed my hard work, including you. Some of the schools I have attended-and I must tell you, when I was walking one evening with a team of canvassers, a bunch of students came late, at 7:30, 8 o'clock, from the van, they all got one by one and they started looking at me and yelling and saying wonderful things. I was very, very pleased. So I must say that that made me very confident, because they were supporting me because the way I've handled myself in schools, and I was compared with, at one time, with the Great Soul, and I said, no, that's comparing the sky to the earth, like Jack Layton. Somebody said you sound like Jack Layton. I said, no, that's too much for me to take. I'm a very ordinary man; he was a super, super hero.

So I must like to say again, I thank a lot of people here. I have a big name of members. I don't know if I have that much time. So I will say that these are the people who supported me, helped me and I thank them from the core of my heart.

Mr. Speaker, I see one of the tasks being ahead is to contribute building our democratic institution. Many opportunities lie ahead for us to debate and we will be debating in the future about how we build our world. But one of the things that I do, as a special envoy for international trade, and thank the minister of enterprise, trade and training, we are working and relationship-building between Manitoba and the rest of the world in a very, very big way. We are talking about building the Arctic Bridge, which will connect Churchill to the rest of the world. We are trying to make trade relations between India, China and Manitoba, and we will be exporting a lot of products from here. I think in one of my brochures I said we

exported in the first six months \$7 billion, which was a very, very big, significant amount of export, which has never happened in Manitoba's history. So that is how this thing will be built.

Now, I'd like to say that the speech, which I want to end by making one statement, which the member from River Heights has spoke today, and that is something very dear to me, Mr. Speaker. Because when I was talking to my—our late Oscar Lathlin, the colleague from The Pas, he and I shared, and I have shared this with our member from Rupertsland that, yes, that problem happening in the north must end, must end soon. But we have to work together, and I challenge the members from that side and this side. We have to work together to talk our parliamentarians and say, unanimous, all-party mission, to say we go to Ottawa and ask Ottawa to say Manitoba north has to be looked after by Ottawa. This is the—Manitoba, the part of Canada, it's a country. And we need to see that our northern brothers, Aboriginal people, must be looked after by a combined and joint effort.

I'd like to say this is a dream. For me the dream is that I want to see the world eradicated from poverty and child suffering. That is one of my dreams. And I'd like to end up by reading the portion of the poem by a famous Nobel laureate, called Rabindranath Tagore, from Bengal, who wrote, and I have with his sole permission, added a little bit of word on that. Here it says, where the mind is without, the prayer is, where Lord help us build an ideal world.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high / Where the knowledge is free / Where the word has not been broken into fragments / By narrow domestic walls / Where the words come from and out from the depth of the truth / Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection / Where the clear stream of reason has no—not lost its way / Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit / Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and actions / Into that heaven of freedom, my Lord, let the new and emerging world awake.

*(15:40)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): It's an honour, Mr. Speaker, to be able to stand on this side of the House once again and speak in support of the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I just want to commend you and congratulate you on becoming Speaker. You certainly have a reputation as a conscientious and very careful person, and I was always honoured to work with you as you were a member of the MPI board. And we could always count on you for your insights.

But, indeed, of course, this House, I think, knows you best for your, I think, proven track record as a committee chair extraordinaire. And so we certainly look forward to behaving under your watchful eyes, but I also, of course, look forward to seeing what we can do collectively and, perhaps, with your new leadership and in modernizing, perhaps, some of the procedures of this House that can be looked at with a view to better serving the public and, indeed, the members themselves.

I know there's always lots of ideas and I'm sure you'll be sharing those with your counterparts from across the country and the Commonwealth generally.

As well, I want to say to all the new members on both sides of the House, congratulations. I don't think that people, when they first run for office, ever expect the calling to be so compelling, to be so engaging, to be so emotional, if you will. I know that I say that not only for those that have succeeded, but for everyone who does seek public office, it is a remarkable, life-changing event to put your name on the ballot and seek the support of people in your own neighbourhoods.

I think that there is a very rare opportunity when we, as candidates, go to a door and are in that very unique situation of being able to ask people legitimately: Do you have any advice or concerns? And my general experience has been that people at the door will then rally, as an answer, some of the most profound and disturbing or very positive features of their life and their needs. And I think that elections really bring us back to the reality of a community's needs, and, of course, some of us are better than others of continuing that door knocking and reaching out, not only by knocking but attending community events throughout our tenure. And I believe that that is a very important grounding for us to be effective members, and so that when we stand up here, we're not talking about anything from textbooks or anything from far away, we're talking about the very real needs of people in our own neighbourhoods, in our own province that need attention.

