

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 19, 2010

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 4—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 4, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, Bill 4, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act, will enable retailers who are currently permitted to be open on Sundays between noon and 6 p.m. to be open any time on a Sunday that falls on Boxing Day. This bill will also, however, continue to allow a municipality to have the choice to prohibit or restrict the extended Boxing Day hours and will also protect commercial tenants from being forced to open for extended hours by the terms of their lease or other agreement.

This year Boxing Day falls on a Sunday and would be subject to Sunday shopping hours of noon to 6 p.m. Boxing Day is the busiest day of the year for many retailers, and restrictions on this day would result in a challenging day for them as well as creating a financial hardship. The Labour Management Review Committee, consisting of representatives of employer and employee organizations, was consulted on the proposal and achieved consensus support for these extended shopping hours.

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

PETITIONS

Multiple Sclerosis Treatment

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

More than 3,000 Manitobans and their families are impacted by multiple sclerosis, and Manitoba has one of the highest rates of MS in the world.

New research indicates that there may be a link between a condition known as chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency and multiple sclerosis. Preliminary studies indicate that many MS symptoms can be relieved with angioplasty, a common procedure.

In order to test this procedure for safety and effectiveness, additional research and clinical trials are needed. Manitoba is not testing for CCSVI, conducting research or conducting clinical trials.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador will be monitoring MS patients who have undergone the liberation treatment and studying its impact. Saskatchewan has announced that it will move forward with a clinical trial when their research community presents a proposal, and has invited other provinces to join them. Meanwhile, Manitoba's provincial government has not taken up this initiative nor shown leadership on this issue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider making the province of Manitoba a leader in CCSVI research and to move forward with clinical trials as soon as possible.

And this is signed by V. Rebelo, J. Weaver Wright, M. Yamniuk and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

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

Rapid City Reservoir and Catwalk

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I'd like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And this is the reason for this petition:

The Province of Manitoba has a role in providing maintenance to artificial water reservoirs.

The purposes of the Rapid City reservoir are: water conservation, recreation, stock watering as well as maintaining water levels in wells.

Due to the low water level and the amount of vegetation in the reservoir, it is no longer usable for recreational activities such as canoeing or swimming.

Due to the amount of silt buildup and vegetation in the reservoir, the use of the Rapid City Fish Ladder, needed for the natural upstream migration of fish, is inhibited, reducing the fish count from 2,300 in 1999 to 15 in 2008.

The catwalk structure spanning the Rapid City spillway, used by children to get to and from school, was damaged when planks were incorrectly pulled from the spillway by the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation and has yet to be replaced.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider dredging the Rapid City reservoir as soon as possible.

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider replacing the Rapid City catwalk structure as soon as possible.

This petition's signed by S. Westwood, D. Bayes, M. King and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Auto Theft—Court Order Breaches

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

On December 11th, 2009, in Winnipeg, Zdzislaw Andrzejczak was killed when the car he was driving collided with a stolen vehicle.

The death of Mr. Andrzejczak, a husband and a father, along with too many other deaths and injuries involving stolen vehicles, was a preventable tragedy.

Many of those accused in fatalities involving stolen vehicles were previously known to police and identified as chronic and high-risk car thieves who had court orders against them.

Chronic car thieves pose a risk to the safety of all Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all court orders for car thieves are vigorously monitored and enforced.

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all breaches of court orders on car thieves are reported to police and vigorously prosecuted.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by A. Woloszyn, I. Barcrak, M. Salorcuro and many, many others.

Bipole III Project

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

In September of 2007, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro directed the utility to abandon an east-side route for its Bipole III project. Five days later, Manitoba Hydro announced that the utility would be proceeding with a west-side route.

Manitoba Hydro staff, technical experts and regular Manitobans have communicated to the provincial government that they would prefer an east-side route.

A west-side route will be almost 500 kilometres longer than an east-side route, less reliable and cost the taxpayers at least an additional \$1.75 billion. The extra cost being forced on Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans by the provincial government will mean that every Manitoba family will end up paying \$7,000 for this decision.

Since the current provincial government has come into power, hydro rates have already increased by almost 20 per cent. If this decision is not reversed, it will result in further rate increases for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to allow Manitoba Hydro to proceed with a shorter, cheaper and greener east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, enabling the utility to keep our hydro bills lower and ensure a more reliable electricity system.

And this petition is signed by D. Crealock, B. Braden, B. Braden and many, many more Manitobans.

*(10:10)

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, and these—of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

In September of 2007, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro directed the utility to abandon an east-side route for its Bipole III project. Five days later, Manitoba Hydro announced that the utility would be proceeding with a west-side route.

Manitoba Hydro staff, technical experts and regular Manitobans have communicated to the provincial government that they would prefer an east-side route.

A west-side route will be almost 500 kilometres longer than an east-side route, less reliable, and cost ratepayers at least an additional \$1.75 billion. The extra costs being forced on Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans by the provincial government will mean that every Manitoba family will end up paying \$7,000 for this decision.

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We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to allow Manitoba Hydro to proceed with the shorter, greener, cheaper east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, enabling the utility to keep our hydro bills lower and to ensure a more reliable electricity system.

And this is signed by G. Lacroix, D. Fraser, G. Produnuk and many others, Mr. Speaker.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 2009-10 Civil

Service Commission Annual Report and the report to the Legislature pursuant to section 63(4) of The Financial Administration Act.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Radisson Hecla Oasis Resort Premier's Knowledge of Receivership

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans were concerned to learn late last night that one of our great provincial destinations at Hecla Island, the Gull Harbour Resort, had applied and gone into receivership. Obviously, this is a significant concern for all Manitobans in terms of the uncertainty for one of our great provincial destinations, and it's also a concern for taxpayers who are potentially out millions of dollars.

I want to ask the Premier, who was at the table playing banker in connection with this deal, if he can outline what due diligence he did when he first became aware of the problems at Hecla and what steps he took to protect taxpayers as well as this great destination.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we know that the senior lender on this transaction, the federal Business Development Bank, has decided to call the loan and have a receiver appointed, which has been done, and the Province has not stood in the way of the receiver being appointed.

We also know that the Paletta Group has done a tremendous job in trying to upgrade that facility and make it available as a high-quality tourist attraction in Manitoba. And we also know that the—it's been a difficult time in terms of tourism recently, with the global recession, especially for high-end resorts.

But the reality is that the senior lender felt it necessary to move on it at this time. The Province has agreed with that, and it's regrettable that the Paletta Group, who put so much investment and time and energy into this facility, were not able to have it move forward at this time as a viable business operation.

Mr. McFadyen: The Premier has been—is unresponsive to the question about the role played by the provincial government. We know of the role played by the federal Business Development Bank, but the Province is also a significant lender, and it's not the Province, it's the taxpayers of Manitoba

represented by this former Finance minister that are in the hole on this deal.

And I want to ask the Premier if he can indicate, in terms of his role and the role of his government, when they first became aware of the issues, what steps they took along the way to protect taxpayers, as well as preserve the reputation of what should be a good asset for our province?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Paletta Group has dramatically improved the quality of this asset; it had been let-run down by the members opposite when they were in office. The Paletta Group has put significant investment into it. The Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, which looks after MIOP loans, has worked on the file along with the federal Business Development Bank, and it came to a stage where the federal Business Development Bank felt that they needed to call the loan and ask for a receiver to be put in place, and the Province hasn't stood in the way of that.

The reality is that it has been a tough market for these kinds of resorts. And in this particular location for many years it's been a tough situation to make a profit when it was run by the government and also when it was run by the Paletta Group. But let's recognize that the Paletta Group has made a very significant investment here, and, unfortunately, the federal Business Development Bank felt that they had to call in the loan.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, looking back at the government's news releases and the statements that were made at the time, it's very clear that there was no due diligence done at the time that they decided to play banker with taxpayers' money, that all of the predictions—all of the predictions—and the wildly optimistic statements they made at the time are now proven to be false.

I want to ask the Premier: Why did they make so many false statements at the time, and why didn't they take appropriate steps along the way to protect taxpayers, as well as protect this asset, Mr. Speaker? And the reason it's significant is that, following on the heels of Crocus, following on the heels of mismanagement at Hydro, following on the heels of his mismanagement of the stadium deal, it's starting to look like everything he touches fails. Can he account for that today?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the—on the specifics with respect to Hecla, the \$8.5-million loan was put in—made available by the federal Business Development

Bank; the provincial government did a \$5.5-million loan. Both of those loans have not yet been resolved in terms of the role of the receiver, and the receiver will handle the windup. And it's too early to tell how much recovery will occur on that.

I've noted in the past that members have suggested that MIOP loans, when they've been put in receivership, don't necessarily work out. In the past they have worked out, and the program has been a very effective tool for economic development in Manitoba, as has the federal Business Development Bank's program. This situation is currently one that's been put in receivership.

I should mention, parenthetically, that Hydro profits are above what's forecast. If the member likes to blame the government every time something goes wrong, I'm just wondering when he will give credit to the government for the greater-than-expected profits at Manitoba Hydro this year.

Vale Inco Mine Premier's Knowledge of Plant Closure

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): On the issue of the news coming out of Thompson with Vale Inco, Mr. Speaker, obviously there are 500 workers and their families who are concerned, feeling uncertainty about their future and their economic security. A major employer in Manitoba is reducing jobs at the same times it makes new investments in Conservative Newfoundland, Conservative Saskatchewan and Liberal Ontario.

And I want to just ask the Premier: He indicated that he was caught off guard by the announcement, and we made reference yesterday to a *Free Press* article that appeared in August of 2005. And since that time, Mr. Speaker, it's come to our attention from a document released by the federal government that there was a meeting held in Winnipeg in November of 2004, involving the provincial government respecting these issues. That's November of 2004, six years ago right now.

I want to ask the Premier: Since his government was at the table six years ago with respect to the impending closure of the smelter in Thompson, why was he pretending the other day to be so surprised when the announcement came?

* (10:20)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the reality is until very recently the company, Vale Inco, was proposing a \$112-million upgrade of the smelter, and that was a suggestion that they thought the smelter had continued life and importance in terms of the value-added proposition in Thompson, Manitoba.

They have now decided that they're going to take the smelter out of operation and, completely unbeknownst to anybody, they've decided that they've—going to take the refinery out of operation. This is new information that caught everybody off guard, particularly the people in the community of Thompson, and they're very disappointed and angered by these outcomes.

Now, the member opposite thinks that the solution is another tax break for the company and is defending the company. We want to work with the local community—the local community—including the people that live in Thompson, the union, the city council, the school board and all their community-development and economic-development agencies, as well as the provincial government, to sit down with the company and look at what alternatives are available for the future prosperity of Thompson, for the future of their mining operation in the north and the future prosperity of Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, in all of his desperate scrambling on Wednesday to pretend that he was caught off guard by the announcement, the Premier failed to take note of the fact that there's a federal document issued by Environment Canada which makes specific reference to a meeting which was held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in November 2004, between the Government of Canada, the government of Manitoba and the representatives of Manitoba's smelter companies to exchange information and address concerns specific to Manitoba facilities. That is the federal document referring to this November 2004 meeting held with the Manitoba government and the federal government and the company to address concerns specific to Manitoba facilities.

