

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

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.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
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

Tuesday, November 23, 2010

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only 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 7—The Polar Bear Protection Amendment Act
(International Polar Bear Conservation Centre)**

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable—the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 7, The Polar Bear Protection Amendment Act (International Polar Bear Conservation Centre); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des ours polaires (Centre international de conservation des ours polaires), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Blaikie: I'm very pleased to rise today to introduce Bill 7. The purpose of the bill is to establish the International Polar Bear Conservation Centre at the Assiniboine Park Zoo and to provide for the appointment of members to an advisory committee that will make recommendations respecting its operation.

As the House will recall, Mr. Speaker, on December 3rd, 2009, the government announced that it would invest \$31 million into the development of an International Polar Bear Conservation Centre that will be housed at the Assiniboine Park Zoo in collaboration with the Assiniboine Park Conservancy. Through this bill it is the intent of Manitoba to continue to pursue excellence in polar bear conservation and to maintain its leadership role in climate change mitigation. It is in the interest of the Province, through the introduction of this bill, to ensure that the International Polar Bear Conservation Centre develops as a pre-eminent, first-of-its-kind facility.

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

Bill 202—The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Amendment Act

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I move, seconded by the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), that Bill 202, The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Taillieu: Under The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is annually required to submit its proposed premium rates for compulsory driver and vehicle insurance to the Public Utilities Board for approval. This bill enhances the authority of the board to consider whether the corporation's activities other than providing compulsory driver and vehicle insurance may have an impact on those premium rates. Manitoba Public Insurance is required to provide the board with information about such activities, and the board is required to take reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of the information.

I urge the government to support transparency and accountability and support this bill.

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

PETITIONS

Mount Agassiz Ski Area

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and the Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operations of the Mount Agassiz ski area were very important to the local economy, not only creating jobs, but also generating sales of goods and services at area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for core provincial government services and infrastructure which benefits all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened and Parks Canada is committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in a Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

And to request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by P. Thompson, N. Kristalovich and L. Haskins and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

Auto Theft—Court Order Breaches

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

On December 11th, 2009, in Winnipeg, Zdzislaw Andrzejczak was killed when the car that 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.

And 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 G. Lusansky, N. Elias, A. Friesen and many, many other Manitobans.

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.

*(13:40)

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

A west-side route would be—will be almost 500 kilometres longer than an east-side route, less reliable, and cost 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 have—will end up paying \$7,000 for this decision.

Since the current provincial government has come to power, hydro rates have increased—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 C. Hourie, G. Wiebe, W. Miller and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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.

Since the current provincial government has come into power, hydro rates have already increased by 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 the shorter, cheaper and greener 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 M. Pear, G. Kaspick, C. Stinson and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Rapid City Reservoir and Catwalk

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I wish 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 on the reservoir—or 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 have 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 J. Greer, D. Andrew, T. Bird and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I would like to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Text Book Bureau for the year ending March 31st, 2010.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's gallery where we have with us today, we have Mr. Carlos Moreno Lopez, who is the undersecretary of the Government of the State of Hidalgo, Mexico, who is the guest of the honourable Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux).

And also in the public gallery we have with us His Worship Jim Johnson, mayor for the City of Thompson and Murray Nychporuk, who is the president of the United Steel Workers, who is also from Thompson, and who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines (Mr. Chomiak).

And also in the public gallery we have from Kelvin High School, we have 26 grade 9 students under the direction of Carmelina Tarantino. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

And also in the public gallery we have with us from Kildonan East Collegiate, we have 35 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. John Thompson, and this school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

And also Mr. Lopez is the guest of the honourable Minister for Local Government.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Costs Estimates Update

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the mayor of Thompson and representatives of the workers in Thompson here today and congratulate them on the response that they have put in place in light of the very difficult circumstances being faced in that community today. I wish them well.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we look forward to in the month of November here in Manitoba is updated capital estimates for Manitoba Hydro and all of the major projects that they are working on or planning. Those revised estimates are provided every November to provide both the PUB, as the guardian for ratepayers, and Manitobans with a clear picture as to the costs of major projects being undertaken by Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Speaker, in connection with Bipole III, we note the last update was provided in November of 2007, that same update in '08 and '09. Will there be a revised update provided this year, November 2010, with respect to the largest project currently on the books at Manitoba Hydro?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I'd like to thank the member for the question because it again offers us the opportunity to point out that he would cancel the converters for Manitoba Hydro and, no matter what the cost of those converters, when he cancels them that will increase the risk of a blackout or an outage in Manitoba Hydro very dramatically. It's a reckless promise on his part that would put at risk Manitoba consumers of the service: business and individuals and families. It would also put at risk our export

markets, and it would also put us in a situation where Manitoba Hydro, after many years of planning on this project, would be set backwards on their ability to provide clean reliable power to Manitoba and to its customers outside of Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the CEO of Hydro two weeks ago said on CBC radio, maybe we'll look at going with AC line, that way we won't need the converters. So he needs to get inside with the CEO of Hydro in terms of his comment about the converters, and if he's calling Mr. Brennan desperate, then, that's a matter I would leave to the two of them to sort out. Reckless, if that's what he's calling Mr. Brennan, then, I leave it to them to sort out.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know they're desperate because they're mismanaging every project they touch, whether it's the stadium, Crocus or anything else. I want to ask the Premier, if he can focus on the question: Will there be an update to the projected cost for Bipole III in November of 2010 because we haven't had an update on that project since 2007, even as we've had 38 other updates issued on nine other small projects relative to this one over that same time period? Thirty-eight updates on nine other projects. No updates on Bipole III. Is he going to be transparent with Manitobans or is he going to conceal that number from Manitobans when the updates come out this month?

*(13:50)

Mr. Selinger: The member has put, again, inaccurate information on the table.

I want to table for the House a note from the president and CEO of Hydro to the Minister Wowchuk, the Minister responsible for Hydro, from Bob Brennan.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When members are addressing other members in the House, it's by their constituency or the portfolio they hold, not by their name. So I ask the honourable—[interjection] Order. I ask all honourable members to follow that rule.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The letter from—and the note from the president and CEO of Hydro to the Minister responsible for Hydro reads: I am writing to inform you that, contrary to any impression that may have been conveyed in the media, Manitoba Hydro is not actively evaluating alternating current

transmission—that's AC transmission—as a viable alternative for the Bipole III project. Manitoba Hydro is proceeding with the use of high voltage direct current—commonly known as HVDC—transmission for Bipole III. HVDC technology provides the most efficient means of transmitting electricity over long distances and is far more efficient than AC transmission for this purpose. HVDC technology, used in Bipoles I and II, helped make the development of hydro generation in the far north more feasible. Manitoba Hydro has since become world-renowned for its research and development in the field of HVDC. Converter equipment is required at either end of a HVDC transmission line. For Bipole III, new converter equipment is also essential to enhance the reliability of our transmission—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: And I'll leave it to the former Hydro minister to sort out the inconsistencies being put on the record by him and the CEO, but if he could today, Mr. Speaker, focus on the issue of the revised cost estimate, which is due by the end of this month, within the next week.

They—we had a \$2.2-billion estimate as of November 2007. Three years have gone by, 38 other updates issued on nine other projects, and as of two weeks ago, the CEO of Hydro said to the *Winnipeg Free Press* that the \$2.2-billion figure, and I quote, could escalate to almost double that amount, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the Premier: They have now got a multitude of numbers, a multitude of designs; can he just provide clarity, Mr. Speaker? Unlike the way they're mismanaging the stadium, can they provide clarity? Is it going to be \$2.2 billion, or was the CEO of Hydro correct when he told the *Free Press* it's going to be almost double that, in the range of \$4 billion, coming from families in the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: As I was putting on the record, the members opposite have not recognized yet that the need for converters is required no matter which direction the bipole goes.