I think that after a while in elections, by the end of the three or four weeks, many of us may be tempted to think that that was about us. That we were the centre of attention, after all, except when we come home and there are too many chores, I think, left unattended. But we're out there with our names and, oh, you know, people are all working for us, and I think we have to remind ourselves and especially once we get into this Chamber that that is not about us at all. It was all about others. That's why we were putting our name on those signs and on the ballot.

I think it was rather a humbling experience this election. We did something different. We started to put our pictures, first of all, on the bus benches, and then, uh, oh, we put our pictures on all the election signs. I found out very quickly that it was a lot more challenging getting in and out of Safeway. People knew who you were and quite frankly, I think it's made us more accessible to our constituents. People certainly can identify us now on the street and in the community. But what was particularly humbling, of course, was we recognized early on the fun that some people would have with your face on the bus benches.

And just the other day, I was reminded of one up at McAdam and Main and I looked quite like a jack-o'-lantern, actually, someone is a very artistic bent that was in the Halloween spirit, but I've had all manners of teeth missing, I've had a googlie eye, I've had interesting hairdos and I've looked quite politically incorrect—new tattoos beyond the one I do have, I'll show you sometime. And—[interjection]—yes, so certainly a part of our humbling experience.

But, I think—oh, by the way, I guess everyone can talk about their sign stories. I was at a picnic partway through the campaign. A fellow came up to me and said, there's one heck of a lot of your signs all piled up by a garbage bin in Point Douglas constituency, maybe you should have a look. So the team went over there and sure enough, all nicely piled against the Autobin were seven of my signs, two of the signs for the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and one Judy-for-mayor sign, all neatly put there. Now, I do know that these Coroplast signs really do extend the gardening season for tomatoes and I have—I've certainly lost a few of the \$5 signs to the gardening expertise in my community.

I think we're also reminded, though, and reminded of how we must be humble just by this little name tag. I notice that the name tags on the desks this year are new and they're quite fancy.

They're all embossed and there's a little picture of the Legislature on there and that. But what is, I think, more interesting is that they can so easily be moved even by so much as a little baby finger. They can come out very easily, and, in fact, if a page really rustles by fast, I think they could come out and fly away. So what that reminds us is how tenuous our tenure is here. We are only here very briefly, we are merely passing through. And I think it reminds us of how critical this moment in our brief lives are. And, you know, I remember in caucus one time there was—we were preparing for a condolence motion and they asked the caucus, who would like to speak to this gentleman's passing. And the—no one had ever heard of the fellow's name. No one—it didn't ring a bell at all. Here, he had—he was a Finance minister. He was in the government for years and years. Again, a humbling experience. We are here briefly and we've got to work hard and do what we can for others when we have that momentary opportunity to serve others. So I remind myself—I try to everyday when I climb the stairs here—what a privilege it is.

I—there's a couple of MLAs, in particular—I really look forward to working with new MLAs, and one is the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) and the other's the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief). These are particularly or especially gifted—or actually, everyone's gifted in a way on all sides of the House. I think it's extraordinary to see the infusion of new insights and talents into the Chamber, but these two colleagues of mine, neighbourhood colleagues, are particularly welcome by me because I know that they will bring new insights into some of the many challenges that we have in the North End of Winnipeg. And we've got to look at how we can better co-ordinate and focus on those challenges to help those community-driven successes that we have seen over the last decade, and, I think, some amazing successes. We've got to build on those strengths and I look forward to something new and different in working partnership, the three of us, with those that live in an area that we love so much.

I wanted to particularly, as well, just mention the recount candidates, the candidates from both of the contending parties. I can't imagine the emotional toll that has been borne by those four candidates and I hope that they've all handled it well and we can move on. But can you imagine that hanging over you just after E-day? Just getting through E-day evening is enough for people, but I wish them all strength and I think we have to acknowledge sometimes what

people do give in extraordinary circumstances, such as a close vote is.

* (15:50)

Our election was launched by the Premier (Mr. Selinger) in the memory of Jack Layton, and I think that is worth just a moment's recollection because, when I heard that from the Premier, I thought that was not only gracious and appropriate, but I very soon came to understand that it actually was an impetus, I think, not only for me, but for many other candidates and, I think, from all parties. When I saw Jack Layton in that last campaign, he was so healthy and vigorous and I've never seen such a tremendous investment in his speeches, in his connecting with people, whether it was at the Labour Temple or at the friendship centre.

And I've known Jack many years, and I had a wonderful working relationship with him, particularly on justice issues. But in that federal campaign, he really shone. I mean, his face literally shone, and he shone. And no one would know the burden that he must have been carrying because we could see the timelines after, which were absolutely astounding.

And, sure enough, I was only about a week into the campaign and I felt like I had a flu coming. I felt run down, I felt cranky. I thought, I'll probably get in some arguments at the doorsteps, but, you know, I just thought, like, how picayune were my little feelings of some flu, or something, when we had the inspiration of Jack Layton going before us only a few months earlier.