I want to ask the Premier: Since his government was at the table in November 2004, how did they manage to drop the ball over six successive years on this issue, and was his failure to understand what was coming on Wednesday a function of the fact that he has been completely obsessed with the stadium fumble?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it's not a surprise to anybody that officials from all levels of government were working with the company on the federal regulatory requirements to upgrade the environmental standards for the smelter.

It's also clear that the company was proposing a major environment in improving the quality of the smelter, and that was well understood. That was a go-forward proposition. So the smelter was in play in terms of environmental regulations proposed by the federal government, and it was understood that there was going to be further investment in the smelter.

That direction changed very recently and, for the first time ever, the refinery was put on the table to be taken out of service. This was a surprising change in direction to everybody, including people at the company itself in Thompson, including the community of Thompson and all their elected officials and the provincial government, which is exactly why we have said we want to sit down with them and take a look at what the alternatives are. And that is a reasonable approach given the surprising turn of events that have occurred very recently.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, on the heels of failures at Crocus, failures at Manitoba Hydro, fails in connection with the Hecla investment, now this latest failure of leadership—this latest failure of leadership—on the part of this NDP leader, Manitobans have every right to be concerned when they hear about major investments taking place in Saskatchewan, major investments in Ontario, major investments in Newfoundland, and here we are stuck in the middle with him.

I want to ask this Premier: Why has he failed Manitobans? Why is he jeopardizing their jobs and their economic security? Why is he putting the economic security of Manitoba families at risk with his negligence and his failures of leadership on these important files?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the reality is there was a labour dispute in Ontario that lasted over a year with Vale Inco in Sudbury. There's a labour dispute that's ongoing for several months in Newfoundland right now, and there's no question that since the BHP issue has arisen in Canada, that international companies like Vale Inco have been under pressure to show net benefit to the country.

So the \$10-billion announcement they made was in the context of a review of net benefit foreign

investment regulations in this country, and those investments, when they materialize, will provide benefits to this country. That does not excuse a sudden change of direction with respect to Thompson and the loss of 500 jobs in the value-added components of that operation, which is exactly why we want to talk to the company. They have indicated that they are going to make further investment. They're in the mining side of it because there's a high-value product there in terms of the nickel. We want to talk to them about all their future plans there. The community wants to talk to them about that. Only the member opposite wants to give up on the future of northern Manitoba when it comes to nickel, just like they give up on the minimum wage—

Football Stadium Cost and Funding Options

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, the workers of Manitoba are obviously disappointed in the failure and weakness on the part of this Premier compared to those in other jurisdictions. We see antibusiness comments being made by him and his colleagues here in this House. The only exception, to his credit, were the comments made by the Minister of Energy (Mr. Chomiak) on the radio whose comments echoed mine, which is that we need to support companies who want to invest in Manitoba. I want to thank him, and I want to thank the Minister of Energy for trying to be constructive rather than taking potshots at major employers.

And I want to, further to that, in terms of their anti-investment attitude in connection with the way they fumbled the stadium deal, Mr. Doer, his predecessor, talked about the importance of private investment in the stadium deal, was prepared to work with companies and people who wanted to do good things. This leader has driven them away, and we are now, Mr. Speaker, 233 days and counting since the original announcement.

When is he going to come out of that snowy hole at the University of Manitoba and tell taxpayers and Bomber fans what's going on on this failed deal?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Let's bear in mind that the members opposite opposed the MTS Centre, and they did everything they could to kill that project moving forward in this Legislature. They're doing

the same thing on the stadium. We knew they would do that. That's not a surprise to us. The good news is all the partners that want to make the stadium go forward are meeting and working together on it. That includes the City, the Province, the Bombers, the university and the private partners. They believe a new stadium is essential to avoid tens of millions of dollars of costs to repair a facility which is nearly time expired. So the reality is that there needs to be a go-forward strategy and there will be a go-forward strategy because all the players in this town are being constructive about it.

Only the members opposite want to kill the deal. Just like they did on the MTS Centre. Just like they're giving up on the people in northern Manitoba when it comes to investment in value-added mining up there. Just like they're giving up on worker safety when they opposed increased safety in Manitoba. Just like they gave up when they don't want to do minimum wage improvements. We know they're reckless. We know that they don't want to move forward. We will, and we'll do it with the support of our partners in the community.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, to see the party of Ed Schreyer doing the sorts of things they're doing today is a sad comment on where the NDP has gone over the years. To see somebody who is actually in a position of power and responsibility try to blame everybody else in Manitoba for his failings is absolutely unbelievable. This is where the party of Ed Schreyer is today, and it's a sad comment on their decline under the leadership of this leader.

I want to ask the Premier—I want to ask this Premier, who is now 200 and—sorry, 395 days into his term in office—13 months ago today he was sworn in; he's consumed 233 of those days on his failed stadium deal, almost 60 per cent of his term in office consumed by this failure on the back—following Crocus and Hydro, will he today, Mr. Speaker, take responsibility for the fact that he is the individual responsible for putting together the failed deal 233 days ago? He's responsible today for sorting it out. Will he stop blaming everybody else in Manitoba, including the business community? Will he stand up, be a leader, be a man, take responsibility for this failed deal?

* (10:30)

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's been the Leader of the Opposition for over five years. Have we seen one good idea out of that party [*inaudible*] issues. No, we haven't. Have we seen one

good idea on how to improve the economy? No, we haven't. Have we seen one good idea on how to improve the education system? No, we haven't. Have we seen one good idea on how to improve the health-care system in this province? No, we haven't. Have we seen any interest in lifting up the poor in this province with minimum wage policy or employment policy? No, we haven't.

We're proud of the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. We're proud of the fact that we have one of the best investment programs in early childhood education in the country, and we think the announcement yesterday to work with our parents, our families and our school divisions to keep children in school until they're 18 will pay great dividends in terms of reducing dropout rates and having more success for young people. That's the direction we want to make—take Manitoba, not back to the dark days of the '90s where the member seems to think all was wonderful because he was there.

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

Mr. McFadyen: He's sounding more like an opposition leader every day with that *[inaudible]*

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that he is the current occupant of room 204 in this building. He is the one who has been Finance Minister for the past 11 years, and he's got his facts wrong, actually, in terms of how long I've been Leader of the Opposition. But it's a small point and it's on top of about a hundred other factual errors, so we'll leave it alone.

Let's just focus on the issue here. Let's focus on the issue which is that, Mr. Speaker, he's decided to play banker. He's decided to play banker on behalf of the taxpayers of Manitoba. He didn't do his due diligence. It's 233 days and counting that he's done damage to the Blue Bombers, created uncertainty for taxpayers, made himself a laughing stock in front of Manitobans.

When is he going to bring this sad chapter to an end so that we can move on to bigger and better things for Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Bombers know they need a new stadium. The community knows we need a new stadium that will serve the public as a publicly owned facility with 75 per cent of its use, and year-round use, unlike the present facility. It will be a

modern facility that will serve the public, it will serve the community, it will serve the University of Manitoba and, of course, it will serve the Bombers.

You know, it's been 50 years since that stadium was built. Every community has to reinvent itself for the next generation. That's exactly what we're doing right now. We're doing it in partnership with all the people in the community that want to move this province forward.

The member opposite has not put one constructive idea on the table to address this issue. He hasn't put any. His plan is very clear. It's to roll back the clock of history in this province, to roll back minimum wages, to roll back water quality standards, to roll back health and safety standards, to roll back Manitoba Hydro and decimate its potential for export markets, to roll back the opportunity to have a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We know the plan of the members opposite. Yes, we oppose it and that's why we want to stay in government, to do the right thing, to move Manitoba forward.

Violent Crime Rate Reduction Strategy

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): A desperate answer from a desperate Premier, Mr. Speaker.

After 11 years this NDP government has shown just how soft on crime it is and, today, Winnipeg is the violent crime capital of Canada: random shootings, kids with dangerous weapons, individuals who are set on fire.

After 11 years, three ministers of Justice, miles of press releases, scores of promises, violent crime is worse under the NDP government than anywhere else in this country of ours. And yet, this week, the desperate pre-election Throne Speech, the NDP came forward and said, trust us, this time we're serious about getting tough on crime.

Can this Minister of Justice simply explain why it is the longer the NDP are in government the worse violent crime gets in this province?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Of course, an approach to crime, unlike what the members opposite would follow, has a number of different, very important parts. It means meaningful consequences, laws and policies that make sure there are appropriate consequences for those who break the law. It means

more support for policing and Crowns, things the member for Steinbach and every other Progressive Conservative vote against every time they have the chance in this House to support police, to support Crowns in this province.

We also believe, unlike the members opposite, that preventing crime is key. The member for Steinbach wants to wait until there's a tragedy, until there's a victim, and he wants to ride on a white charger. We're going to prevent crime in the first place, Mr. Speaker.

Probation Breaches Quarterly Report Availability

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I can assure this minister we will never vote for a weak plan that continues to make violent crime worse in the province and in the city, Mr. Speaker.

You know, last session in this House the Minister of Justice, he was shamed, and all of his colleagues were shamed into voting for an opposition motion which required that breaches of court orders be reported quarterly. That motion passed unanimously; everybody in this House voted for it.

Last month, a freedom of information request was filed, asking for those court order breaches, and it was denied because, apparently, no records are being kept. You know, that's not a promise like entering the leadership race one day and dropping out the next. This is something that should be kept.

Will this Minister of Justice admit that he misled the House, the media and Manitobans when he voted in favour of reporting breaches and now those records aren't even being kept, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): You know, Mr. Speaker, certainly court orders are to be followed and breaches are a very serious situation. That's why, of course, we've worked with our partners at MPI, the Winnipeg police for the Winnipeg Auto Theft Suppression Strategy, which, of course, the member for Steinbach and every member on that side have voted against. Of course, the Winnipeg Auto Theft Suppression Strategy provides for intensive community supervision of offenders. It means protocols, so when there are breaches steps are taken as soon as possible.

And I'm happy to talk about auto theft because, unlike members opposite, this side of the House works with different levels of governments to get

things done. And I'm happy to table for the member a letter that the Minister of Public Safety, Vic Toews, handed to me yesterday, in which Minister Toews says: I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for your support of this legislation, as we work with our federal partners to make laws—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, we're very happy to work with victims, and we worked with the Andrzejczak family, who came to us after being turned away by the Minister of Justice. We worked with them to bring forward a petition because they want—they want—this province to get serious about breaches and to get—ensure that those probation breaches are reported. In fact, every member of this House voted in favour of reporting probation breaches just this last session, and now under a freedom of information request, we're told that those records aren't even being kept.

Won't this minister have the strength of the Andrzejczak family, have the strength to stand up and say he's actually going to stick to his word and not quit, like he's quit so many things before, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Swan: Well, if you want to talk about quitting, we will talk about the quitting that this opposition party would want to present to Manitobans as they recklessly cut \$500 million to the budget. And forcing court orders takes resources; it doesn't just happen. That's why we support more probation workers, that's why we support and include in our budgets more police officers for the City of Winnipeg and, indeed, police forces across the province. That's why we're making an historic investment in Crowns.