But the note from the CEO and president of Manitoba Hydro, Bob Brennan, concludes: Converter equipment is required at either end of an HVDC transmission line. For Bipole III, new converter equipment is also essential to enhance the reliability of our transmission system, as presently

75 per cent of Manitoba's hydro power supply is dependent upon a single converter station near Winnipeg known as the Dorsey station. Thus, the loss of the Dorsey station, even for a short period of time, could have catastrophic consequences. New converter equipment is also required as soon as any new generating stations come online.

This statement, Mr. Speaker, once again shows how reckless and irresponsible the Leader of the Opposition is. He wants to cancel those converter stations. He wants to put hydro at risk for Manitobans. He wants to put our export contracts at risk, for a cost of \$20 million. Manitobans would see their rates go up and their power diminish under the members opposite.

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

Mr. McFadyen: I know Mr. Bateman and the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) and others would resent the implication that they're being called reckless.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier will want to look at the actual—he'll want to look for the—look at the actual numbers tabled by Manitoba Hydro in its own capital expenditure forecast. Capital expenditure forecast 2004 for this project: \$388 million. Afterward, they're required to add converters because of the west-side decision: it jumps to \$2.2 billion. As of 2010, it jumps to \$4 billion. It's now 10 times the original budget that it was as of 2004.

I want to ask the Premier: How is it that he has so badly mismanaged this project? And what is the next generation of Manitobans going to have to pay because everything he touches fails, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had his way, he would gut Manitoba Hydro. We know that. Now, just a couple of months ago, he was accusing the government of being responsible for the losses at Manitoba Hydro on the first quarter report. In this quarterly report, Manitoba is exceeding its profit projections for this year, but the member opposite won't give us credit for that. The reality is Manitoba will exceed its profit projections for this year; the reality is Manitoba Hydro has \$2.2 billion of retained earnings; and the reality is Manitoba Hydro is not affected in its need for converters no matter which side of Lake Winnipeg it puts its hydro transmission facilities.

The converter stations are needed for reliability. They're needed to protect Manitoba families and businesses to have a secure source of power. They're needed to provide new energy to our American customers, which will generate \$20 billion of revenue over the next 20 years. And the member opposite would like to roll the dice and get rid of all that and put all Manitobans at risk of dramatic power outages and rate increases. That's irresponsible.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, November 2004, Bipole III on the east side: \$388 million, according to Hydro. November 2007, three years later: escalates to \$2.2 billion, a jump of \$1.8 billion, caused by—according to Mr. Brennan, we required new investment in conversion equipment after we were told to go down the west side. As of November 2010: further escalation, almost double the \$2.2-billion figure, according to Mr. Brennan. In the *Free Press* two weeks ago and on CBC Radio two weeks ago: from \$388 million to almost \$4 billion inside the span of six years.

Are they going to come clean with Manitobans when the numbers come out this month or is he going to do what he did with Crocus and conceal the numbers from Manitobans and leave a great, big mess for the next generations to pick up?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The member opposite—the member opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little decorum in the House, please. We have guests in the gallery, and also I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers in case there's a breach of a rule because I'm sure if there is you would expect me to rule on it, and for me to do that I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. So I'm asking the co-operation of all honourable members, please. We still have a lot of time left in question period.

Mr. Selinger: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The president, CEO of Manitoba Hydro has been crystal clear on this, and the member opposite continues to obfuscate. Converter equipment is needed to increase the reliability of Manitoba Hydro when 75 per cent of the power goes to one place: the Dorsey Converter Station. The new bipole, regardless of where it goes in Manitoba, requires conversion equipment to increase reliability for the system.

Let's remember, when this was first brought to the attention of the government when the members opposite were in government in 1997, they were told,

after some of the transmission capacity went down very close to Dorsey, that they needed another converter station. They ignored that advice. They carried on with the privatization of Manitoba Telephone System, ignored the advice they were given to provide increased reliability for Manitoba Hydro and, now, more than a decade later, they still don't want to provide that reliability. They want to play reckless and irresponsible and roll the dice on the future of Manitoba Hydro. We won't let them do that; the public won't let them do that.

* (14:00)

Mr. McFadyen: Rather than get caught up in the fog of misinformation, I'll table Hydro's own documents which they submitted to the PUB, and he should take a hard look at them, because as of November 2004 the estimate was \$388 million for an east-side line. In November of 2007 it escalates to \$2.2 billion; Mr. Brennan says that's because they were required to go down the west side.

It's 2010, three years since that estimate. No new updates officially; we're waiting for that. It's going to come any day, but Mr. Brennan telling the media that it's now almost double that, \$388 million to \$4 billion from 2004 to 2010, as they drag their feet, slowing down this project every step of the way. I'll table the documents.

I'll ask him to explain: How could he have mismanaged this bipole project to the point where it's now 10 times the budget that was quoted in 2004? How does he explain it to ratepayers? How does he explain it to seniors? How does he explain to the next generation that everything he touches is a disaster for those who have to pick up the pieces and pay the price?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the information the member opposite has provided.

If he was in charge of the government, you know what the information would be for the converter stations? It would be zero, because he would cancel them. He would put the entire hydroelectric system in Manitoba at risk, just like they did when they were in government, when they did nothing. They were busy selling off the telephone system and ignoring Manitoba Hydro's need for greater reliability. More than a decade later, they want to return to those days of the '90s, cancel the project, put Manitoba Hydro at risk, cancel our export contracts and make sure that Manitoba ratepayers have an over 40 per cent increase in the rates and less reliability on their

electricity. That's a reckless and irresponsible approach.

Manitobans won't let them do that. We won't let them do that, and he knows it.

Football Stadium Cost and Funding Options

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'll leave it to the Premier to ask the CEO of Hydro why he said, and I quote: In fact, AC might be the best way to send the power down south, even though losses could be higher, and then you wouldn't need the conversion equipment if you came down with AC. This is what he said two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker.

Now, speaking of completely bungled projects under this Premier's watch, Mr. Speaker, can he just give us an update: How's he doing on the stadium?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, first of all, if the member would look at the document that's been tabled in the Legislature, which was the preamble to his question that's in front of us right now, he would note that Manitoba Hydro believes that HVDC transmission is the best way to proceed to increase reliability for Manitoba Hydro, and as part of that project there is a necessity for converter equipment.

The member opposite would cancel both the project and the converter equipment and put Manitoba Hydro at risk, just like they opposed building the MTS Centre in downtown Winnipeg, just like they opposed building the new stadium, just like they opposed water protection in Manitoba, just like they opposed increased legislation for worker safety in Manitoba.

This is the party of do nothing. Roll back the clock to the dark days of the '90s. We could even say, roll back to the clock when there were no labour protection laws, no environmental protection laws, no water protection laws.

We know where they want to take Manitoba: back to the future. We want to take it forward, and that's what we're going to do.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, it's been 237 days since the original photo op on the stadium.

I just wonder, could the Premier—if the Premier could just regain his composure and give us an update on the stadium.

Mr. Selinger: And as I have this opportunity here again to address the Legislature, we know that the existing stadium will cost tens of million dollars in repairs. We also know that the stadium at the University of Manitoba for the Bisons was in a great state of deterioration as well.