So you get back out there, and that happened to me more than once. And, I think, it will happen through my life that that inspiration will lift us. So I thank the Premier for bringing Jack into our campaign like that.

So this election was—this was my sixth election, and even though six elections later I can confirm with the House that I still always believe, and I know I always will, that I'm one vote behind. I'm as jumpy as heck, and anyone that was anywhere around me will confirm that. Jennifer's giving me the hairy eyeball here. She—so she knows exactly—but anyway, I never take it for granted. And I think it was Judy Wasylycia-Leis, who I learned so much from, who always said they vote for us in the North End because we work hard, we don't take things for granted. Don't ever take it for granted. And I always

try and remember that. It's about the hard work and always working hard on election time.

I think we underestimate the impact that elections have on our spouses and our families, quite frankly, though. And maybe we should share a bit more of that informally. I think in some earlier years—and I actually would go back a couple of decades—I think there was more camaraderie in this House on both sides. I think things are improving a bit. But I think it was a time when, aside from just the winter fair, families did get together and we got to know each other as human beings, and I think that makes for what I—the public deserves and expects, and that is that we do work together on some issues, even though we always know, especially closer to an election, that there are some very important differences among us.

But when it comes to the impact on our spouses and families, I'll tell you—actually, my dad died when I was two years old—but sometimes I have the feeling that my kids have had it no different from time to time. On the other hand, you know, I don't know, they may have been more engaged in public issues more than they would have been otherwise, and I think that's very positive. Of course, my daughter now is very much engaged in the party and is very dedicated. I never could understand that, by the way. I thought, wasn't she watching me, you know? But she really feels compelled by the cause, and I'm very proud of that.

I want to tell you, though, about my wife, Margie, who is an extraordinary canvasser and came in and was doing regular phoning along with my sister, Charlotte. Margie heard on the phone from somebody a complaint that the—they—saying, well, the NDP's never done something, never done anything on crime or justice. Well, this doesn't go over too well with former Justice minister, who for seven years would come home and was a bit wonky, right, after a good hard day's work. So she wasn't prepared to really put up with that.

So she was very polite on the phone, but immediately after, she went and got the speaking notes from the front office and went over to his house. Now, she knocked and she rang, and, thankfully, I think, he didn't come to the door, because I don't know if there would have been a crime stat there, actually. But I'm sure it would have been fine, but I am sure there would have been a very passionate discussion.

But it just shows you, I think, how engaged many of our spouses can be, and sometimes when they're not always with their hands on the levers, it could even be more frustrating. Sometimes I think their hands are on the levers as much as ours, and that's just fine.

I want to just thank the family, of course; that's what that was about. But I also have to thank Team St. Johns and just a tremendous, tremendous team, just an amazingly powerful, insightful and dedicated loyal team. And what was particularly worthy of celebration this time was that so many on the team did go and help in other constituencies.

And some of them were working, like, almost full time, I heard, in some other constituencies. And yet they would still come and do a drop in St. Johns, and I was so honoured by that, that there was that commitment, still to their own neighbourhood, even though they saw the bigger picture across the province.

You know, when I think about thank-yous, there's, of course, only one thank you that is—trumps all the others and that—are the constituents who came out, and voted, and voted to support our party. When I go to the doors, I usually ask—and actually Gary Doer was a model for me in that—I ask, do you have any advice or concerns, and that seems to elicit, then, that storytelling that I spoke of just a few minutes ago.

But what I was getting, from early on in the campaign, was an answer, no. And I found that rather interesting, and I'd have to sort of prod and ask them about certain areas of concern that I have, for example, and see if they could provide some advice. But what I was getting, aside from that pattern, was, I think, the most wonderful music to my ears, and that was when a constituent would say, just keep doing what you're doing. And they're not talking about me, I know that. I know better than to think it's about me. It was about all of the thousands of people on our team, in our party, and our government that have worked so hard.

And I wanted to talk just about some of those things that we are to continue to keep doing. Just locally, north Winnipeg was really, when we came into office, bottoming out in terms of property values, in terms of a sense of community pride, a sense of any movement forward. It really had hit an all-time low. The inner city in the North End of Winnipeg had been abandoned, not only by a provincial government, and in some ways a civic, but

in varying degrees, but also by the federal Liberal government, starting in 1993. It had a huge impact on our well-being, because north Winnipeggers, just proportionately, do feel a loss of public supports. And we tend to have some lower income neighbourhoods than the province as a whole. So the impact can be very serious on some of our families.