They've already voted against each of the 48 Crown attorneys that we have added. We are making the investments they wouldn't. Not only would they be cutting nurses and teachers and social workers, they would be cutting probation officers, they'd be laying off Crown attorneys, and they'd be going to the RCMP and the City of Winnipeg, and the City of Brandon, and telling them to lay off police officers.

We know that these investments are important. Unfortunately, they are so out of touch, they just don't get it, Mr. Speaker.

Criminal Offenders Recidivism Rate

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Steinbach, on a new question.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): The only thing we're looking forward to laying off is NDP MLAs after the next election.

Mr. Speaker, also, last session, this minister promised the House and he promised the media a detailed accounting of expenditures that this government was making for things such as Slurpees and for—and baseball tickets for convicted young offenders. After six months, yesterday, the response finally came, not a detailed breakdown, not a year-to-year comparison, but an admission that over \$17,000 was spent last year for treats for convicted young offenders.

* (10:40)

And while maybe 7-Eleven benefited from these expenditures, did Manitobans really benefit? Statistics show that 90 per cent of youth in the Manitoba Youth Centre are going to reoffend when re-released. Is this minister beginning to understand that his \$17,000 Slurpee solution isn't reducing youth crime in our province?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm quite happy to talk about young offenders and the work that my predecessors and our government's done to make sure the Youth Criminal Justice Act provides meaningful consequences.

And, you know, this year, we were looking forward to the federal government introducing effective legislation to deal with young offenders, and in some ways they got it right—they got it right—there is a bill which would actually allow judges to take into account denunciation deterrence. That's good. We welcome that.

But the member opposite should well know there are some serious problems with that proposed legislation which would make it almost impossible to keep young people in custody pending trial, that will actually expand the availability of conditional sentences for out-of-control youth and, as well, will have other consequences that are going to make it very, very difficult, including making it almost impossible to ever seek an adult sentence.

Well, Manitoba didn't stand still. We work with governments of all stripes—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, there's a reason why on his door of his office it says Minister of Justice. It's because he has some responsibility, that he actually has some power. There's a reason why he gets the car and there's a reason why he gets the extra salary. It's because he can actually do certain things but he's not doing them, and we don't just see it on the youth side, we see it on the adult side, where 70 per cent—and these are new statistics—70 per cent of individuals who are leaving Headingley are just committing another crime. It's nothing but a brief time out, three meals a day, on their way to another victim.

The Slurpee solution isn't working. The soft-on-crime approach isn't working. Doesn't he understand that he's created in Manitoba a system that just simply has people go in jail, leave jail, recommit an offence and another victim, and they're not breaking the cycle? Why doesn't he get it? He has a job. Is he ever going to do it before Manitobans say he's out?

Mr. Swan: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm so glad the member for Steinbach found his voice during this Throne Speech debate, because actually it was pointed out to me that last year, during the Throne Speech, the member never asked a single question on Justice. Well, why was that? I'm guessing, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Steinbach discussed, I have a feeling that his shyness was because of the Integrated Organized Crime Task Force, an investment by our government for intelligent work, intelligent policing with our police forces across the province. And when they moved in and they shut down the Zig Zag Crew and put more than 30 dangerous gang members behind bars, it was probably very funny for the member for Steinbach. He has all the words. Man, he's got a lot of words once in a while.

We have action on this side and we are using smart ideas to get tough on crime and make sure dangerous criminals are where they should be, behind bars.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been accused of a few things in this House but never being shy. I'll add it to the list.

All of the phony and desperate announcements that we've seen from this NDP government over the last 11 years, and we're going to see a lot more

phony and desperate announcements from this government over the next 11 months.

But it doesn't change the fact—it doesn't change the fact—that we've become the violent capital of Canada under this government. It doesn't change the fact that our justice system is a revolving door of criminals under this NDP government. And it doesn't change the fact that Manitobans are fed up with crime in this province. Simply, Mr. Speaker, after 11 years of NDP government and things have only gotten worse, why would anyone, other than an NDP MLA, believe that over the next 11 months these desperate and phony announcements are going to make things any better?

Mr. Swan: Well, if the member for Steinbach was listening to the Throne Speech, he would've learned that we have plans to continue expanding the gang response and suppression plan, the GRASP program, which Manitoba Justice supports together with the City of Winnipeg Police Service, which works with Crown attorneys and probation officers to make sure that there's effective policing, there's effective measures when somebody breaches.

The GRASP program is taking on the high-risk offenders and making sure there is constant supervision; police officers, probations officers are in their face. But let me explain again to the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) these things just don't happen. These require investments in people, investments in resources, and this member from Steinbach and his leader want to cut half a billion dollars from the provincial budget. He wants to hamstring the police. He wants to hamstring our Crown attorneys. That's not the way you get things done in this province.

Violent Crime Rate Reduction Strategy

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Wow. Mr. Speaker, with those weak and desperate answers, we know that the Attorney General has been so preoccupied running failed civic campaigns that he hasn't had time to deal with the crime in his own constituency, and the Premier's been so busy on his failed stadium deal he hasn't had time. Their top priority last session was protecting ministerial salaries; their top priority this session is opening up time so they can go shopping at Christmas. That's their priorities.

When is this Premier's top priority going to be fighting crime? Will he step in and save his failing minister and protect their very own constituents from violent crime so that we don't have any more of the sort of failures we're seeing from his Attorney General?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it's remarkable the member now is against shopping. It's just phenomenal that [*inaudible*] That's a new level of saliency in the Legislature now that he's against shopping.

You know, perhaps he's missed some of the announcements. Perhaps the member opposite has missed some of the announcements that we've made this week.

Yesterday we made a—[*interjection*] The members opposite seem to want to go shopping sooner than everybody else in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

He missed the announcement yesterday where this government has decided that it's important for young people to stay in school to 18 years old. It's a historic announcement. It builds on all the work we're doing with helping young people have the access—having access to the programs they—it builds on the work this government has done to help young people have access to the programs they need to succeed in education, in training and in job opportunities.

And we have seen the lowest unemployment youth rate in the country here right now because of the many things we've done to allow young people to get an education and to get a job. That's how we're dealing with crime, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the issue is one of priorities for the Premier and his government. Manitobans are saying that their top priority is safety in our communities. Manitobans don't like living in a place that's known as the violent crime capital of Canada. And so while the Premier is fumbling the ball on the stadium deal and his Attorney General is running failed civic election campaigns, Manitobans are looking for somebody to step up and provide leadership. It's a matter of setting priorities. It's not the priority of Manitobans to protect ministerial salaries.

And I want to ask that since—which was their focus last session—I want to ask the Premier: Will he show leadership and put the safety of Manitobans on

top of the agenda, rather than playing political games in their little offices, put safety at the top of the agenda?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this is one thing that the member opposite and I agree on. It is a matter of priorities.

That's exactly why we do not agree with their desire to cut a half a billion dollars out of the budget at a—in the middle of us recovering from a recession. They wanted to lay off police officers. They wanted to lay off teachers. They wanted to lay off health-care workers.

We're investing in young people and the education system. We're investing in recreation opportunities for young people and their families. We're investing in a health-care system, including mental health services and a mental health court on the justice side to improve the services to help people. We're investing in things that will help young people get into the labour market with the skills they need so that they can earn a living.

The members opposite do—have not demonstrated one single idea in this regard. All they want to do is gut everything that moves out there in terms of the budget, lay people off and roll back the minimum wage. How's that going to help deal with crime? Nobody can answer that question from the members opposite.

*(10:50)

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, their only attack on the opposition is that they are alleging that we want to relieve ourselves in Lake Winnipeg. And the concern Manitobans have is not about what the opposition is doing; it's about the fact that they're desperately wetting their pants across the aisle as they approach the election.

I just want to ask the leader of the bedwetting party if he can just stop panicking for a moment and set aside his paranoia and desperation, and focus for a few minutes on the priority of Manitobans, which is safer streets. Can he put aside his desperate paranoia and focus on real results for the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, if the member wasn't so obsessed with smart aleck comments like that he'd know—he would know that the priorities—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, he would know that the priorities of this side of the Legislature are precisely things that will make a difference for young people and their families: investments in education; investments in a stimulus program, which has brought us the lowest unemployment rate in the country; investments in innovation and new technologies, including hydro projects that will grow the economy; including wind power; including geothermal; including building our schools and our hospitals; including building more recreation facilities; including signature recreation facilities like a stadium; including water protection. Those are the priorities Manitobans have told us are important. That's why we're investing in them.

The members opposite want to cut the budget and gut all of these protections for Manitobans. That's their approach, which will not be accepted by Manitobans.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Underwater Location

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, under this government the Premier has allowed Manitoba to fall behind Saskatchewan as a place to raise a family or to build a business and, now, yesterday, we learned that this visionless government has allowed Manitoba to fall behind Atlantic Canada when it comes to taking leadership on green energy approaches. The governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia announced yesterday that they care about the environment and that they will build a major high voltage transmission line under the water going for a long distance in order to make sure that Nova Scotia has got power.

I've been on the record for three years asking for an underwater line down the centre of Lake Winnipeg as a best option for Bipole III. Can the Premier tell us why it is that under his visionless government's leadership he has failed and we're falling behind Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, just to put the record straight, the Government of Saskatchewan placed Manitoba as the No. 1 place for affordability and cost of living last year in their budget, so that—they were—they gave us a very strong ranking, No. 1.

It is true that there seems to be a new arrangement in the Atlantic provinces for electricity transmission. They want to do it in a way that avoids some of the historic issues they've had going through Québec. They are looking at underwater cable routes and they should be commended if they can bring this to fruition. Conditions are different in the Atlantic provinces in terms of freshwater versus seawater underwater transmission.

Manitoba Hydro, I understand, keeps an open mind to looking at new transmission opportunities in this province, and we support them in doing that. But we want to ensure that we continue to develop that resource, not only for the benefit of Manitobans in terms of reliability, which is why we need converter stations when the members opposite want to cut them out and put at risk the ability of families to have reliable electricity and businesses to have reliable electricity. We want transmission that's—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is championing bulldozing lots of forests on the west side of Manitoba. The Premier is championing going through lots of farmland and disrupting and angering many farmers. He's hardly a champion of forward-thinking progress for this province. Even Québec is putting a major power line under Lake Champlain to go to New York, and we are falling behind Maritimes, Québec, the rest of the world in our approach to power lines, while this Premier is just hurting farmers.

I ask the Premier again: Why is his province—why is his leadership so far behind, so visionless, when we could be leading and we could be ahead?

Mr. Selinger: Hydro has been tasked with examining the option of an underwater transmission capacity in this province. They will do the due diligence on that with outside expertise that's made available to them and, if that's a viable option, Hydro will consider that.

The reality is that we have term sheets signed with our customers to provide them green energy, and they want reliable green energy of good reputation, and that's what we're going to provide them. And at the same time as we do that, we're going to continue to protect the east side as the UNESCO World Heritage Site because we know that is a sustainable form of economic development for the future. Ecotourism is the fastest growing part of the tourism sector across the planet, and tourism is

one of the fastest growing sectors across this planet. We have an opportunity to protect a world-class asset and provide a highly reputable, clean power product to our customers to the south of us as well as to the west of us, and these are the opportunities we are pursuing. We're not taking the reckless approach of the members opposite, or the pie in the sky approach that the member has proposed. If that proposal is viable and technically feasible, it will be considered by Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the government's arrogance towards farmers in the committee hearing of October 25th was extraordinary. This proposal that the government is moving forward on with Bipole III going down the west side will do untold damage, not only to farmers, but it will bulldoze through and down many forests on the west side. It's very clear that this Premier is going in an old-style power line which is much longer, much more costly. I've been on record for calling for an underwater power line under Lake Winnipeg for Bipole III for more than three years. This Premier hasn't even presented a report in more than three years.