So the project that everybody's working on of bringing a new stadium to the University of Manitoba, a stadium that will be 75 per cent used by the public all year round—it'll be used by amateur sport, it'll be used by the community, it'll be used by the Bisons and it'll be used by the Bombers—will be a project that will generate 2,400 years of employment in Manitoba. It will address the problem at Polo Park. It will address the problem at the University of Manitoba and it'll put in place a first-class asset for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Now, I know the member opposite opposes that, just like he did the MTS Centre. We understand that, and in the midst of that opposition, we will find a way to go forward with the City, with the Bombers, with the university, with private partners. We will deliver the project to Manitobans while the member continues to oppose it as he has every other major project in Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, his stadium deal was so well thought through he didn't even include it in the budget he brought down a week before the announcement, Mr. Speaker. Now, mind you, the Finance Minister didn't vote for the budget either and so maybe she's—maybe that's her way of taking a stand as well.

But I want to ask the Premier, since we're now 237 days since the original announcement, he's clearly got a vision in his mind as to what the stadium is going to look like, when is he actually going to share some details with the public about what we're getting, who's paying for it and what it's going to cost? Three basic questions. Does he have answers to any of them today, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: The first question is: Do we need a new stadium? The members opposite think not. They oppose it with every fibre of their body. There's a compelling argument to build a new stadium in Manitoba when the old one will require upwards of \$50 million of investment for another 10 years, when

the existing facility—stadium at the University of Manitoba is in a state of deterioration as well.

This project will move forward. It will move forward with the co-operation of the City, the Bombers, the University of Manitoba, and support from the community. It will bring in a business plan that involves the Bombers playing a more significant role because of their great interest at having this facility. It'll provide a first-class amenity to Manitobans. All people from Manitoba that go to university will have access to it. All members of the community will have access to it. It'll be available 24/7, 12 months of the year.

The members opposite will oppose it. We know that. They opposed the MTS Centre. We will find a way forward on the project, and when all the details are ready they will be disclosed fully to the public, and the members opposite will oppose it again. We know that. They've opposed every other project to move Manitoba forward. There's nothing inconsistent about their approach today.

Phoenix Sinclair Death Commissioner Appointment for Inquiry

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

I wonder if—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and, again, to the Premier: Can he just indicate when his—can the Premier just indicate when his government is going to stop dragging its feet on the appointment of a commissioner of inquiry into the tragic death of Phoenix Sinclair?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that decision will be taken subsequent to all the existing reviews that are going on. We know that the child welfare system is in need of improved investment, which we are doing, and the members opposite are opposing.

We commend—we thank the federal government for coming to the table to put money into prevention to help families prevent getting into the kinds of difficulties that we've seen in this case, and we will certainly participate with them in those kinds of

prevention activities. And the inquest that the member asked for will be proceeded with upon the conclusion of the existing procedures, which are under way.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, and the former premier, Mr. Doer, promised an inquiry into this very tragic case. The Premier clearly hasn't been briefed on the issue as it arose yesterday.

Can he be clear at this moment: Why is this government dragging its feet on the appointment of a commissioner to look into the tragic circumstances that caused the death of Phoenix Sinclair?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, subject to the existing procedures being exhausted that are before the courts right now, including the possibility of an appeal, the inquiry will be called. The inquiry was held in abeyance to prevent any negative influence on the existing judicial procedures which are under way.

* (14:10)

Once they are concluded, including the possibility of an appeal, the inquiry will be called. We know we have to proceed in a logical, coherent fashion on this to ensure that the family gets the best possible opportunities to have their concerns heard and dealt with by the courts. That's how we will proceed.

Mr. McFadyen: And as they roll out excuse after excuse for delay, we give credibility to the statement made by the director of Legal Aid, who said that the appeal to the Supreme Court has no merit. We also acknowledge that the appeal, as unlikely as it is to succeed, deals with matters of law rather than matters of fact.

So I want to ask the Premier: Why is it that his government is dragging its feet on just appointing a commissioner so that commissioner can make decisions about the appropriate way to proceed, somebody who understands the evidentiary issues and can start to bring the inquiry together? Why the delay in this appointment of this commissioner, even as things continue to happen within the system, Mr. Speaker, that are not being addressed while they delay, for political purposes, on looking into this very serious and tragic issue? And they demonstrate that they just don't care if it happens again.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, as was said from the very outset of this tragic affair, we do not want to do anything that will prejudice the criminal proceedings.

We want to ensure that the aggrieved parties get every opportunity for the court system to fully examine their case and address it properly. After that is done, including the possibility of an appeal, the inquiry will be called.

But we're not going to do anything that will take away the opportunity for people to have the full benefit of the justice system and the proceedings that are under way. We've said that from the very beginning. We've said that consistently. We repeat it again today. Our position is clear: we want the full opportunity for the justice system to serve the interests of the aggrieved parties. The members opposite want to play politics with it; that's unfortunate. That's extremely unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. The inquiry will proceed after the present judicial proceedings are concluded.

Radisson Hecla Oasis Resort Government Involvement

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that the Hecla Island Resort was placed in receivership.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we hear reports in the media from the private sector partner, Mr. Paletta, that the provincial government reneged on its commitments to the Hecla Island project, despite a private investment of \$19 million in the project.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson): What can he tell us about the provincial government's action on this file? Did they indeed go back on their word, as Mr. Paletta is stating, sinking the project and putting Hecla Island Resort into bankruptcy?

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I'm sure that all members of the House share the feeling of regret that the—at what has happened to the Hecla Island Resort.

The member will know that the loan was called by the Business Development Bank and that has set in motion a process of receivership, and, of course, he will also know that the private partner he referred to has filed a suit and we now have both these processes in play. And various statements have been made about the role of the Province in this matter, and we will defend the role of the Province played vigorously in the appropriate context, which is in the courts and in the receivership process.

Mr. Borotsik: Well, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that this side—these members on this side regret is that this government continues to mismanage files and continues to fail on behalf of the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the examples are a multitude: they failed on Crocus; they failed on Vale Inco; they failed on bipole; and now they failed on Hecla Island Resort. It shouldn't be in receivership. It shouldn't be in the courts.

Would the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade please tell this House what he did or did not do with that deal with Mr. Paletta that made it fail, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Blaikie: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the member for Brandon looks so disappointed every time I get up to answer the question.

But the fact remains that, as he knows, a suit has been filed by the private partner. The loan was called by the Business Development Bank of Canada and a number of processes are now in play, and it's only appropriate that whatever argument there is about what may or may not have happened and whatever role the Province may have played, these are claims that the Province will defend its position vigorously in the dispute of, and we will do that in the appropriate venue.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the appropriate venue is this House; \$5.5 million of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted again by this government. This is where they should defend that; \$5.5 million was put on the table to the Hecla Island Resort. It's now in jeopardy.

Would the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade please tell this House what he did or did not do with the deal with Mr. Paletta and Hecla Island resorts?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we didn't do what the Tories did and that was let the building rot. I can tell you that we didn't do what the Tories did and participate—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bjornson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We didn't do what the Tories did in terms of the unethical land transactions that are still being settled in the courts.

**Wawanesa Child Daycare
Need for New Facility**

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, and the answer from the former minister of Education is probably a reason why I have to ask this question today.