So, after 1999, north Winnipeggers began to tangibly see a difference. And I think one of the most remarkable, not just symbols but, markers, is Seven Oaks Hospital. I don't think I could ever forget when the former government intended to close Seven Oaks Hospital, and how that revolutionized north Winnipeg once again. It was the new battle of Seven Oaks. And bus after busload of north Winnipeggers came down to this Legislature, and, as we looked out the front steps, we could see all the headlights coming, people streaming out of the buses and into the foyer here.

And I commend Jim McCrae, the Health minister at the time, for this. Not for his initial decision to close it, but he had the fortitude to come and address the crowd, and I always thought highly of Jim for doing that, because that was brave. But they changed their mind, because northenders don't like things being taken from them. They have a real good sense of fairness, and we changed it around. But what we have seen since 1999 is a huge investment in that hospital. It was going to be closed down, and now it is more important than ever, by way of so many enhanced investments. And I can go on; I could list all the improvements, and how that is addressing the health needs of north Winnipeggers and people north of Winnipeg as well.

But it was, well, investments and partnership with so many for the North End Wellness Centre, the Win Gardner Place, that's named after a former MLA in this House, John Loewen, who, by the way, is one of our heroes. He launched a private fundraising effort that was extraordinary, and it really was the ideal partnership of three levels of government, the community and the private sector. So it's named after his mother. I saw him the other day. I said, hey, I was at your mom's to get a flu shot. And I told the Minister of Health just for good measure.

*(16:00)

But we put a teen clinic into St. John's High School, as we're doing in other high schools as well, so that teens really feel that they have no barriers between them and wellness, and they've got so many

issues that we've got to get better at attending to, that can disarm their sense of wellness as well.

When it comes to community safety, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act has been making a remarkable difference in north Winnipeg and, I think, particularly the work of Sel Burrows, another one of my heroes, who's done a remarkable job in mobilizing the community to make sure that it was used because it empowers communities to shut down drug dens and prostitution houses.

The anti-car-theft strategy: I just heard the other day from the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) just what a different sense of security the auto-theft reduction has made because it was a crime that was hitting everybody, like it was just so, so, horrible to have that happen over and over again. I remember the former member for Burrows talking about how many times his vehicle had been stolen in his own neighbourhood.

But, we're doing some other thing—the Police in Schools program was actually launched at St. John's High School and it serves North End schools and, again, a great partnership with the Province, Winnipeg police, the school division and, well, there's a lot of leadership in the school division I can say on this one and I don't want to start naming people who were involved in that one, but I'm glad to see that that's going to expand.

The Citizens on Patrol Program as well, and I see they were out in full force last night in the William Whyte neighbourhood and that's not only about safety, it's also about a sense of safety and it's about engaging the community, reminding them that they all have a role to play in empowering.

When it comes to recreation, aside from the Win Gardner Place, and by the way, the number of kids that are being helped there is way beyond what was even initially thought. It is an extraordinary investment at the old Y site. But the investments that we are making with the City, and I think many of them with the federal government, the Kildonan Park pool for example is an amazing place. There are lineups right at noon every day when it opens. There's also a new kiddie park there. The Centennial Pool complex is amazing and if—I'd urge all of you to go and see what's going on there.

Sinclair Park Community Centre is all rebuilt. It's brand new. And when I was canvassing in the part of my constituency that was formally in Burrows but along Machray, Cathedral, there, they

were one door after another remarking on the importance of that investment and keeping kids busy and providing opportunities there.

And other enhancements, whether it's the West K curling club, for example. I think we've replaced the play structures at every tot lot and playground in St. John's. I think we're up to eight or 10 replacements now with state-of-the-art tot lots. That's just not about keeping kids busy, but it's about healthy communities. It's about the parents getting together as well. Making sure that there's a bench there, by the way, we've discovered is a very important part of the tot lot investment. It's not just a play structure.

The Lighthouses that we have at Ralph Brown and at Victory. When it comes to schools I think it's the biggest capital construction program in the history of Manitoba and that's the West Kildonan Collegiate, which, by the way, has a built-in child care, state of the art, that's the way of the future.

Three of the north Winnipeg schools are rated best in Canada: Luxton, Sisler and Children of the Earth, by different measures. We now have the Monty Hall scholarship by going to work for kids and my office does the Peacekeeper Awards.

New child care, boy, splash, at Win Gardner Place, West Kildonan Collegiate, as I mentioned, and the new one now coming at Victory School which is going to be extraordinary and run by Sunny Mountain.

When it comes to public housing, Betham [*phonetic*] getting record investments and, of course, property values. We've rebounded from bottoming out and we've regained our property values to an extent greater than the average across Winnipeg as a whole. People want to live in older neighbourhoods, established schools, elm trees, and all those amenities close to the bus lanes—or the bus routes.