I ask the Premier: When is he going to present a report? Why is he so stuck in going down the west line when there's a much better option, much more environmentally favourable option, under Lake Winnipeg, for the future of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member for River Heights for the question. Hydro technology for transmission is evolving. Manitoba is the world leader on high-voltage, direct-current transmission, and we share this expertise around the entire planet in terms of helping people transmit energy over long distances with as much efficiency as possible.

Manitoba Hydro has the capacity, with external review and support, to look at the underwater option. If the underwater option makes sense and it's a good technology, a reliable technology, it will be considered by Manitoba Hydro. So I thank the member for his interest in that. It's a quantum leap better than what the members of the official opposition want to do, which is to gut Manitoba Hydro and put it at risk in terms of its export contracts and destroy the boreal forest. They want to roll the dice on the future of Manitoba Hydro and \$20 billion worth of revenues. At least the member from River Heights has some constructive suggestions which will be considered by Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

National Child Day

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, November 20th is National Child Day and commemorates the proclamation of the United Nations Declaration on Rights of the Child on November 20th, 1959, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the same day in 1989. The Convention outlines the basic human rights of which all children and youth should be entitled. The Convention on the Rights of the Child insists that the best interests of a child be the primary consideration in all actions concerning that child. The annual National Child Day forum and numerous other events across the province seek to raise awareness of the importance of healthy development of the child, the role of play and education, and the right of children with working parents to benefit from child-care services.

While National Child Day is a day to applaud an increasing interest in the well-being of children, I would also like to draw the attention of Manitobans to the particularly vulnerable children and youth in our province.

We must pay more attention to the social realities that have led to a substantial increase of Manitoba children in care to approximately 9,600, the highest number ever. Tragically, we are still seeing children mistreated by their parents even when they are involved with the Child and Family Services system. Recently, a six-year-old little boy had to beg for help four times before he was removed from an abusive household, and last month, a four-year-old little girl was killed by her mother. She had been returned to her mother's care after spending the majority of her life with a foster family.

We must continue to address the challenges faced by child welfare in this province, to ensure that the best interests of Manitoba's most vulnerable children are served first and foremost. The system is still failing far too many children.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

*(11:00)

Manitoba Métis Policy

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the recently unveiled Manitoba Métis Policy. At its heart, this policy recognizes the distinctness of the Métis people and

their invaluable contribution to the settlement and founding of the province of Manitoba.

Work on the Manitoba Métis Policy began in 2008 on the recommendation of the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission. Basing their work on mutual respect and interests, the Manitoba government and Manitoba Métis Federation developed a policy that better enables Manitoba's estimated 71,000 Métis people to address current and emerging issues.

In an effort to create a policy that would benefit Manitoba's Métis people well into the future, the representatives from government and the MMF grounded their work together in five key principles: recognition, partnership, a comprehensive approach, capacity and accountability.

The government of Manitoba has taken great strides in emphasizing the role Métis people played in the founding of our province. This is demonstrated by the Manitoba government's recognition of the legislative assembly of Assiniboia, which was the body that formally ratified the Manitoba Act in 1870 on behalf of the Red River settlers.

The role of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia in the development of this province has largely been forgotten. There was no public record or artifact that showed its importance before the unearthing of its sessional journal this past summer. The journal demonstrates just how important this assembly was to the foundation of responsible government in Manitoba and shows the pivotal role that the Métis people played in this regard.

I'm personally proud of my family's connection to this part of Manitoba's past. My first white ancestor to come to this country was James Curtis Bird, a Hudson Bay Company fur trader and one-time Governor of Assiniboia. He was the father of Dr. Curtis James Bird who served in the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. Dr. Bird was also the Speaker of the First Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and served there with my great-great-grandfather, Frederick Adolphus Bird, the MLA for the Portage la Prairie, who was a Métis.

May we all look back with pride and gratitude to the founding peoples of our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Austin Threshermen's Reunion

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): The annual Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede in Austin

made history this year, as two world records in plowing were set at the festival on August 1st.

The group involved in the attempt of this impressive feat was made up of farming equipment buffs from all over Canada. The idea to attempt a new record came from Erron Leafloor. Mr. Leafloor is originally from Killarney and now works as an engineer for Case International in Saskatoon. He was able to provide a significant contribution to the project as he was responsible for the hitch design.

Although planning for the world record attempt began three years ago, the team worked down to the wire in the 11 days leading up to the Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede. The group worked up to 16 hours a day during this period to make sure everything was just right for the big day.

The first—for the first attempt at a new world record, the world's largest plow was used to till an area 78 feet wide. The team was successful in beating the previous record that was set in Illinois in 2005 by using five Rumely 30-60 Model E tractors to pull the plow with 66 14-inch bottoms. Fittingly, the attempt took place on the 100th anniversary of the Rumely Oil Pull tractor. Rumely enthusiasts from all over North America gathered in Austin to celebrate the event.

The second world record was set for pulling the largest plow using just one tractor. This time a brand new tractor from New Holland was used. Again, the team was successful and will have both of their new records documented by the World Records Academy.

Elliot Sims, one of the co-chairman of the festival, stated that the record attempt went off smoothly, although it was tricky to negotiate the extremely wide turns.

Spectators were excited about the event and the chance to see a world record set before their eyes. Many of the observers had spent many years farming and shared their amazement at witnessing the event.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to extend my congratulations to the team who worked so hard to set the two new world records and put Austin, Manitoba, on the map. Their contribution to the event helped to make this year's Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede a great success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

J.H. Bruns Collegiate

Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, on November 10th, the students at J.H. Bruns Collegiate co-led a touching Remembrance Day ceremony with various divisions of the Winnipeg Cadets. The student-run ceremony paid a sincere tribute to fallen soldiers and personalized Remembrance Day for students and invited guests.

Student council members wrote speeches for the ceremony and read a letter from Alexander Waugh, a Manitoba lieutenant who fought in World War I. The choir sang, featuring soloists Katie Tough and Shannon Patterson. It ended with both army and sea cadets conducting a marching salute to the flag.

Sanjana Menon, the student body president, and Anthony Ferens of the Royal Canadian Cadets co-organized the event. The teachers at J.H. Bruns Collegiate based their expectations on two beliefs: respect and responsibility. For the cadets, their mandate is to encourage leadership, good citizenship and self-confidence. This Remembrance Day ceremony included examples of all these traits. The students and cadets, through researching the qualities of the soldiers they wanted to honour, absorbed these qualities themselves.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the tribute, especially Sanjana Menon and Anthony Ferens. You can be proud of this event and the respect it showed for our fallen soldiers.

Boonstra Farms

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Each year, families gather at Boonstra Farms, located near Stonewall, for a day of fun, of entertainment. Boonstra Farm is owner operated by Murray and Pauline Boonstra, just located 15 kilometres north of the Perimeter. The Boonstras are dedicated towards creating a place where farm and family meet and offer fun activities for the spring, summer and autumn months.

Boonstra Farm offers its patrons a variety of different activities to take part in during their visit to the farm. In the spring, the farm is open for bus tours, where students can learn how to milk a cow, take part in an environmental nature walk, enjoy the fox tower and a large bale maze, the petting zoo, a wagon tour and a playground. During the summer months guests are welcome to fresh strawberries, raspberries that are available for picking.

Autumn is, perhaps, the farm's busiest time, as kids gather for many Halloween attractions that are

set up on the farm in the weeks leading up to Halloween. Visitors are welcome to visit the Tower of Terror, the Black Hole and go on a hayride, where they might run into the farm's Headless Horseman.

The main attraction at the Boonstra Farms, however, is Murray's Maze, a 10-acre corn maze, which makes it one of the largest mazes of its kind in Canada. When seen from the sky, these mazes are a work of art. They are designed and cut to resemble a popular image. Some of the past mazes have been designed to resemble the RCMP Musical Ride, the Assiniboia Downs, even Michael Jackson. This year's maze was a tribute to one of Manitoba's most well-known symbols. It was cut in the shape of the Golden Boy. There is also a smaller one-acre maze for children and kids, night mazes and a spooky Halloween maze that starts in October.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Murray and Pauline Boonstra and all the staff of Boonstra Farm for transforming their farm into a small tourist attraction. They have found a way to welcome people of all ages to their farm for a fun, educational experience.

I encourage all members of this House and Manitobans to visit Boonstra Farms. I am certain they will find it to be a great experience no matter what their interests may be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business. I'm rising to seek agreement of the House that, as per the written agreement between myself, the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the time limit specified in rules 31(2) and 31(3) for the selection and prioritization of private members' resolutions shall be waived for the November and December sitting of this Legislature with the understanding that private members' resolutions can still be announced a week in advance for consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement of the House as per the written agreement between the minister, the Opposition House Leader and the member for River Heights, the time limit specified in rules 31(2) and 31(3) for the selection and 'priorization' of private members' resolutions shall be waived for the November and December sitting of this Legislature with the understanding that private members'

resolutions can still be announced a week in advance for consideration.

Is there agreement? [*Agreed*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH (Third Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: We'll resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen)

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

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fifth Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba, and the proposed motion of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in amendment thereto.

And it's standing in the name of the honourable Minister for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, who has 26 minutes remaining.

* (11:10)

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to continue with my comments that I started yesterday and, of course, yesterday I had the privilege of following the member from Carman. And I referenced the fact that the member from Carman said that they are not going to win an election on health care. Well, we knew that—we knew that—and we did talk about the things that we promised in this Throne Speech for improving health care in the province of Manitoba.

Now, one of the things that I found really curious is the member opposite said that they were going to run an election on education. I could not believe what I was hearing from the members opposite: that they're going run an election on education. Because when you consider the records of their government to our government, and what we're committing to continue to do once we've set the table, as we have over the last 10, 11 years, for continuous improvement, Mr. Speaker, members opposite increased spending and investment in education by 2 per cent—2 per cent, not in one year, not in two years, but 11 years. Our investment to our education system over the same period of time was in excess of 40 per cent—[*interjection*]

And I hear the member from Lakeside chattering about taxes. Well, we've introduced measures to offset dependence on property taxes, and the member from Lakeside should know, because he was on the school division, I believe, as a—he worked for the school division—and their taxes were going up every year that the Conservatives were in office because they abandoned their responsibility for education. I know in Evergreen School Division, like every other school division, taxes kept going up. Every year I didn't know whether or not I would have a job as a young teacher, and every year for five years I didn't realize—I didn't have the job security because of their funding formula. And it was only because teachers are retiring that I was fortunate enough to continue to be a teacher at Evergreen School Division.

But, you know, members opposite, it's really curious how they say they are going to run on education. I find that passing strange; the party that gutted the system, the party that showed nothing but disdain for the profession, the party that introduced punitive legislation that cut teachers' salaries, that introduced punitive legislation that stripped them of all their collective bargaining rights after over 50 years of bargaining in good faith.