The community of Wawanesa has communicated its frustration with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh). The mayor of Wawanesa said, and I quote: The present daycare is located within our school in a cramped space and is presently full to capacity. The current wait-list exceeds our present capacity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Family Services: Can you confirm that Wawanesa daycare will be receiving their much-needed facility or should they just file their request under not interested?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Acting Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Well, our government's record on daycare I think is quite clear and something that we're quite proud of. We've invested millions of dollars in capital for daycare centres, created thousands of spaces, addressed the wages and benefits of workers and, for the first time outside of Québec, put in place a pension plan for those child-care workers.

So I think our record speaks for itself on child care. We're very proud of that. We're very proud that we protected exactly those services in the last budget.

Mrs. Rowat: And I think the mayor of Wawanesa is quite clear. The community is clear in their need for action from this government. He said, and I quote: The school is full to capacity as well and could use the space presently occupied by the daycare.

Families have been looking for more than words from this tired NDP government. The lack of child-care spaces in Wawanesa are having a negative impact on families, the school and the community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, when can Wawanesa expect a positive response from this tired, misdirected NDP government—[interjection] Yes, Christine, you did nothing in that area.

Ms. Howard: Well—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The honourable minister has the floor.

Ms. Howard: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure there are daycare instructors all over the province would be shocked at that kind of behaviour.

I would like to speak again to our record on child care. You know, what we didn't do—what we didn't do—is what the federal government did when they took power and cancel the historic agreement on child care that would have seen the building of more spaces and the funding of more child-care workers.

But we have continued to make those investments even without that kind of support from the federal government, and we will continue to make those kinds of investments in daycare in the city, in the rural areas and in the north.

And one of the things that we've also strived to do is be sensitive to the fact that daycare in different regions of our province have different requirements. So we've put in place evening care, we've put in place flexible care for children all over the province, because we recognize that child care is not only a social necessity, it's an economic necessity.

Mrs. Rowat: The community of Wawanesa knows that some families have had to choose to not locate in its village due to the lack of daycare spaces. Rural communities need a strong government with a vision for their families. The NDP government continues to fail them, Mr. Speaker. Point—Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh)—if the Minister of Family Services truly cares about the importance of early childhood education, then he would give Wawanesa an answer to their daycare today.

* (14:20)

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I will say about child care, it's something that this government has worked tremendously hard on. With our partners in the child-care field, we've worked hard to increase spaces. We've worked hard to increase safety. We've worked hard to make an early childhood education system in this province that we know that children are benefiting from. And I guess the question that I would ask is: If the opposition had their way and they cut half a billion dollars out of the budget, how many child-care centres would they close, Mr. Speaker?

Rapid Transit System Government Policy

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, this Premier has not been able to show leadership on setting the course for phase 2 of the rapid transit system, and the good people of Fort Rouge have to bear the burden of this government's bad management. Yet, we all know that the NDP's pie-in-the-sky approach to building a rapid transit system has fallen way behind due to this government's inability to take leadership, its policy of making promises that it won't keep and, now, with an influx of people and traffic set to move into the Fort Rouge yards area, can the Premier explain why all we have to show for the government's policy—government's bad management policy—is an inadequate, amputated 3.7-kilometre rapid transit system?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the development of the Fort Rouge area is part of the Plan Winnipeg process, which the City has just completed, and they're looking to take brownfield sites and develop them with higher degrees of density to encourage more people to use public transportation. The first part of the corridor has been built up to Jubilee Avenue. It's a City project. We've helped fund it, of course, and, of course, we support these broader objectives of Plan Winnipeg to have more people live in Winnipeg, to have reasonable levels of density in neighbourhoods so that public transportation can be used more efficiently.

The fact of the matter is that this project's under review at the community committee level, and the local elected politicians will deal with it with respect to Plan Winnipeg and the concerns of the neighbourhood, and they will render a decision which they think balances the interests of moving forward with greater population density and the concerns of the people in the neighbourhood. This is under review right now at the civic level. The member knows that. We will work with the City on any project they wish to move forward on with respect to rapid transit. He knows that, and we will do that.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the good people in the Fort Rouge area are bracing for a big influx of people and traffic as a result of the development of the Fort Rouge yards area, and yet all this Premier and government can deliver are policies of bad management that give us, for example, a hole in the

ground where a stadium should be and an amputated rapid transit system.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell the good people of the Fort Rouge area what he is doing and why phase 2 of rapid transit has so been—so badly developed? I ask the Premier: Was he too busy getting his hair done for his next empty photo op opportunity?

Mr. Selinger: I think it bears noting that the existing investment in rapid transportation goes through the Fort Rouge area. It will serve this community that the member has raised as a question of concern right now. They will have access to the rapid transit corridor, the people that live in the community right now, and if any future project is approved over there by the community committee and ultimately by City Council, those residents that may come in the future as the result of any development approved in an area will also have the advantage of the rapid transit investment that is presently being constructed and completed through the Fort Rouge area. So the member, he may have a great interest in this project, he may wish to talk to his local councillor about it, who is going to be involved in the final decision on it.

Our—for our part we will carefully review Plan Winnipeg and look for opportunities to support Plan Winnipeg because it is the master plan for developing the city. It is the master plan for developing older neighbourhoods, brownfield sites and public transportation, and we will look for opportunities to partner with the City to advance the objectives of Plan Winnipeg.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, a 3.7-kilometre rapid transit system is not going to work to transport all the people out of Fort Rouge and into the rest of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, all this Premier has been able to do, in the face of this large influx of people as a result of the development of the [inaudible] is that promise, sometime in the ineffable future, that there might be a phase 2 rapid transit system.

Now, while the Premier and his ministers have been cutting ribbons, you know, our young people are seeking a better life in places like Calgary and Toronto, and I would ask the Premier: Why is the Premier, instead of taking leadership on important issues like rapid transit, why is he more concerned with providing a boon to the ribbon developing industry in China?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question on rapid transit. Again, the City of Winnipeg, after very extensive consultations, identifies a master plan for the city. In that master plan are their ideas for moving forward on public transportation. We would like to support those ideas.

They also have ideas for developing brownfield sites for greater density to have a greater population available to use rapid transit. I do point out to the member that the first leg of the rapid transit, the 3.7 kilometres that he identifies, will go through the neighbourhood in question here. It will provide them with rapid transit, probably the best in Winnipeg, and that, as a result—and as a result of that, that will be a positive asset for that neighbourhood.

But, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we will work with the City to advance their plan and their vision for the city.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral question has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Canadian High School Rodeo Finals

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, since 1997, young cowboys and cowgirls from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have been competing in the Canadian High School Rodeo Finals. This past summer, from August 5th to the 7th, I am proud to announce that Virden hosted the competition, which was the first time added—which, for the first time, added the Junior High Division Finals to the event.

The Junior High Division consisted of cowboys and cowgirls from grades 6, 7 and 8 and the High School Division of grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. The top five cowboys and cowgirls from each western province competed in numerous exciting events including bronc riding, steer wrestling, barrel racing, pole bending, tie down roping, ribbon roping, chute dodging, bull riding, and more.

Virden mayor, Bruce Dunning; reeve of the RM of Wallace, Vince Heaman; and I were invited to greet the rodeo. We had great weather for all three days of the event which allowed the competitors to exhibit their talent. I want to extend my congratulations to all the competitors.

Manitoba was able to showcase our local talent as Orin Larson from Inglis was the Canadian High School Division All Around Cowboy with 84.5 points. Samantha Peters from Plumas finished in a tie for second place for the Canadian High

School Division All Around Cowgirl and Heidi Smith from Oak Lake was the Canadian Reserve All Around Cowgirl in the Junior Division.