For seniors, we've invested in Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre and, of course, the SafetyAid program for home security. And when it comes to roads, whether it's resurfacing and the cost sharing that we're doing with the City or the Inkster Boulevard twinning, Inkster Boulevard is our gateway to the west and to the Ex, but that is nearing completion. The north Winnipeg bikeway, means so much to so many in north Winnipeg and now we're looking at refurbishing the Seven Oaks Monument site so we can better celebrate our history.

So those are some of the local investments that people recognize as important to their lives and what I know is one of the reasons why people say, just keep doing what you're doing.

But, I just want to conclude by talking about two absolutely key pieces of the last election campaign, in my view. The first was our record and our commitment to helping families make ends meet. I think that might have been underestimated by observers of the last election. You know, we had one heck of a recession, and there was a lot of job displacement, and I think disproportionately in some lower income neighbourhoods. But the unemployment rate went up 38 per cent, and yet our Employment and Income Assistance caseload was still far below the last recession. In fact, the caseload for single parents was 35 per cent below the rate—the caseloads in the last—after the last recession.

Now, we heard today, and it's no consolation to those that are living in poverty, but food bank use did go down last year, and, again, absolutely no consolation to anyone that—when you consider the—Manitoba's low cost of living. Child poverty is down 23 per cent and is now fourth lowest in Canada. But we have to be reminded each and every day that there remains too much, because any is too much poverty, and the ALL Aboard strategy now will be taken to a new level as a result of the legislation that's been introduced and the measures that will go with that.

But the election commitment then said we had to do more on affordability, and so the commitment for Canada's lowest heating, auto insurance, and electricity cost was so well-received, commitments to annual minimum wage increases and to continued tax fairness, I think, went so far.

The other key element of the campaign that I think was not recognized to the extent was the issue of trust, quite frankly. You know, I believe that campaigns are built not on platforms, but they're built on trust. And I had early indications going door to door that, indeed, there were questions over the heads of the opposition heading into the campaign. But as the campaign unfold and the opposition rolled out its campaign commitments, I think I, like other Manitobans, quickly realized that what they were saying in the campaign was not at all what they believed. And that flip-flop, I think, was absolutely deadly for the opposition.

So what people voted for was a government that was strong and steady and a Premier who, indeed, is

strong and steady. I said this on election night at the interviews, but I don't believe I've met a man that is as earnest as this man, our Premier, who is so committed to the well-being of all Manitobans. And I think people clearly saw that and said that is the kind of premier that this province embraces. And we are all grateful that they saw what many of us have seen for some time.

Now, as Jack Layton urged, said: So let us be loving, hopeful, and optimistic and we will change the world. So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let's all get on with that change, and I, for one, look forward to the honour of hard work for others.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): If we can keep that going for a while it shortens the speech. Thank you. There you go, it's good.

An Honourable Member: That's all it takes.

Mr. Selinger: It's perfect. Well, thank you for extending that. That makes the speech even shorter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and, again, congratulations on your new responsibilities. So far, so good. It's been a steady hand, and I think the members of the Legislature have been pretty well-behaved up to now, doing their best to set a standard for the kind of decorum that we want to see in the Legislature in the months and years ahead.

* (16:10)

This Throne Speech, we came back early after the election, and all members agreed to do that, and it was an attempt to get everybody back to the House. There's many new members in the House. I want to congratulate them all on being elected and welcome them to the Legislature. I know for the new members this is probably a bit of a startling environment when you first come in here. The emotional intensity in the room and some of the behaviour is maybe—is not something that people are used to in their normal day-to-day activities.

But I have seen in many of the early speeches, and the first speeches that have been made by many of the members, a real sincere commitment to public service. And so many of the folks that have come to the Legislature this time have a tremendous track record of service before they were elected, service to their communities, whether it's recreation, education, business. All of these kinds of activities have brought a mix of people to the Legislature that can represent all the views of Manitobans from so many different

walks of life. And I think that makes—that diversity, I think, makes for a much stronger Legislature.

And I look forward to the years ahead and the things that we can do together, sometimes forgotten, in the midst of the headlines and the differences, that we actually agree on most things in the Legislature. And we actually come together on most issues because we put the interest of Manitobans first and foremost in our deliberations, and I don't think that will change. Those are not the stories that will show up in the headlines for the most part because good news and consensus is not as necessarily newsworthy sometimes. It doesn't generate that sense of conflict and drama and attention that the media feeds off of. But, in many cases, and in most cases, we do actually find common ground on the things that we want to do on behalf of Manitobans.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, this election offered Manitobans a clear choice. Both parties put forward their platforms. Manitobans made a decision on what they thought was the best program to move Manitoba forward. And, when we came back here with the Throne Speech, we tried to encapsulate in that Throne Speech the things that we ran on and the things that Manitobans told us were their priorities.