So, you know, for them to say that they're going to run on education is really, and quite frankly, bizarre. I can't think of any other word to describe that.

Now, you know, it's—it was also really fascinating following the member from Carman because he stood up and called the bipole silly—silly. I could not believe that I am hearing that, calling the bipole silly. Well, Mr. Speaker, you know—*[interjection]*—and I also hear them nattering about the New West Partnership. So they don't want us to sell hydro to the west, but they want us to sign up on the New West Partnership. So it's a rather fascinating position for the members opposite to take.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what's been happening in this province over the last 10 years—and they always natter, oh, you guys, bad for the economy, NDP bad, NDP bad. Well, if you want to take a look at what's been happening in this province, Manitoba has the lowest unemployment rate in the country: 5.2 per cent, and it's better than second place Saskatchewan, at 5.7. Manitoba's youth unemployment rate is also the lowest in the country at 9.2 per cent. In the past 12 months, 19,200 jobs have been created, including 15,100 full-time jobs and 14,500 private sector jobs—

An Honourable Member: Would you like fries with those jobs?

Mr. Bjornson: And the member opposite is belittling the work that our communities have been doing, that the private sector has been doing to create employment here—this coming from a member who claims to have been a very business-friendly individual.

Now, jobs are increased by 1,600 positions in October, bringing the total number employed to 625,300, an all-time new record; 3,200 more full-time jobs in October. So our growth is leading the country when it comes to job creation. Not only are more Manitobans working than ever before, we're creating more full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the members opposite, I heard the member from Brandon West, when we were talking about our plans, say, no plan is better than your plan. So does that mean they have no plan? They have no plan? Well, actually, no, that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. They do have a plan, and their plan is a very dangerous plan, quite frankly, if you take into consideration what \$500 million in cuts would mean, what would that mean to the province of Manitoba. You know, as a former educator who saw the cuts year after year from the members of the Conservative government in the 1990s, as a teacher who'd seen 254 teachers given pink slips in one year, I know what Tory cuts can do to the education system. As a teacher, I had difficulty getting textbooks in his classroom because of education cuts, funding cuts by the Tories.

I know what \$500 million in cuts would do if they applied that strictly to education because what was their platform in education in the last election? Their platform—pardon me, in the last budget—was they were going to give \$20 million to schools of excellence. Now, look what we're doing. We're saying all students should stay in school till 18 years of age. We're targeting children who have been at risk of leaving school. We're targeting students who don't necessarily fit in the current system to find a way to make the system fit the child, not force the child to fit the system, make the system fit the child. And that's what we're going to do to keep kids in school from all corners of the province.

And members opposite, their plan for education: schools of excellence. Now, members opposite, if they knew anything about education, would know that there is a correlation between low socio-economic status and student achievement. So what was their plan? Instead of resourcing the schools that

needed the money most, they were going to give the schools—give the money to schools that were achieving excellent grades.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you have to question the wisdom in that because all that does is further increase the gap between those who are most at risk versus those who come from the more affluent and more privileged parts of society, if you will. So for them to say, we'll just give—oh, no, it wasn't \$20 million. Pardon me, it was only \$10 million. That's what they were going to do, \$10 million to schools of excellence. How did that compare to our funding announcement of over \$50 million when they came up with that model? Pales in comparison and targets very few individuals, not the entire school system. But that's their model. They govern for the elite. We govern for all Manitobans and we'll continue to do so.

So what would that mean if they were to cut \$500 million from the budget? I hate to think what that would mean to the education system because I've seen it happen before. Now, where would they cut? Well, the tough-on-crime crew, if they were to cut \$500 million, that's the equivalent of eliminating the entire Department of Justice, \$402 million, and then they'd have to find another \$98 million to cut from somewhere.

An Honourable Member: That's Healthy Living.

Mr. Bjornson: That's Healthy Living. There you go. Would they cut \$461.5 million from child protection and child care? Or the champions of tax cuts who I don't think cut any taxes when they were in office—did they cut any taxes?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Bjornson: No, I don't think so. The champions of business and tax cuts had a 9 per cent small business tax, which, by the way, will be zero under this government. The champions of tax cuts who had a 17 per cent corporate tax plus a corporate capitalization tax—and now corporate taxes are down to I believe 13 per cent. Correct me if I'm wrong, but they're going down. Did they cut the taxes? No. *[interjection]* The small business threshold being increased—all these things that we've done to support business and support private enterprise in Manitoba could be wiped out if they choose to cut \$500 million from the budget because all the business tax reductions since 2000 has totalled \$422 million.

Now, I know the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), I believe, was directly involved with the

Board of Governors at the University of Manitoba when tuitions kept going up and up and up and up and up, and, you know, he's spoken against the tuition freeze, and he's really said some rather disparaging things about the quality of the universities here in Manitoba. Well, take \$500 million out of the budget; you're going to cut all university operating grants at \$471 million.

As the First Minister said in question period today, what are you going to cut? Tell us what you're going to cut, but they are not having any answers for that. Oh, maybe it's the personal income tax. Maybe they want to reverse all the reductions that we brought in since 2000 which amounts to \$455 million. What are you going to cut? *[interjection]* The member from Brandon East: Oh, no plan is better than your plan. Well, we know what their plan is, \$500 million in cuts.

* (11:20)

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to gut legislation that's been very important to Manitobans, particularly as a lifelong resident of the Gimli community, growing up by Lake Winnipeg. Here they are, they're talking about water regulations. They're going to gut the water regulations. It's taken a century to bring the lake to the state that it's in in terms of the health of the lake. It's going to take many, many years for that lake to be restored to the health that we all desire as Manitobans. You know that Lake Winnipeg is a jewel in the crown for tourism, for the fishing industry, for all the recreational opportunities that it presents. We know that it's a jewel in the crown. It's going to take a long time to restore the health of the lake, and what do they want to do? They want to gut the legislation. And the Leader of the Opposition was kind of joking about that in question period today, and, frankly, as someone who's lived by the lake all his life, I find that really offensive.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's clearly a choice to support a Throne Speech that has a vision for Manitoba that supports health care, a vision for Manitoba that supports education, a vision for Manitoba that supports economic and innovative culture in the province of Manitoba, a vision that supports helping families and the environment, a vision that supports safer communities, a vision that supports rural and northern Manitoba, or—let's cut to the chase—what their options would be: cutting, cutting, cutting. Cutting health care, cutting Education, cutting

Family Services, cutting Justice, that's what members opposite would do.

And then they've also said, you know, of course, that they'd be very, very friendly with respect to the business community. So are they going to not only cut money from the budget but also cut revenues? I guess that remains to be seen, what their plan would be, because they haven't told us what their plan is. But we know what their plan is: It's to cut, cut, cut.

Manitobans deserve better, and they should be supporting the Throne Speech because this is a Throne Speech that lays the future out for the province of Manitoba. And we'll do what we do best: We grow together, we work together and we'll become a stronger province because of it. And I'm proud to be on this side of the government speaking in support of this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I, too, am pleased to be able to stand up and put a few comments on the record.

And in a special way, I want to welcome you back, Mr. Speaker, and wish you good health. And it reminded me, back in 1995 when I was elected, it was right after we had had our first session in June that—actually, I was at home for three days and that's when I got necrotizing fasciitis, what is called as—actually, we know it as flesh-eating disease. And so I was hospitalized for—I guess it was 12 days. And so the point I wanted to make on that is I think we should never take our health for granted. We never know what the next thing will—day will bring us. So, when you mentioned that you were going to be having some surgery, those were some of the flashbacks that I had for myself. And so I think there's others in this Chamber who have had health challenges as well, and so we live one day at a time, but when we have good health we should enjoy it and be thankful for it.

I, too, want to welcome the pages back and I know that they will have an enjoyable experience. From previous pages who have been here, at the end of the day, I think they feel it's been an exciting educational experience for them. And our table officers, you know, the work that they do for us we should never take for granted. And we may not always agree, but so be it. They—we do appreciate their work.

And, just having come through a civic election, I, too, want to congratulate those who were elected

as mayors and councillors and school board members.

And for those who let their names stand, it's—it takes, I think, that extra—well, maybe it's the extra momentum that each individual needs to have to put their name on a ballot. There are those who criticize, and at the end of the day if you ask them, well, would you be prepared to put your name on a ballot and run for office, very often they shrink back and they would say, no, I really wouldn't want to do that, but I have taken on that role of being—the critical role of being—of criticizing you. So I, too, want to thank them for their work—or the fact that they have taken on that responsibility within our own communities.

And then last but not least, I want to thank the constituency of Pembina for the trust that they have again put in me, for allowing me to be here to represent them. And it is a wonderful constituency. And I know that all 57 of us feel that we have the best one, and I can truly say that I do have the best constituency and the constituents there that I do represent. And so that is—I just again want to thank them for the confidence that they have put in me.

Now to the Throne Speech. Yes, it was—it went on and on. However, I think when you start to analyze it and take a look at it in a critical manner, you find out that it is a rehash of the previous years. And really, there is a skepticism that one develops over a period of time, and when I think back at the 1999 election of the promises that were made by the now government, they were desperate at that time. I think we're seeing some of that desperation sliding in again at this point in time. But they—the promises that they made, such as ending hallway medicine, keeping balanced budgets or they were going to cure and fix health care in six months with \$15 million.

Now, they could say that was then and, of course, once they were elected and were government, they changed their mind. But I do think though that when promises like that are made that they know very well—and the gentleman at the time, Gary Doer, who was the Leader of the Opposition and then became Premier, had enough experience within this House to know that the promises he was making could not be kept. And so it puts a black eye on the whole political life when promises are made, promises that cannot be kept, and certainly that is something that we see that this government has done time and time and time again, and so it leads one to become rather skeptical of the whole process.

I've said this numerous times in this House when I've had the opportunity to speak and that is that we make some of our worst decisions during the best of times, and this government has come through some very good times, and they did not prepare for the times that would not be so good, and they do come. We know that there are going to be variances in incomes. Whether it's on a personal level, whether it's government, whether it's as a province, we know that these times will come, and it's imperative that those who are in power and have that responsibility that they do put away some money or whatever other resources are needed for those days that will not be as good.

So, consequently, this is something that the government has had the opportunity to do. They have not taken that opportunity and so now the beneficiaries of this mismanagement are the people in the province of Manitoba. It's our children and our grandchildren who are going to be paying the penalty for years and years to come.

We see this mismanagement continue when we look at the Justice file, and again this morning we heard of the issues in the province of Manitoba that we are the crime capital of Canada. You know, it's a sad commentary on this province when those are the statistics that are out there, and these are not only statistics, these are actually people who are impacted by the violence within our communities. Now, I could—as a rural Manitoban I could say, well, this is the city of Winnipeg. I will indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that the violence and the crime that we see in the city is moving out into rural areas as well and is something that we are impacted by.

And so it is important that when suggestions are given, and I know that our critic for Justice, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), has given numerous suggestions to the government of the day. They haven't taken that advice. Why not? I'm not sure. But I guess they really feel that the direction they are going is the correct one. When I see it I open the paper and I see the violence that is taking place within this city, and then I see—and we do go to Mexico every year. We enjoy it out there, and people will say, well, are you not afraid of the violence out there? Well, I say, just go to north Winnipeg. Really, what is the difference? And I'm not saying that one is right and the other is wrong or whatever. All I'm saying is that there is violence all over the place, and it is imperative that we in this province do the very, very best that we can to make sure that we can live in safe communities.