The rodeo was truly a community event that offered activities for all family members of all ages. In addition to the rodeo action the spectators were able to shop at a number of the vendors in the local arena, enjoy the swimming pool, which hosted a rodeo theme pool party, and many of all ages attended the Cowboy Church Service on Thursday evening at the main arena. Volunteers from the United Church served hearty breakfasts, lunches and snacks throughout the three-day event.

The rodeo was a great success thanks to the tireless preparation of Orville Brown, chairman of the Canadian High School Rodeo, and his group of organizers. Sponsors and fundraising events, many carried out by the students themselves, raised close to \$170,000 for the event.

Lastly, I would also like to extend a thank you to the over 50 volunteers who made the whole event possible, and I know their efforts will produce a repeat performance in Virden in 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*(14:30)

Flin Flon Culture Days

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, on the weekend starting Friday, September the 24th, Flin Flon and surrounding communities hosted their very first and super successful Culture Days. It comes as no surprise to me that there is overwhelming support for arts and culture in northern Manitoba.

The first Culture Days were part of a grassroots movement across the country to encourage participation in the arts and culture by hosting a weekend of free activities across Canada.

In Flin Flon, a dedicated group of volunteers, spearheaded by the Flin Flon Arts Council and its many partners, put on an impressive program of events over the weekend that showcased a variety of local art and performances. The activities in Flin Flon included artists and participants from northern Manitoba and across Canada.

The Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross) and I had a chance to participate in the opening ceremonies which took place at the Gala Café tent near the Flin Flon community centre. We spent much of the day

sampling many creative offerings. We enjoyed watching mask making at the R.H. Channing Auditorium as part of the youth programming and were impressed by the creative exhibitions in the Sportex, among other things.

There was much to choose from. There were explorations of the rich history of Manitoba's earliest mining community, live concerts showcasing northern artists, workshops for young people and a variety of art exhibits. Hundreds of people joined in a flash mob dance down Main Street on Saturday night, and the museums had to stay open extra hours to accommodate the high demand.

Over 5,000 people attended Culture Days. Attendance rivalled that of major centres in Manitoba. Flin Flon and region's Culture Days events were spotlighted in national media coverage, which just goes to show what a success it truly was. Arts and culture are alive and well in this vibrant region of northern Manitoba.

Congratulations to each participant in Culture Days, especially congratulations to the north's most creative sparkplug, Crystal Kolt. I'm not sure how the artistic community in Flin Flon is going to outdo itself next year but, as always, I'm confident there will be even greater and more sophisticated artistic activities on the horizon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Harvest for Kids

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, this summer the community of Winkler hosted an incredible, record-breaking charitable event. The 2010 Harvest for Kids was organized by Children's Camps International and raised enough money through on-site donations, event sponsorships and the sale of harvested grain to send at least 50,000 children to Christian day camps around the world.

Organizers hoped to attract 200 combines to surpass the previously held record of 175 combines harvesting simultaneously for at least five minutes. Harvesters of all ages and sizes from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, North Dakota and Minnesota gathered on a 300-acre Winkler area wheat field. Some of the sponsors for this event were Meridian Manufacturing, Centennial Supply, Wentworth Ag, Western Producer, Secan, Precision Land Solutions, PhiBer Manufacturing, Rosenort Credit Union and BASF.

On Saturday, August the 7th, spectators gathered on a previously harvested section in the middle of the field. The spectators were located in between the two

rows of combines, which faced one another at the two far edges of the field. At noon, the two rows of 100 combines began harvesting simultaneously, travelling side by side at 1.5 miles per hour, harvesting in unison. After five minutes, the record was set and the field was completed about six minutes later.

Amanda Mochan from the Guinness world book of records office in New York was there to witness the event and verify the record.

As the harvest was going on, helicopters flew overhead and volunteers on quads sped around providing photographers with their desired shots. It was quite a spectacle. I was lucky enough to ride in one of our combines at the field. It was a wonderful experience to be out there and something I will likely never experience again.

I would like to thank Children's Camps International for all of the work they do with children around the world, as well as all of the volunteers, organizers and sponsors that made the 2010 Harvest for Kids a huge success. Thank you.

Frontier Mosakahiken School

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, this September marked the opening of the Frontier Mosakahiken School, the new on-reserve school in the community of Moose Lake. I was very honoured to attend the official opening along with my colleague the member from Flin Flon. It was a very proud day for the students, parents and residents and staff of the school.

The opening of the school shows what can be achieved when partnerships are formed to improve opportunities for First Nations youth and communities no matter where in Manitoba they might live. The school will serve as a focal point in the community, a place of learning and an investment in the young people of Mosakahiken Cree Nation and the adjacent Northern Affairs community of Moose Lake.

Fire gutted the previous school building in 2005, leaving the community devastated and without a school. But the fire drew the community together and showed its true spirit as it co-ordinated with the recreation facilities to ensure students could continue studying without having to leave home. Teachers, parents, government and administrators charged forward to make sure that a new school was built and that it was done properly to ensure that it would be there for students for many years to come.

The school fulfills a long-time goal of community elders and leaders. The facility includes 24 classrooms, a science room, a library, computer labs, a gymnasium and other amenities. The site also includes a baseball diamond, soccer pitch and outdoor hockey rink. The school, which serves students from kindergarten to grade 12, is now a major asset for Moose Lake. The new facility strikes an important balance of reflecting the Cree culture and language while providing students with the tools they need to pursue higher education and employment.

We know that education is an important investment in any community. The completion of this school demonstrates the recognition of the importance that education has in improving the quality of life of Aboriginal people.

I would like to thank all those involved in bringing this school to fruition: the leadership of Mosakahiken Cree Nation; Moose Lake Community Council; Frontier School Division; the governments of Canada and Manitoba; and the Manitoba School Boards Association. Thank you for working together to help Moose Lake students fulfill their learning potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Heather Todoruk

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Heather Todoruk, who has been named Neepawa's Sportsperson of the Year. She was presented with this award before a sold-out crowd at the second annual Neepawa Sports Dinner, an event which she has a strong hand in organizing.

Ms. Todoruk has shown a great deal of dedication to the sporting community in Neepawa and has participated in sports in a variety of capacities. Ms. Todoruk's love of sport began at a young age. She competed in figure skating at the provincial level, played baseball and university hockey. More recently, she's taken up running and curling. In addition to competing in the curling league for many years, she also set about organizing a competitive women's curling league for Neepawa and surrounding communities when she saw that there was a need for one.

Ms. Todoruk has demonstrated a talent for organization and fundraising, has organized several fundraisers and tournaments for the community. She was chairperson of the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in 2000 and the Safeway Select Championship in 2002. In 2009 she participated in

organizing committees of the Scotties Tournament as chair of the volunteer clothing and souvenirs. In addition, she has helped plan the Shane Hnidy Golf Tournament which has now run for 10 years. The funds raised from that tournament benefit the Beautiful Plains Community Foundation.

As a strong supporter of the Neepawa Natives hockey team, Ms. Todoruk has done a lot of work to co-ordinate events and promote the team. The Neepawa Natives Golf Tournament, which she organized, was a great success, helping to raise awareness and funds for the junior hockey team. As well, Ms. Todoruk co-ordinated a Christmas party for the team and a parent-billet social evening.