When you drive around in Winnipeg, for example, you see that the Jets are back. You see a new—and you see a lot of people downtown wearing Jets jerseys and participating in that tradition of Manitobans being sports supporters and rabid fans, and being proud of what Manitoba produces.

You drive out by the University of Manitoba. You see the stadium being built and you see that tremendous—you see the progress being made there on what will be the finest stadium in the country. And it will be used not only by the Blue Bombers; it will be used by the University of Manitoba; it will be used by the community. It will be a facility that makes a big difference in the quality of life in Manitoba.

You drive over to The Forks, just on the other side of Portage and Main, and you see the tremendous progress being made on the human rights museum in Manitoba, which is going to be another—which will be a world-class asset. You can just see it right now. The quality of the materials and the unique design that's being put in place there. It's going to create a facility that will last for generations to come in Manitoba and will be a beacon of the story of human rights, the global story of human rights, and will attract people from all over the world

to understand what the human rights story has been in Canada from the earliest days.

And just about every member of this Legislature probably can tell a story of their own human rights struggles in their own families: why some of them immigrated to Canada, whether they were First Nations or Métis people, whether they were francophones that had to struggle to maintain their language and history, whether they were Ukrainians and experienced their own holocaust back in their own homeland.

People from all over the world have come to Manitoba, not just for economic opportunities, but for freedom and liberty and the opportunity to live their lives according to their religion, their cultural values, and the opportunity to raise their children with the opportunity for free speech and public assembly and the rule of law, and to be able to pursue a lifestyle that is respectful of other lifestyles.

So the human rights museum will be well placed here in Manitoba. It's the first national museum outside of the Ottawa Capital Region. That's a first for Manitoba. It's a first for Canada.

We, of course, were very pleased to be able to support that with some capital investment, as we were able—willing to support the new MTS Centre downtown, as we were willing to support the new stadium. All of these projects are not done uniquely by government. Government plays a role of enabling other leaders in the community to bring these projects forward, and Manitoba is very blessed with some excellent leadership in all walks of life to move Manitoba forward. And we see our role as government as being a partner in many of these activities to allow them to come to fruition and provide the services and the opportunities that will create a high quality of life in this province.

So this election was our attempt to say: Let's keep Manitoba moving forward; let's not go back to some of the old habits that we've had in the past. Let's find a pathway to the future that will generate opportunities and success for all Manitobans, including people that have not yet arrived here. Because our immigration program is such an important program in this province, 15,000-plus people that came here last year and are now, for the first time in their lives, saying Manitoba is their home, and that's something we want to continue.

We want more people from around the world to agree and identify and be motivated to come to live

in Manitoba. We're a population-driven success story. *The New York Times* called us a centre of parka-clad diversity, and I think that is true. And to be a centre of parka-clad diversity speaks volumes about the quality of life we have in this province and the tolerance we have for differences and our ability to see the common humanity that we all bring to this great province of Manitoba.

And, of course, when they come here, they come here for job opportunities. And that is one of the central themes in this election was to ensure that people had job opportunities, which is why we put an emphasis on education and training and the ability for people to be apprentices and to become journeypersons, the ability for people to become nurses and doctors, the ability for people to become professionals, like accountants and engineers and all—and teachers and social workers and all the other great opportunities there are in this province, including being small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs, people that generate new products and new services that will enhance the quality of life.

And some of those opportunities and services can be exported to other jurisdictions, which is why we now have a focus trade strategy in Manitoba and a trade council which will capture the innovativeness of this province and allow it to be exported to other parts of the world, which will increase the wealth of Manitobans once again.

So, when we ran in this election, we said we wanted to make health care even better. We said we wanted to expand job education and training opportunities. We said we wanted to make sure Manitoba remained one of the most affordable places to live in the country. And I know we can do that because we happen to own things like auto insurance on behalf of the people of Manitoba; we own Manitoba Hydro on behalf of the people of Manitoba. And, as the stewards of those government business enterprises, we want them to continue to provide good value to Manitobans and good opportunities to Manitobans.

We said we'd make our communities safer and healthier, and we know the challenges inherent in that. But we will never relent in working towards that every day. And again we will do that in partnerships with other levels of government, with community organizations and local leaders, because they often are the ones that act as the bellwethers of what needs to be done at the local level.

And, of course, we will forge ahead with building Manitoba Hydro. We have signed contracts with our export customers. We know we have the opportunity to build that asset and those assets over the next 15, 20 years. We know that the best way to get through fragile and uncertain economic times is to have a good economic plan. And central to that economic plan is to forge ahead and build Manitoba Hydro, because it will help lift the entire economy for all regions of the province and provide opportunities for things to get done in Manitoba, and then to have a durable source of clean, green and affordable energy for our customers around the world, which will in turn allow our rates to remain among the lowest in North America.