* (11:30)

I mentioned—or made mention of the fact of balanced budgets, that in 1999 the then-NDP, who then became government, did on their—in their platform say that they would continue with balanced budgets. What has happened over the period of time? We've had good years, and I indicated that as well in my speech; we've had good years. But have we prepared for the future? No. And now we have left a mess for future generations. And, as legislators and individuals, whether it's in our homes, in a business, whatever, we should leave the business or the province, whatever we represent, in a better state. It should be in a better state when we leave rather than when we first entered, and that's not taking place out here.

We have a \$24-billion debt, and it's rising at 10 per cent per year. We have no plan to grow the economy and, you know, when we look at the spending that is taking place, when we see how they have been raiding Crown corporations, and then they come back and they say that they expect the revenues to grow by 1 per cent per year. The spending is going to be at 5 per cent per year. Then they suggest that within five years they're going to be able to balance the books. I would say, do the math. It doesn't work. It does not work. Any of us who—that'd be like trying to pay off your credit card. You're going to pay it off at 1 per cent per year, but you're going to increase your expenditures by 5 per cent, like, you will never ever pay off that credit card. So the only thing that this government can do is raise taxes. And, you know, doing that is just going to, again, challenge businesses, anyone living within the province to move and look other places. And so their plan to reduce, or rather to have a balanced budget, to me, just doesn't work, and that the only thing that can happen is that they will increase the taxes in the province of Manitoba.

Then they continue to say that they have support for small businesses. The only way that they can survive—and any small business can survive—is if they can be competitive. Keep the rates down for all Manitobans, but, no, there is no plan. Manitoba has had the lowest GDP per capita in the West every year since the NDP formed government in 1999. The debt being carried by every man, woman and child in Manitoba is now \$19,000. Since 1999 the NDP have added nearly \$10 billion to the Province's debt. In taxation, since 2001 Manitobans have paid the highest taxes west of Québec.

Now, where do our revenues come from? Equalization. Manitobans' dependence on—Manitoba's, rather, dependence on federal handouts continues to grow. For 2010, 37 per cent of Manitoba's budget is coming from Ottawa, compared to 28 per cent in 1999.

Now, this government constantly refers to the federal government and the things that they are doing, and they call it the stimulus package, and, et cetera, et cetera. Well, I will assure you that the federal government will also not continue and increase the equalization on payments that they have. So, consequently, in order to balance the books here, this province cannot be depending on the increase in numbers in the equalization payments.

Now, only 21 per cent of small businesses in Manitoba are confident that their provincial government has a vision that supports small business and entrepreneurs. By the way, in Saskatchewan, 79 per cent of the businesses feel confident that there is support for what they are doing—21 per cent in Manitoba. These are the people who are supposed to be growing our economy, and you will not grow an economy if you don't have confidence in what you are doing. Only 53 per cent of Manitoba's small business said that they would likely recommend starting a business within this province. Now, that's—that really, really is a sad state for what we see taking place here within this province.

Just to continue, I also want to talk about the fact that the—Manitoba was—has been left out of the western partnership agreement. And, just before I make a few comments on that, it's interesting to note that 80 per cent of what we produce within the province of Manitoba is exported, and in order to be able to have those exports we need to have buyers. In order to be able to have buyers you need to be competitive. And the way that we are going is we're definitely losing our competitive edge, and businesses are not confident that they want to continue to grow, because there's no point in producing more product not having an export market for it, and then, on top of it, losing money doing it.

So, on February the—or, rather, the second Friday of September 2009, Ontario and Québec held a joint Cabinet meeting. On the same day, the cabinets of BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan were also meeting. Manitoba was excluded from both Cabinet meetings. So here we sit in the middle of the country. We're sort of an island unto ourselves and, yet, none of the other provinces really want to do business with us.

And why is that? They don't have confidence in this government.

Now, we on this side of the House firmly believe that Manitoba's participation in trade and economic agreements, such as the New West Partnership, are an integral part to the advancement of our economy. The New West Partnership is aimed specifically at the expansion of economic ties to Asia, which is a market that Manitoba would profit from enormously. Manitoba's isolation from such ties and partnerships under the NDP hurts our economy and our business sector. We say that in here, but we're not the only ones who feel this. I've talked to many a businessman who feels exactly the same way.

Now, just to sort of wrap that up, there are other comments that I could make specific to that are that in the response to Manitoba's exclusion from the New West Partnership, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall is quoted saying that: We decided that there just seemed to be more in common between these three most western provinces in terms of their equalization status. These are three have provinces and yet we sit here and we stand here and the government of the day stands here with their hands up and just say, could we have a little more money from Ottawa? And that well will dry up as well. And why not become an independent province and deal with the issues that you have internally?

I want to move on to health care as well, and I will indicate here today that I was very pleased that the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) came to Morden this past week and that she announced the new Tabor Home. You know, I—it is great—it was great that she came and we were very pleased to have her out there. But there is a skepticism within the community as well, and I will tell you what that skepticism is. Fourteen months ago, the minister was out there and it was basically the same call as she had on Monday when she came. She asked all the dignitaries and local leaders and community to come to her announcement. At that time, her announcement was that they were going to be doing another study, but added to that was that the study would take place and it would be brought back to the community within two months. Fourteen months later—14 months later—there is an announcement that there could be and that there will be a Tabor Home. Now, again, I want to be optimistic and I want to continue to assure the people within my constituency that this will take place, but I think you cannot help but feel that element of skepticism when this is what has taken place in the past.

So it was a good announcement. There was nothing said about a cost; there was nothing said about timelines. I have been told that this will be fast-tracked and I've also heard a rumour—and I hope that it's a correct one—that within three years this facility will be completed, and that's wonderful.

I also want to thank the chair of the RHA and the CEO, Kathy McPhail, for the work that she has continued to do on this file. The board of Tabor Home—they have worked very, very hard for many, many years. This is not a new concept; it's nothing that just sort of popped out of the sky, but it needs—but it's something that certainly needs to be done. However, just add to that skepticism: when you have a government of the day who says that they're going to end hallway medicine and it's as rampant as it always has been or who says that they're going to fix the health-care system within six months and \$15 million. I will submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that some skepticism does arise when these kinds of promises are made and are not kept. And so, again, we will be watching this file very closely to see whether in fact it will move ahead as the minister has indicated.

* (11:40)

I want to make a few comments regarding labour and immigration, and that is the critic area that is my responsibility. And, again, I just—I know that the minister indicated that she was very proud of the Nominee Program, and we all are. And, of course, it started under our government and so, consequently, it's something that we are proud of, that we continue to see take place, and certainly my community has been the recipient of much of that immigration. And I know, too, that when you look at immigration, the word "cluster" is used and that is something that has taken place within our area, that the first immigrants who came, and it's a number of years ago when they started coming, they have been good ambassadors and have indicated to their friends that, you know, it's a good place to move to. It's a good place to be a part of, a good community to be a part of, that there are jobs out there, and so consequently they have been the messengers and have gone back to their home countries and people have come to the community. And so we are grateful for that. And they are the ones who are out there, and many of them started as employees and moved into buying their own businesses and starting their own business, being employers themselves. So that is really gratifying to see.

Now Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program, touted in the NDP's Throne Speech, was spearheaded by the Progressive Conservative Party, as I said, and I know that the minister has made a comment to that. And I would say that if anything was said correctly by the—by Gary Doer when he was the Premier that the things that worked they would keep. Thank goodness at least they did keep this program.

But, when the minister starts talking about the huge growth that we have here, I would just question the fact and ask why is it that since 1999, under the NDP government, 175,000 people have moved out of the province. We've had immigration in but, again, if the math is the same as it is in the Finance Department, then does this equate to a net loss of people within the province of Manitoba? So, you know, we can say all the kinds of things that we want. We can have all kinds of platitudes out there. But, ultimately, the proof is in the growth of the economy. And, as I indicated, we are pleased to have had that growth take place within the area that I represent.

I want to mention just a few things about agriculture, as well, and I know that the government has instituted a taxing program. But I was talking about taxing just a few minutes ago. But they are now going to be taxing supply management—the dairy industry, the feather industry. Like, why tax them? But, again, this government is desperate. They have failed in their attempt to try to run a good province, and so consequently they are now taxing commodity groups within our province that are able to survive and do well, and I congratulate them for doing that. But why do we have to put taxes in those areas at this point?

The other area I want to talk about in agriculture and that is the Minister of Agriculture, I have—and he will remember, that's a year ago that we started talking about some of the programs that were out there, and I know that in the Throne Speech it was mentioned that they were very—that, in fact, the dollars had gone to Agriculture through the form of stabilization programs or crop insurance. And I guess I want to indicate to the minister that in crop insurance, for instance, those are premiums that are paid by producers. And so I don't think that we should penalize them for saying that they are getting any handouts.

But, suffice it to say, I just want to move one step further on that, and I know that the minister is very well of the issue that I have. In '09 it was

brought to his attention that Manitoba Crop Insurance officials did make a commitment to the corn producers, who did harvest their crops and, yet, to this point the crop insurance officials and crop insurance, who is under the watch of the now minister, have reneged on their commitment, and so I am trusting that the file isn't closed. But I do hope that the minister will take to heart the comments that he made and said that he wanted to have fairness in the system, and I think it's been pointed out to him time and time again that the fairness in the system does not exist.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by saying that over a period of 11 years we have seen a litany of promises made and not kept. We're going to fix hallway medicine—did not work. We're going to fix health care with six months with \$15 million—that didn't work. We're going to keep balanced budgets, and that didn't work. What we now see is that we've got a \$24-billion debt within the province. Our plan is to have growth of 1 per cent and expenditures of 5 per cent per year and balance the budget in five years.

Mr. Speaker, that math doesn't work in my books. I know that the government must have a plan. At least I sure would hope they would have, but they did not reveal that within the Throne Speech and so I just want to indicate that the current government has failed in its promise to Manitobans and, as a result, it is now clearer than ever that it will require a new government to deliver positive results on the crime reduction, fiscal responsibility, job creation, tax relief, protection from rate hikes, access to family physicians, support for farm families, the cleanup of Lake Winnipeg, better sports facilities and infrastructure, stability within Child and Family Services, and other goals that are supported by all Manitobans.

And so, consequently, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the Throne Speech. Thank you very much.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): Mr. Speaker, it is delightful to see you back in your chair.

I'm very excited and enthusiastic about standing up and talking about this Throne Speech. This Throne Speech lays out a vision for Manitoba that takes us forward, that brings everyone along with us, that is inclusive, encouraging and innovative.

I want to begin by acknowledging the constituents of Fort Garry who have given me the

privilege for the last seven years to sit in this House and to share in many debates and to help work with them within the community to make a difference. It's been a pleasure and a delight as we've moved forward and we've grown together. I'm excited what the future brings and that's what this Throne Speech talks about; our plan, a plan that will work with all Manitobans, that will address innovation, education, needs for families and seniors. It's very exciting.