Ms. Todoruk has a busy schedule including a job, volunteering for her children's sports involvements and her own sports-related commitments. Recently, she's been forced to cut back her involvement in sports in order to spend more time with her family. However, she's still very active in the sporting community. Her two children, Amy and Bryan, participate in figure skating, hockey and baseball, which Ms. Todoruk proudly supports. She even took on coaching the figure skating team when a coach could not be found.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Ms. Todoruk for her outstanding contribution to sports and community life in Neepawa. Her untiring dedication and enthusiasm for sports are inspirational. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, on House business, Mr. Speaker, if it should come to pass that the Throne Speech debate is concluded by next Monday, I'd like to announce that the private member's resolution that would then be considered next Tuesday morning is the resolution on Federal Cap on Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program, brought forward by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran).

Mr. Speaker: Okay, if it should come to pass that the Throne Speech debate is concluded by next Monday, it's been announced that the private member's resolution that would then be considered next Tuesday morning is the resolution on Federal Cap on Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program, which will be brought forward by the honourable member for The Maples.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH
(Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: 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 honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in amendment thereto, and it's standing in the name of the honourable member for Southdale, who has 26 minutes remaining.

* (14:40)

Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, when my time ran out yesterday, I was talking about the newest phase of Rainbow Day Nursery. This project is a wonderful example of what this government does best: work co-operatively with the community and business to build projects that benefit everyone. This busy corner in Southdale could have easily been home to a new store or restaurant, but the Borger family has deep roots in Southdale and knew that a daycare is what we needed. So, together with the folks at Rainbow and our government, we now have a stand-alone daycare that's easy for parents to access, is close to many schools and provides an essential service to Southdale families.

This government is committed to daycare and the people who work in our child-care centres, and that's why we've increased child-care workers' wages 49 per cent since 1999. In about a week, our child-care workers in this province will be eligible for a pension plan.

We know how important and, sometimes, how difficult their jobs are. Mr. Speaker, I know you understand, because you, too, have to deal with some infantile behaviour at times.

Our licensed child-care workers and home-care providers provide a valuable service, not just to Manitoba children but to their entire families. Their training and expertise in child development and learning make them a valuable resource for parents

as well, and they are shaping our future. In the last five years, more than 2,000 people have chosen this rewarding career, and this government thanks you for that. We know that there's more to do, but together we're on the right path.

There are about 1,200 licensed daycare spaces in the constituency of Southdale. The latest numbers show that we have 14 daycare centres, 22 family child-care homes and eight nursery schools. Rainbow daycare alone has increased spaces by 33 per cent since 2007, and that includes a 56 per cent increase in infant spaces, 38 newly funded preschool spaces and nearly 130 more school-aged spaces at the several Rainbow daycare Nursery locations.

I spent a lot of time knocking on doors in Sage Creek this past summer, and at almost every door I knocked on the same scene was acted out. A woman would tiptoe to the door, put her finger to the lip—to her lip, step out on the front porch to speak with me, and then she would still apologize, whispering, and explain that she finally got the baby down for a nap. Well, after sharing a few tips of what worked for me and promising that eventually they do sleep through the night—although I didn't mention that sometimes that's not until kindergarten—I would knock on the next door in Sage Creek and have the same scene played out again.

The constituency of Southdale is having a growth spurt, and many people in those new homes are living new families, and I know that many of these new moms will be going back to work in the next year and that's why we're putting emphasis on more funded infant spaces.

We are currently piloting a centralized, online child-care wait-list in Brandon that will be province-wide next year. That will make it easier for parents to find child care and easier for the Province to track where spaces are most needed.

Going back to work after maternity leave is a stressful time, but knowing that your baby is in a safe, loving environment makes it a whole lot easier.

Manitoba is often referred to as resilient. Our average growth rate over the past five years leads the nation and our unemployment rate is the lowest. And, although we know that things have been worse outside our borders, the recession hasn't been easy on Manitoba businesses either.

This government made a choice not to increase suffering by making reckless cuts to front-line

services. We invest in people and the things that matter to them, such as health care and education.

We know Manitobans are never short on ideas, and so working with the innovation council of Manitoba will help Manitoba entrepreneurs with a range of programs and investments to help them build their dreams into business successes. And we'll introduce incentives to help women and young people turn their ideas into profits. Manitoba is open for business; in fact, we're the only tax-free zone in Canada for small businesses.

And for those businesses that continue to grow, our Provincial Nominee Program will bring more skilled workers and their families to Manitoba. What makes me most proud, though, is the opportunity that these new Canadians find upon settling here. Within three months of moving to Manitoba, 85 per cent of newcomers have found work, and within five years, three-quarters of those families own a house, making Manitoba not just a place that they live and work, but they call this place home, and that's a huge accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, our children are our future, and I want to live in a future where young people have an education and the chance to reach their full potential. I know in the last election the Leader of the Opposition wanted to fund schools of excellence. Well, I think all our children should be given the opportunity to achieve excellence. Not everyone gets the same start in life, but it's our job as a government to make sure everyone gets the same opportunity to succeed. I see excellence in all our schools and potential in all our children.

There was a time when you could get a pretty good job and work your way up with even a grade 10 or 11 education, but now a high school diploma isn't always enough to get your foot in the door, and that's why our government is working with schools, universities and colleges around Manitoba to help students find their path to a higher education. That might mean a degree for some people; for others it might mean learning a skilled trade or an apprenticeship.

This government is on the same page with parents who recognize that a grade 12 education is essential. We know the parents want to stay informed on how their child is doing throughout their education, and that's why we'll see a common plain language report card in Manitoba. Parents work hard to teach their children manners, ethics and their

family's values. It's no easy job. Up against peer influence, pop culture and the ever-present screen time, but we know parenting is easier when children get the same message at home and at school, the same expectations they'll eventually find at work, and that's why Manitoba students will be more accountable to their teachers. There will be consequences for late assignments and underperformance can result in a failing grade. Learning doesn't begin at school, and anyone who's held a baby can see that. We know that early learning affects a child's outcome and success in school and beyond, and that's why Early Returns, a play-based curriculum, will be phased in at our licensed daycares and nursery schools.

I mentioned earlier about some of the new buildings around Southdale, and I know that around the province people are driving by new buildings or construction sites such as Access St. James, the new Women's Hospital and the Ste. Anne Hospital. But there's another new building that I see on my way home from this Legislature every day, and that's the new birthing centre at the corner of St. Mary and St. Anne's. Right now the area is full of heavy machinery, but not long from now I expect they'll see a row of baby car seats waiting to take those new families home. And by 2015 those new families and everyone in Manitoba will have access to a personal family physician; we'll link existing facilities and provide medical service in quick-care clinics staffed by nurse practitioners. And for those in remote areas who can't easily get to a doctor, health care will come to you with the primary care health bus, because prevention is the key to better health.

Prevention is also the best method to fight crime. Do you know one of the best, most proven ways to prevent crime? It's education, keeping kids in schools and out of gangs. We know our high school graduation rate has gone up from 72 to 81 per cent and we've increased funding to provincial schools each year—all the schools, not just a few—chosen few that the opposition might be willing to fund. We've also done that at a rate that exceeds economic growth and still saved Manitobans \$145 million each year in education taxes. But we need opportunities for young people to avoid a life of crime.

For those who do break the law, they will be held accountable. We've added 219 new police officers and 48 new prosecutors with more to come in the next five years. We know how successful our

auto theft strategy is, and now we'll apply that knowledge to taking on gangs. We'll work with our federal partners to strengthen the Criminal Code.