So, with those opportunities, when we said we would run and make health care even better, we knew that was one of the top priorities for Manitobans. And that's why we've had—and we've had some good debate on that in the Legislature today. But we said in our first announcement was a \$24-million commitment to additional training, additional training for nurse practitioners, which we think are an invaluable asset in offering new scope of service in Manitoba. And that's why QuickCare clinics will be possible, because we'll have nurse practitioners, over—we have a hundred now, we said we'd double the enrolment in the nurse practitioner school. So we'll have even more of these qualified people to provide services to Manitobans.

We said we would increase paramedic training, to have advanced paramedic training in the province. So the paramedics, when they attend to the situation where somebody is in medical crisis, they can provide more services right where people are affected, and not necessarily have to just transport them to the hospital.

We said we would train more doctors and nurses and hire more doctors and nurses in Manitoba. And, indeed, we will do that. We will replace a thousand nurses retiring with a thousand new nurses and, in addition, we will add another thousand nurses in the province of Manitoba. And in order to do that, we made an announcement at the nursing school where we will continue to invest in professors at the nursing school and training opportunities for nurses to have more spots in the nursing programs around Manitoba, so that people that come to Manitoba, people that live in Manitoba and young people growing up in Manitoba will have those opportunities to become a professional nurse or other health-care provider in the province, including to be

doctors in Manitoba, doctors that will serve rural Manitoba, doctors that will serve northern Manitoba, doctors that will serve the—in a specialty capacity.

* (16:20)

And one of the things that we've put in our budget and had in place for over five years now is the graduate tuition tax rebate program. A professional or a person graduating anywhere in the world who decides to come and make Manitoba a place to live and work can get up to 60 per cent of their tuition back. So, if somebody wants to leave Manitoba and get a specialized skill in another jurisdiction, wherever that may be, maybe they want to become a specialist in health care, neurology, for example; they take specialized training in doing that they can return to Manitoba and recover the investment they've made in themselves and then have a good quality of life living here and providing services to Manitobans.

So health care will remain one of our top priorities, and we focused in particular on cancer care. Cancer care and heart disease are the two leading causes of death in the province. It's a bit of a race which is No. 1, but we know cancer care is a very serious issue that affects so many Manitobans. CancerCare Manitoba has done an excellent job and has improved their services, hired more cancer care specialists, but we thought we could do even better. And with Sir Michael Richards coming here to Manitoba, who had a strong personal relationship with Dr. Dhaliwal, who is the head of CancerCare Manitoba, we believe we can have the best, most efficient, most effective cancer-treatment process in Canada in the next four years where a person who is entering treatment and diagnosis all the way up to their treatments will be able to get the most efficient access to that treatment, and 15 CancerCare hubs that we have around Manitoba will be enhanced with people who will help people make that journey through the cancer care experience to get a successful outcome and to ensure that we increase their possibilities of living and thriving and returning to the community with their cancer being in remission.

And, in order to facilitate that, we said we would make cancer drugs free outside of hospitals. We had done that earlier in previous terms; we'd made palliative cancer care drugs available to people free so that they could ensure that they had a dignified end-of-life experience. And that is very important here in Manitoba, and we have some of the best

palliative care services in the country. But, for more people, the choice of being in a hospital or in their home, they prefer to be in their home with their family and friends; and, by making cancer drugs free to people outside of the hospital facilities, we think we can actually relieve pressure on the health-care system and help people be able to function more effectively in their community as they go through that cancer care journey. So we're going to do that.

And home-care services, we think we do have one of the best home-care programs in the country. It has been a program that has been lauded everywhere and widely copied in the way it's delivered. But, if we can continue to improve it, and we can continue to improve it by adding hours for people that might otherwise have to wind up in a personal care home or in an assisted-living situation or in a situation where they require extra supports. By enhancing home care, we can allow people to function and stay independent even longer in their homes and in their communities, and we're going to do that. We're going to do that, not only by adding additional hours, but also ensuring that the program has special features attached to it that will provide extra services to people when they need them. So those are some of the challenges in health care and some of the opportunities.

But even maybe, perhaps, more fundamental to the future of the province is our commitment to education, and we have said that we would continue to fund universities for the next three years at 5 per cent a year and we would legislate tuition fees being tied to inflation over the next three years. So we have an affordability advantage for young people going to post-secondary education, and we have a funding commitment to the universities so that they can make proper decisions about program development and enhancement, and we do actually have a new university in Manitoba now and that's the University of St. Boniface.

The Université de Saint-Boniface c'est le plus nouveau—nouvelle université ici dans le province de Manitoba. C'était une des premiers institutions post-secondaires ici dans le province de Manitoba dans l'année 1838 et maintenant c'est le plus nouvelle institution universitaire dans le province de Manitoba.