I want to start by, you know, doing some comparison and some contrasts about our plan and their plan. Our plan is around economy and innovation, ensuring that we provide a strong business environment so businesses can flourish, Manitobans can be employed, but while we were developing that employment strategy, we're also talking about education and training. And we're really excited in Manitoba Housing and—that the initiatives that we've been able to promote across the province. With redevelopment and record investments in our social housing, we've been able to hire community forces in Lord Selkirk Park, Gilbert Park and in Brandon, and those initiatives are having people employed. Some of these individuals have not ever been employed. It's their first job and how exciting it is to see the pride that they have, the pride that they have in themselves and their own accomplishments but also the pride that they have in their community, and how the community is embracing their work and acknowledging their good work. And we have people asking to move in specifically to the homes that have been renovated by the community forces. That speaks about our commitment for poverty reduction. That speaks about our policy on inclusion. That speaks about our vision for the future and working with everyone and supporting families.

One of the most exciting initiatives that was related to Housing and Community Development was acknowledgement of a very innovative, green strategy called FortWhyte Alive, and with FortWhyte Alive, the Province of Manitoba, we're working together to ensure that we develop a state-of-the-art community that addresses the environmental issues. I have to encourage you all to stay tuned to listen to more details as we work with our partners.

* (11:50)

But, as we work to preserve the environment, what do we hear about their plan? You heard a lack of commitment to Lake Winnipeg, the concern about—that we have about ensuring that we have safe,

fresh water. What do they want to do? They want to gut the legislation, and that's not okay. I think what we need to continue to do is to preserve our environment. We need to ensure that we are preserving the boreal forest and not ripping the lungs out of the province by removing the boreal forest. We need to ensure that we have that asset, not only for our environment, but also for ecotourism because we know that's the future. We know that on the east side the communities have been gathering together and excited about the opportunities of employment and welcoming the world into what they have known as a gem in our province.

One of the pillars of our Throne Speech is education, and I was very excited to hear about our education strategy, where we're going to continue to work with the partners, the families, the parents, make sure that they get the information they need to make the best decisions for their children. We're going to make sure that we simplify the lives of our families and make sure that we're co-ordinating in-service days and, really, making sure that the youth have the best foundation they have to go into adulthood and to contribute to our economy. And I really believe that the policy of having the young people stay in school till they're 18 years old is one of those avenues, making sure that we provide them with opportunities so they can grow and develop, find interests that they have passions for and contribute.

I ask you: What did the Tories do around education? Well, cut funding for schools; they fired teachers; and the list goes on about their lack of commitment to education.

I think that when we talk about a future for Manitoba it has to be based on education of all of our citizens, an education that is dynamic and flexible and meets the increasing needs of our population.

Let's talk about health. Let's talk about our vision for health care. What we have done is we've continued to support capital development across this province; record amounts of dollars are going into hospitals: Ste. Anne's, Dauphin, doing the women's hospital here in Winnipeg, and those are just a few examples of the hospitals that we have supported; hiring more nurses and doctors; looking at our innovative commitment of every Manitoban having a doctor by 2015 and doing it in a way that we broaden the services through using other professionals such as nurse practitioners, and as we do that we'll strengthen our whole health-care system.

But, as we're talking about that, we're also talking about primary health care, and with the mobile unit making sure that we're getting information out to individuals in our rural and northern areas in a timely manner, involving them in their health-care decisions and, also, most importantly, in the prevention.

What did the Tories do? Well, there's a long list. They recklessly froze capital construction—or the capital spending, fired thousands of nurses. We know that they reduced the spaces at the medical school. It has taken us over 10 years to rebuild that system. We have more work to do, but we are taking it forward, ensuring that there's access for all Manitobans, making sure that we're listening with our partners and the professionals to provide quality service.

There is—one of our other pillars are safer communities, and we are doing that through a wide range of crime prevention strategies and justice initiatives. And what I want to talk about, that I think is one of those assets that we have, is Neighbourhoods Alive! This year we celebrated its 10th anniversary. It was exciting to see the community partners come together. This is an initiative that is grassroots. Individuals get together; they talk about what they are—their vision for their community is. They talk about housing needs. They talk about safer communities. They talk about youth recreation. They talk about capacity building. They talk about poverty reduction. And we have seen significant improvements in those communities.

I have to tell you, I was at one community and they said, well, there have been no volunteers for this community club. For the last 10 years there have been nobody here stepping up to the plate. This year they're knocking down the doors saying, we want to be a part of this community; we want to participate.

And I take great pride in saying that our government developed—we're the architects of Neighbourhoods Alive! The community embraced it and has taken it to new levels, levels that we didn't even anticipate, and because of that we're making a difference. We're building strong communities and a safe place for individuals to work, live and play and which is very important.

What did the Tories do around community and Justice. Well, they cut the funding to the RCMP and also to prosecutors. You didn't hear in their plan about more police, more prosecution, innovative legislation, smart crime prevention, didn't hear about that at all.

Our plan is one that ensures that there are safer communities. We talk about recreation programming, and Community Places is also celebrating a milestone; 25 years that program has made a difference across this province. We will continue to work through Community Places and ensure that we are providing capital investment across the province to ensure that our rinks are open, community clubs are still vibrant places to meet. When the Tories were in place, what did they do? Slashed it. It was very disappointing for many, many people.

I want to also take a few minutes and talk about the non-profit sector. We were heard loud and clear in our Throne Speech, a commitment to the non-profit sector by working with our community partner, the Manitoba federation for non-profit organizations. And our commitment is one of reducing red tape, making sure that there are clean lines of communication so we can work together and, most importantly, reducing paperwork so those vital organizations that provide an endless list of services, whether child care, home-care services, whether it's education and advocacy services, make sure that they can stay in the front lines and provide those necessary services.

Now I ask you: What did the Tories do to the non-profit sector? Recklessly slashed it. Elizabeth Fry Society lost money. The Indian and Métis Friendship Centres lost millions of dollars. And what did that do to the sector? It left them. They didn't go away. They had fewer resources to do the work they did, but they continued to fight the good fight and represent their people that they're working with. We aren't going to do that. In our plan, we're committed to ensuring that non-profit sector continues to grow and flourish and provide those vital services to Manitobans across the province.

We also heard about a seniors' housing strategy, a continuum of housing options for seniors. I have to tell you I've had quite the last couple weeks travelling around the province of Manitoba. One day I was in Sprague, Grunthal and La Broquerie, where we announced over \$10-million worth of funding for seniors' housing options. Then we went to Riverton and made the same announcement. And I encourage you to stay tuned, because there's many more announcements like that to happen.

That is showing our commitment to age-friendly Manitoba, making sure that seniors can age in place, can stay close to home—and talking about staying

close to home and staying in their homes, we were the architects of the home care. It's renowned, one of the best in North America. It is important and vital to ensure that seniors can stay in their own homes and provide a quality of life.

I ask you: What did the Tories propose to do about home care?

Some Honourable Members: Privatize it.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Privatize it, that's right. I shudder to think of what the consequence of that would've been. Who would've been able to access that program? Our plan continues to be inclusive and supportive and ensure that they're providing those necessary services.

* (12:00)

It's really unfortunate my time is running out. I could go on for hours and hours to talk about this magnificent piece of work called our Throne Speech, which lays out a plan which is forward thinking, that is genuine, visionary and innovative. I am so proud to be on this side of the House and to support this wonderful piece of—this plan that we have. I wonder, why can't they? I find it very difficult to understand why they don't see the value in this, in supporting Manitobans, protecting our environment, being innovative in our thinking, making sure that everyone is supportive. I am so proud to be a part of a government that acknowledges inclusion, that acknowledge the need and importance of investing in all of our front-line services, our health-care services, our social services, and has a vision for our future.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you and encourage all members to support this Throne Speech, as we move forward, and understand our plan. Thank you.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate the opportunity to rise in the Legislative Assembly today to participate in debate on the Throne Speech.

It is an honour and truly a privilege to serve as MLA for Portage la Prairie.

I want to begin with a statement that I made just a little more than a month ago on September the 9th, 2010. At a press conference, this is what I said:

I would like to announce that I will not be seeking the nomination of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba for the scheduled 2011 provincial general election. I feel very

privileged to have had the honour of representing the residents of Portage la Prairie as their member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for 14 years. I want to thank all those that have supported and encouraged me during my years as MLA, especially my wife, Lori, our children, Aaron, Jenna and Katelyn.

I would also like to recognize and express my appreciation to all the locally elected members of city and rural municipal councils, school board and First Nation councils who have served in public office along side of me. It has truly been a pleasure to work with so many dedicated individuals focussed on making Portage la Prairie a better place to live, work and raise a family. It is very humbling to be leaving politics as the third-longest serving MLA in Portage la Prairie's history.

I am, though, very proud of having had the opportunity to establish the rural rotating licensed practical nurses' training program, which offers this career to rural residents, and for the ability to work with municipal officials to create a Rural Waterfication Program that brings potable water to rural residents. I will continue to work hard on behalf of all constituents during my last year in office, after which I am looking forward to spending more time with my family—*[interjection]*—and working to produce and market three new varieties of wheat which I have developed and recently licensed.

Once again, I want to thank all the residents of Portage la Prairie for their support and for the privilege of serving them as their representative to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. It was not a decision entered into lightly, because I truly appreciate the opportunity that fewer than one one-hundredth of 1 per cent of Manitobans have the privilege of doing, and that is serving this Chamber.

We all come to this Chamber looking to make a difference, not only for ourselves, for our families, but all Manitobans, and that is why I truly respect each and every individual in this Chamber, regardless of our political viewpoints and how we might believe is the best way to go in order to resolve the concerns and problems that face our fellow Manitobans. But it's because we are here. We are dedicating ourselves and, indeed, our families to pursuing that goal, that ideal of making this a better place for future generations.

It is with a little bit of sadness that I am leaving this Chamber, but I know it's time for someone else to come along and fill this seat for Portage la Prairie.

The rural community of Burnside, just to the west of Portage la Prairie, has yielded up four MLAs over the course of the history of Manitoba. That same, very same farmland which I farm today, is rich in history and pride in the representation that has come to this illustrious Assembly. And so I hope I've carried on the tradition and left a little bit of a legacy that people can look back on with pride and understanding and belief that I did what I could during the time I was here.

But you never do anything by yourself and it starts with your family and your community. But, once you're here in the Chamber, you can only accomplish that which needs to be accomplished with a collective wisdom, understanding and support of those in the Chamber. And I want to cite a couple of particular instances that happened over the course of the 14 years in which I've been here.

When I first arrived here, this Assembly, as we still do today, conducts—it starts conducting its daily orders with prayer. When we came here—when I came—first came here, sorry, Mr. Speaker—all persons in the gallery and in the media gallery as well were seated and talking and totally distracted of what was happening in the Chamber. And I spoke with the Speaker at that time, and I said it should be a respectful moment by anyone that shares in this Chamber, whether it be by participation or by audience. And the Speaker at that time then asked the Sergeant-at-Arms that those persons seated, whether it be in the public gallery or in the media gallery, rise when the Speaker enters the House, along with the mace, and that they remain standing and be respectful in silence while we engage in prayer. Today that is the protocol of this Chamber, and I'm pleased to have made a little bit of a mark on our proceedings that this Chamber will, hopefully, continue on in these weeks, years and decades ahead.