A few weeks ago, I met with a police officer who lives in my constituency and works in one of our inner-city schools. It was obvious the difference that she's making in those children's lives. Kids who were once afraid of a police officer now run and hug her. And, although she is based in the school, she has gotten to know the children's parents, grandparents and the people in the surrounding community. Some of those children come from countries where a person in a uniform can be very intimidating. But, by getting to know their school officer, it has changed their perception of the Winnipeg police uniform. That is the difference that community policing can make, and that's why we're committed to expanding on it.

I heard an interesting documentary the other day that was talking about the fact that humans are the only animals that can do something knowing it's not in their best interests, but then go ahead and do it anyway, and they were using climate change as the example. We know it's happening, but we're not always willing to make the necessary changes to prevent it.

It also makes me think about the boreal forest on the east side. We know it's the largest intact boreal forest on earth. We know it's the lungs of the planet, and in pictures or videos, even if you've never been there, we know instinctively it's a special place, and as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, not just for us but for the entire planet, it's a place worth protecting. This boreal forest may lie mostly within our borders, but that doesn't mean that we own it to preserve it or throw it away as we please. This precious resource is ours to care for. It's our responsibility, and if we allow it to be torn down we'll be left to defend those actions.

* (14:50)

In the last 12 months, this government has protected a million hectares in Manitoba. Lake Winnipegosis will be this province's 84th provincial park, and we're restoring Manitoba's marshes, a natural way to reduce the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen entering our lakes.

Manitoba Hydro is our future. Export sales will allow this province to continue growing and ensure our children can live and prosper here at home. Hydro energy is our advantage, and we can't allow

these potential sales to be tied up in court. The opposition may be willing to gamble on our future and our children's future, but this government is not.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to work with this government, and I'm proud of the work that we've done over the last few years, and I'm grateful that I've been able to contribute as a member of this NDP team.

We aren't here for self-gain. We're here to represent our constituents, and we're accountable to them. And I hope to continue being an effective voice for the people of Southdale. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm pleased to respond to the amendment put forward by the member—the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, just before I begin, I want to just say—welcome you back. It's good to have you back in the chair, as many people have said before.

I'd also like to thank the table staff and all of the staff that help us in the Legislature here. I also would like to just welcome the pages and hope that the experience here will be something you can take forward with you. Maybe one day one of you will want to come back and be a member of the Legislature.

Also, I'd like to just thank my constituency assistant, Wendy Capri, who does a wonderful job for me. She doesn't get enough thanks sometimes. Sometimes I think that we take a lot of things for granted of what gets done behind the scenes, but we certainly do thank the people that do all that for us.

I also want to thank the constituency of Morris, the people of Morris, who have again put their confidence in me, and I thank them for my recent nomination for the Progressive Conservative Party to represent the constituency of Morris. So I'm very pleased about that. It was a very nice event, uncontested as it should've been, and had a lot of people come out; 168 people come out in support. It was very, very good, and I thank the constituency of Morris and look forward to representing them for the next several years.

And I also do want to say—I want to give tribute to my colleagues who aren't seeking re-election, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurchou) and the member from Pembina, who I've had the fortune to serve with in this Legislature for several years now. I just want to say to them that we all appreciate the job that they have done here in the Legislature. I

think from whatever party that we belong to, we all recognize what a job that we have to do here, what sacrifices have to be made in terms of family and personal friendships sometimes when you're away doing work at the Legislature and you aren't able to be at home and—with your family or with your friends. So it has been a commitment in public service, and I do want to acknowledge that and wish them both all the best in their future endeavours and hope that they will come back and visit us from time to time here.

Also, just like to take a moment to congratulate all of those who ran in the municipal elections last October and congratulate those who were successful in their wins and also just say thank you to those who either did not seek re-election or were defeated, thank them for their many years of public service. I think anytime someone is willing to put their name on a ballot and be elected and serve for the public interest, they are to be commended for that. Sometimes it's not a very thankful job. You don't get a lot of thanks sometimes, but it is—I think the thank you is in knowing what you have done to serve your community. So I want to just thank everyone for that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I rise—anytime I rise in this Legislature to speak, I am reminded of the significance of this Chamber, the significance of the roles that we play here, whether it's government, opposition. We all have roles to play and sometimes we can get a little heated in our debate in this Chamber on both sides of the House. That is what happens, but certainly I think that we should be reminded that we are debating the issues, and sometimes some comments may get a little personal and we need to strive to debate the issues at hand.

So with that I'd like to just talk a little bit about the Throne Speech that we've heard here, and I hope that I will stick to the main issues of the speech because the speech was well delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor. We appreciate the fact of that, but it was a very long-on-wind speech and short on substance, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I need to highlight some of the failures of this speech. It was a tired and weak and desperate attempt by this government with nothing really substantial in this Throne Speech. It just speaks to a government that's been in power too long. It's out of steam, out of ideas, weak presentation and a desperate move to try and maintain their position, something that they would rather do to keep themselves in power, to support

themselves and their friends, rather than do what's right for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I'll start with the issue of violent crime. This government has been in power for 11 years and what have we seen over the last 11 years? An escalation of crime in our cities and our countries and our province here. We have seen gang activity escalate, more gangs on the street that you can count. We've seen Hells Angels move into Manitoba in 2000 after the NDP came into power, and the reason the gangs are here is because of the failed policies of this government. They fail to be tough on crime—they fail to be tough on crime—and because of that crime has escalated.

You cannot go anywhere in this city and ask somebody, are you feeling safe in your neighbourhood, and the answer is, no, people don't feel safe in the neighbourhood. And the reason they don't feel safe is because if they walk out their door just to go down to the corner store to get a quart of milk, Mr. Speaker, they don't feel safe because of what's happening on the streets.

How many days do I turn on the radio in the morning, Mr. Speaker, and hear of another stabbing, another shooting that happened overnight. This is just because of the NDP's policies and their weakness and the—on their inability to be tough on criminals.

Yes, there are two different methods of approach here but we need to have the immediate consequences for those who offend and break the law, Mr. Speaker. There has to be immediate consequences for that. And, second of all, yes, there is an education component behind all of that, but the immediate response is we do need to be tough on crime.

The NDP, Mr. Speaker, have failed to be tough on violent crime and we all know that we are the violent capital of Canada, the violent crime capital of Canada. That is not something that we should be proud of. That is something that we should strive against, but after 11 years we still have that to contend with, that we are labelled as the violent crime capital of Canada.

Now, I feel very sad for seniors in neighbourhoods that are afraid to go out at night because of violence in their neighbourhoods, afraid to drive at night because of carjackings that happen within Winnipeg and the violent nature of what we've seen in terms of accidents that have occurred

because of people that have stolen vehicles and are joyriding in the city. We've seen horrific accidents happen, Mr. Speaker, because of this, where people have lost their lives, and that's a tragic and unfortunate circumstance of the failed policies of the NDP who refuse to be tough on crime.

* (15:00)

When you see—when you hear about incidents where people are set on fire in their neighbourhoods, my goodness, Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow this to go on. We hear about the violence against women, and especially Aboriginal women. And there are so many missing Aboriginal women that have likely met a violent fate, and we know nothing of what has happened there.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the terms of crime, the NDP are weak, they have failed and we continue to be the violent crime capital of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have also failed to end hallway medicine. I think that is one of the biggest election promises ever broken. Do we remember that? We will end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. Well, I mean, when you make a promise like that and it just—it's just totally unrealistic but, you know, they continue on. I'm just reading a headline from the *Winnipeg Free Press* on Monday, November 22nd, and it's Dan Lett, surprisingly—Dan Lett, who says: Premier's promises lofty, unrealistic. Pledges about docs, schools ignore reality.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you can promise anything in a desperate attempt to get re-elected, but it's just another weak attempt at pandering to the public, making a promise that they know—they know—that's very unrealistic and probably unattainable.