Translation

The University of St. Boniface is the newest university here in the province of Manitoba. It was

one of Manitoba's first post-secondary institutions in 1838 and it is now the province's newest university.

And those are the kinds of changes we can make, which will allow our post-secondary institutions to offer more programming, attract more young people to the post-secondary experience and even attract people from around the world that want to come here. And this is the only French university in western Canada now, and we think it'll be a source of pride for us in the future.

But, in addition, one of the big things that we heard and understood from people outside of Winnipeg was the need for more people to have trades skills. Whether they're electricians or plumbers or whether they're carpenters, those kinds of trades are something we want to offer throughout Manitoba. One of the commitments we made was we would upgrade shops in schools so that they could offer a wider range of trade opportunities for high school students and they could start an early career. And I know you, Mr. Speaker, as I look at you, I'm thinking electrician because I know you were trained in that skill as well and how important that is, and young people now can start taking their electrician training in high school. They don't necessarily have to wait until they graduate, and that's an opportunity for them to get ahead of the curve and see where the jobs are for the future and get that training. And we will equip some of our shops and our labs in the high schools to allow those experiences to be developed and have an early start on that.

In addition, we will have a program that allows journeypersons and people with trades to be able to start up a small business because a lot of them wind up running their own enterprises, but—and we need more of those enterprises in rural Manitoba and in northern Manitoba. And if we can help them start a business, they will locate outside of Winnipeg, they will put down roots there and they will offer invaluable services to many members of their community. So I think these are things we can do and I know we will do them and we will move forward on those opportunities.

We also talked about safer and healthier communities and I know we've had questions about that this week in the Legislature. We did commit to more community police to be hired in Manitoba: 50 outside the city, 50 inside the city and 25 more cadets to be hired as well. We want to see more police on the street. We want to see more police engaged with citizens in a preventive way to identify

what risks are out there, to be able to act on them quickly, to be able to know where there's the possibility of a violent crime occurring or an act that breaks the law is occurring and to be able to anticipate and move on it quickly. And we know that model of policing works. We know there's an interest in that on the part of the chief of police and, therefore, we will follow up on that and move on that as well as many other community safety initiatives that we've got in Manitoba.

And we do have very good agencies that provide services to young people, that provide services to families in our communities, whether they're child welfare agencies, whether they're recreation agencies, whether they're educational or social agencies. Many of these agencies provide the kinds of supports that allow young people, for example, to complete high school, or allow young people to have a mentoring experience and get a job. And just last week, we announced a major mentoring program for the first 500 young people to have a mentorship experience with a small business or a non-profit organization in Manitoba. And I was very pleased that the Premier's Economic Advisory Council took the leadership on that and moved on that and created that opportunity in partnership with our sector councils which have good relationships with the employers. So the more opportunities we can create for young people to get jobs, education and training, the better off we're all going to be and we will continue to find ways to do that.

Now I did talk earlier about our affordability advantage in Manitoba, and we've always said we want to keep Manitoba families in the top three for affordability in this country. In this election, we said we could keep our electricity rates, our home heating rates, costs and our auto insurance costs as a bundle, we could keep them the lowest in Canada over the next four years. And that will be one of the commitments that we follow through on.

How are we able to do that? We're able to do that because we own Manitoba Hydro on behalf of the people of Manitoba. We're able to do that because we own Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation on behalf of the people of Manitoba. We're able to do that because Centra Gas is now a part of Manitoba Hydro. So we will work with our Crown corporations to ensure that they offer very good value to Manitobans, and when we say very good value, we mean the lowest bundle of rates for auto insurance, home heating and electricity over the next four years. And that'll apply to all Manitobans

that use those services, regardless of where they live or where they work and what their background is, that will be available to them.

And I'm getting the one-minute hook here and so I'll quickly move on and say that as we go forward we want to ensure that we have a socially just Manitoba where we address issues of poverty. And how's the best way to best address poverty is to ensure young people get an education and a job and we have decent housing for people, and we will make commitments to follow through on those areas that will ensure people have the maximum opportunity to not only participate in our society, but to participate in the economy. And we want those opportunities for all Manitobans, regardless of whether they live in the north, rural areas, on reserve, off reserve, in the neighbourhoods of Winnipeg or Brandon or Thompson. We want those opportunities to be available to all Manitobans as we go forward.

We look for the chance and we appreciate the opportunity to serve Manitobans for the next four years and to be able to be accountable for that here in the Legislature as we go forward.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak, and I think I'm pretty close to the deadline and you're going to give me the flag right away.

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 45(5), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do the members wish to have the motion re-read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: The Speaker hears a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of adopting the motion, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Formal Vote

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Crothers, Dewar, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 32, Nays 20.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to—honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I think, if you canvass the House, you'll find it's the will to call it 5 o'clock.

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

The time being 5 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 1, 2011

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