Also, too, how we conduct our business at—through committee, we are very fortunate to have that public input, and the governments not only of today but recent past have engaged the public and given them opportunity to participate.

One of the committees, though, of this Chamber was that of Public Accounts, and it did not have that ability to hear witnesses or from the public. The committee, in fact, only met, at best, two times a year. I was fortunate to be selected to serve on that committee, and it was at that time that I was able, with support of both sides of the House, to request, through motion, a review and changes to the

conduct, through rules, of the Public Accounts Committee. And I believe just a few days ago the Public Accounts Committee was meeting and, under the new rules, was able to conduct a very open and transparent committee meeting under the new rules. And so, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate—have had that opportunity which to see a change that I believe is for the better.

I also would like to ask and thank the—asked for in the past—and to thank the Chamber for indulging me on a couple of different occasions and throughout the years of the presentation of strawberries to all members and to staff about the building. I believe I will try to continue that if my successor does not. But I was a little wary once upon a time when it was quite a feisty question period that the strawberries that were placed upon the honourable members' desk would end up being projectiles across the Clerk's table to reinforce the argument of debate that was taking place, but, fortunately, it did not happen.

*(12:10)

Also, too, a very, very proud son of a veteran of the Second World War. To have had the support of the government on a motion by the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) to provide for recognition of those that served in our Armed Forces, with a licence plate denoting their service to not only ourselves in Manitoba but all those in the nation of Canada.

Also, too, by leave of the House, upon the returning of the—of soldiers to Shilo from service in Afghanistan, I placed upon everyone's desk a ribbon that shows through display the support for our troops. I know it was ruled at the time that it was a prop, but this Chamber supported my ability to put that before every member of this—the Chamber by unanimous consent, and for that I am truly and will remain always grateful.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to also do is commend yourself in the service of the Speaker's office—to be always approachable, to always listen and have that understanding ear, and to make changes and to promote this Legislative Assembly as you've done through the program initiated by yourself that enters into schools and assists history teachers in the discussion of the democracy in which we are privileged to live. Also, too, taking forward our history and bringing forth in the hallways below us and just outside the Chamber door, that gives recognition to past participants, past members of the Legislative Assembly and also, too, those that toiled

away to construct this most magnificent Legislative Building which we all remain in awe of to this day. And those are initiatives that, to your credit, have—will be a lasting legacy and speak so well for you. And without question, we are so heartfelt in our feelings of your—towards your recovery and return to the Legislative Assembly.

It is also, too, with a great deal of—I'm lacking the words of appreciation towards those that serve this Chamber and this building: the Clerk and her staff, how accessible and learned they are to assist each and everyone of us; and those that support them in Leg. Council; and those that secure this Chamber and provide for us, whether it be the pages, the Sergeant-at-Arms, to the Security staff that are outside these doors; and to those in Hansard that provide for us written record of what we do in this Chamber for all those to review and be critics of and perhaps praise that on occasion, our proceedings and what we've been able to do.

But last, but not very least, that I want to recognize at this time is colleagues; colleagues that I've served with not only today, but in the past. They have made an indelible impression upon myself. I am emotional because with some of those they're not with us today, and I speak specifically of a gentlemen that welcomed me into the building on my very first day and that was the Honourable Harry Enns, who passed away earlier this year. A statement was made at his memorial that Harry never let facts get in the way of a good story, and that spoke so much of Harry. He was an individual that was colourful and spent more than 37 years in this Chamber. And so the history that he possessed of this—of the proceedings in this building, I was absolutely speechless and listened hours on end to the tales that were told. And I get the chance to witness some of the different things that happened within the Chamber that spoke of Harry's respect and regard by those that served the Chamber.

As a new MLA, I looked and followed the lead of others in the Chamber and Mr. Enns was reading a newspaper, the *Manitoba Co-operator*, to be specific, and so this new rookie MLA brought forward this—the newspaper, only it was the—it was the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The Sergeant-at-Arms at that time approached myself and stated that it was not permissible for me to read the newspaper within the Chamber. I closed it, and being respectful of the Sergeant-at-Arms that I'm—I apology if I've broken the rules of this—of the Chamber. But what of Mr. Enns, he's reading a newspaper as well? And Mr.

Enns turns in his seat, and he said: Son, it's not a newspaper, it's a resource document. I found the difference between newspapers here in the province of Manitoba on that very day.

It was a nervous occasion for me to enter into the House because I had the chance to move the Throne Speech for the new session, and, being a new member to the Legislative Assembly, was thrown into the deep end of the pool with a 40-minute address that took me a while to prepare with the assistance of such capable staff at the time. But my mother and father were in the gallery, and one of the things that my mother said to me before I entered the Chamber, she said: David, you always talk with your hands. Don't talk with your hands. You're on the camera. And so I made sure I didn't talk with my hands.

But, instead, what I did with my hands was that I had unbuttoned and buttoned up my jacket so many times and when my jacket was undone, what I proceeded to do was roll up my tie. Apparently, I rolled up and down that tie more than two dozen times. My mother was counting. And so it was—I was promptly told at the end of that rather lengthy speech of mine that I would never ever do that again, but my mother, otherwise, she would make sure that somebody slapped my hands.

But we are all different personalities within this Chamber and some of us more comfortable in standing and addressing the Assembly, those that have had legal experience, it comes by way of profession, that comfort level. I, coming from the farm, never aspired to be a politician, but it came my way—the opportunity to be one. And so the public speaking ability was not one that I had a great deal of experience in, and so throughout the years, though, I have watched many individuals and how they address the Chamber, and I hope I've been able to learn a little bit of it and that those that have taught me and given me advice, I hope that I have not disappointed them.

It is, as I said, a true privilege to be here in this Chamber and I hope it is not lost on any of us that even in the heated, spirited debates that we engage in here in the Chamber. And we're engaged in another debate regarding the Throne Speech that is, without question, the document to which the next general election will be the focus, and so we participate. And it is something that all of us, as we represent our constituents, participate in that debate, reflective of those that have elected us, and always should we be

acting in the best interest of those that have given us that honour.

One area that I would hope that this Chamber, in years to come, would look to passage of rules that would be—would permit a greater dialogue on private members' business, because that is where legislation and ideas are born, born and brought forward to—for debate, and perhaps this Chamber should not always be looked upon through debate under the—under a whip. And I think it is important that all of us have that opportunity and not to be shunned or chastised by our parties for representing the best issues, best ideas that our constituents want us to promote. And so I hope that that takes place.

*(12:20)

I also wish that there was an opportunity to pass legislation that would provide for a more structured legislative session that would allow persons to plan to come back at a certain date, an ending date, and then also, too, provide for sessional recesses that allow us to return to our constituencies and engage with our residents that we represent. And that way then, also, too, it is refreshing for not only ourselves, but our staff so that we can catch up, if you will, during a session, because at times now we sit for three months with only the occasional day away from this Chamber, and it is rather difficult and very stressful, and we are only human. We can only perform at our best for a certain length of time. And I believe that the legislative calendar legislation that Ottawa has adopted is an excellent model for which we should take some guidance in and perhaps bring that legislation forward.

It is also, as I say—said earlier, you don't accomplish much without the co-operation and support and, indeed, the expertise that some of those that have given a lifetime to the civil service—and I just want to cite a couple who have made an indelible impression upon myself, and that being, as I mentioned earlier, I believe, Mr. Peter Moll [*phonetic*], who worked alongside myself in a, what I see as a landmark move to merge the Town of Gimli and the Rural Municipality of Gimli into one municipal jurisdiction, which, I believe, is functioning extremely well.

And at this juncture of time, I also want to thank the honourable member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), whom was the Minister of Rural Development at the time of my election that I had the privilege of serving as his legislative assistant and the ability to have the

opportunity to go to Gimli and to work alongside municipal officials to see that change in governance.

Also, I want to recognize Mr. Bob McKay, now retired and battling cancer. He is an outstanding gentleman who served his province for decades and retired as the director of the central regional operations for the Manitoba Department of Transportation at the time, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation as it's known now, who was innovative and allowed for the spirit of co-operation to flourish between his departmental staff and those that used the roadways within his region. It was not only those who used the roadways, but those who used the ditches, and that was some acquaintances, farming acquaintances of myself, Mr. Speaker, that needed a right-of-way for the irrigation waterline. And it was not permitted as normal course to see that waterline running down the highway and through the culverts or under the bridges, but Mr. McKay, he saw that as common sense, something that would not hurt anyone and provided the best for the farming community.

He also was a little more creative than perhaps his minister would have appreciated, the honourable member for Thompson, at the time, and that was—wanted to see the—a replacement of the guardrails on the overpass on Provincial Road 240 known as Tupper Street in Portage la Prairie. As most members are aware, Portage la Prairie has a history of note in the—with the railways. It is where the two major rail lines cross. It was a negotiated contract that was done back in the late 1800s, and I'd best not say the precise date, but the member of Parliament for Portage la Prairie at that time was Sir John A. Macdonald. Sir John A. Macdonald, as a member for Portage la Prairie, negotiated the Canadian Pacific right of way which would see the southern route, closest to the American border, which would, ultimately, at that time, believed to be the greatest opportunity for commerce and expansion of the rail line.

And so they crossed in Portage la Prairie, and many railway historians and those that are interested come to view this crossing from the vantage point of the Tupper Street overpass. Well, this—the railings were full of rust. They were badly damaged and I won't say unsafe, but for anyone that put their hand on the railing, it—the cracked and chipped paint was very sharp and many a person had to be careful not to grab it too tightly. But Mr. McKay, after my request that this had to be a—replaced and improved, told me that it could not be done within his limited

budget, that I was to speak to the deputy minister in respect to it and following that, the assistant deputy minister.

Well, the deputy minister told me it was not on. The assistant deputy minister told me it was not on, but Mr. McKay went over a series of years about replacing rail by rail by rail and, over the course of a number of years, a little bit of a budget here and a little bit of a budget there was used to replace the railings, and after a number of years, I called the deputy minister and once again asked and the deputy minister responded: I've told you, Mr. Faurschou, once, I've told you twice, I'll tell you a third time. We have no budget. Mr. Deputy Minister, the reason I'm calling is just to thank you for the replacement of the bridge railings. They are so much appreciated, and he then responded: Well, in that case, we are so glad to have obliged.

Mr. Minister, I don't believe it ever heard that story told, but now it's in *Hansard* and I want to praise Mr. McKay for his service to the province and pray for his—for him during his battle with cancer.

Another person that I would like to speak briefly about is Mr. Gordon MacKenzie, now retired. My first entry into service on committee was with the Natural Products Marketing Council and Mr. Gordon MacKenzie served as that director and was an extraordinarily resourceful, intuitive individual responsible for all the orderly marketing in the province of Manitoba. And lastly, Gladys Cook, who's now passed away, who served this province well and received the Order of Manitoba.

For that I thank everyone in this Chamber for that support. Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity and the latitude to speak this afternoon.

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I guess it's quite appropriate to acknowledge our member opposite from Portage la Prairie and to thank him for his very heartfelt speech that he presented to us this afternoon and to wish him everything and the best in his new endeavours and to enjoy that time that he will have with his family that has been missed.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Rossmere will have 29 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 19, 2010

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