What have we seen in health care? We've seen Mr. Brian Sinclair, who died in a waiting room after waiting over 30 hours to see a doctor. I—I'm just appalled at how this could happen, Mr. Speaker, under the watch of the Health Minister and the NDP government, who, by the way, tried to hide all this and say that Mr. Sinclair hadn't been triaged but, in fact, it was shown that he was. She tried to mislead the public on that, but the public knows what has happened, and the public knows that this NDP government has failed when it comes to being able to present quality health care for everyone here in the province.

And I know that they're cutting back, Mr. Speaker. There's cuts all over the place. I have a very significant case with a young child who requires 24-hour attention. This child has a terminal disease and has been given—alotted—was allotted—a certain number of home-care hours for care because he has to be cared for 24 hours a day so that he continues his breathing. The parents are caring for him at home, but they need some home-care support because they both work and they are required to be awake most of the time to care for him. But what have I found in the last little while is that they have cut back his home-care hours. This is—

An Honourable Member: You make it up all the time.

Mrs. Taillieu: Oh, well, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier seems to think I'm making this up. Maybe she should check with the Health Minister, to whom I wrote a letter about a month ago and who hasn't responded to me yet. So, although I take this seriously, I take this issue very seriously when there's—the life of a child is at risk. The Deputy Premier, on the other hand, seems to think it's a joke. But I suggest it's not a joke. It's very serious, and when you take money from home care because you have to cut back and because you're cutting back your budget, and that's where you're taking the money from, I would suggest—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Minister of Finance, on a point of order?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): The member opposite just put on the record that I don't take these issues seriously, and I would ask you that you ask her to correct that inaccuracy, but I'd also like to ask her how she would pay for home care if she—when she voted for taking \$500 million out of—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, it's clearly not a point of order; it's a dispute over the facts.

The minister knows that; she clearly knows that. She just can't take any criticism. That's the problem.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Minister of Finance—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On a point of order raised by the honourable Minister of Finance, it's not a point of order; it's a dispute over the facts. And also I remind members that—not to use points of orders as a means of debate. Every member that wish to speak will have the opportunity to put their thoughts and their words on the record.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: So the honourable member for Morris has the floor.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and that just illustrates the point, how desperate this government has become.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak about the failure to manage the financial responsibility of this Province. You know, we've had a relatively good 10 years—well, I'd say eight years, I suppose—in terms of the economy and transfer payments from Ottawa. So you would think at a time—I know families in Manitoba know this: When money's coming in, that's when you put money away to save when things aren't going to be so good, but not this government. Their idea is spend it all, spend it all, and go back to Ottawa with your hand out for more. In fact, I think it was the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) that suggested that if he was elected Premier, that's what he would do. He would betray Manitoba as in really bad economic circumstances, so he could go to Ottawa and beg for more money for Manitoba. Instead of having the goal to make Manitoba a have-not province, he would continue to keep Manitoba dependent on its neighbours.

But, instead of saving, the reckless spending of this government—and then it—what happens after the money's all spent? We get a downturn in the economy. And when that happens, now they have to say, well, okay, now we have to repeal the balanced budget legislation. We really know what that was all about. That was really just about protecting their ministerial salaries, but, Mr. Speaker, this is another broken promise, another broken election promise. I believe that, in 1999, I think it was the Premier, the opposition leader at the time, Mr. Doer, who promised—he said, well, we'll keep the things the

Tories got right and we will keep balanced budget legislation, but it didn't take long—it didn't take long to break that promise, as well, but, of course, that was all about protecting their own salaries, the big bill from last session, that that's the only thing they wanted to talk about was protecting their own salaries.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is an obligation to be financially and fiscally responsible in this Province. They're not spending their own money; they're spending money that is belonging to the taxpayers of Manitoba. The taxpayers have to contribute money through their taxes to this government to allocate, and they have to be—they have to do that in a responsible way, and we've seen so many examples of mismanagement and waste of—on the part of this government. It's quite unbelievable.

When you, you know, you just look at the west-side bipole decision. I think it's been known for over 20 years—the Hydro officials that I've spoken with anyway—that the Bipole III was always destined to go down the east side of the province, but, through a political decision made by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), who was the Finance minister and critic for Hydro or the minister responsible for Hydro at the time—directed in a letter to Manitoba Hydro to go down the west side of the province.

*(15:10)

Now, we just had a discussion earlier today in this House about the extra costs associated with going down the west side of the province, Mr. Speaker. What legacy that is going to leave to Manitoba families at—right now, we know it's approximately \$7,000 for every family in this province, but if those costs double or even go higher than that, that is a cost that not only our families are going to be paying but our children's families are going to be paying. And they can talk about the boreal forest and saying we must protect the boreal forest and I think the member from Southdale said tearing down the boreal forest. Well, of course that doesn't happen—course that doesn't happen.

Even the world UNESCO people say you can put a hydro line through the boreal forest, and that does not destroy the boreal forest and does not hinder a world UNESCO site designation. There are other areas in this country that are designated as UNESCO sites, like Banff National Park, Mr. Speaker, and we all know that there's much tourism and highways and transmission lines and railways and a lot of things that have gone through there. It does not take away.

We can have both: we can have a protected boreal forest and we can take less than 0.1 per cent to put a transmission line through the boreal forest.

In fact, when I was speaking to the Hydro people at some of the open houses, they were showing how they can actually drop in the towers by helicopter so that their imprint—the footprint of the towers is so minimal, Mr. Speaker. But to say that it's jeopardizing sales to the United States, well, there's no agreements. There's no agreements in place so I don't know what the Finance Minister is talking about because there are no agreements in place and when people need to buy electricity from Canada, they will buy it but what's also important is protecting the First Nations on the east side and allowing some economic development for them.

They say they need economic development on the east side of the province; an all-weather road would help their economic situation dramatically. But it's curious, Mr. Speaker, that this government wants to listen to the environmental lobbyists from the United States over their own people here in Manitoba. They would listen to the environmental lobbyists and it's going to cost people here in Manitoba money and yet, maybe they're going to get a photo op on the cover of a magazine somewhere for this but, really, that is purely, purely self-interest on their part and they're not doing the best thing for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, this is a tired and weak and desperate government, out of ideas, out of steam, cannot support this Throne Speech. In fact—but if this government will support the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), then we would have a Throne Speech that we could support.

The reasons why I am not supporting this Throne Speech is that because it's failed to acknowledge that after 11 years violent crime is rising, waste is rampant and past health-care promises have been broken.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it did not provide a credible plan to reduce violent crime, reduce waste and improve health care.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because this Throne Speech endorses large, ongoing deficits and rising debt, which will result in higher taxes for Manitoba families.

I am not supporting this Throne Speech because it's failed to acknowledge the government's

misguided plan to raise taxes on Manitoba families starting after 2011.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it's failed to take immediate steps to improve Manitoba's competitive position by seeking entry into the New West Partnership.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it has failed to protect Manitoba seniors and families from hydro rate increases caused by the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) interference in Manitoba Hydro.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it's failed to acknowledge that for 11 years the government had wasted money on bloated health-care bureaucracy and boardrooms at the expense of front-line care.

And I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to acknowledge that the shortage of personal care homes in Manitoba is a direct result of the government's failure to plan for the needs of our seniors.

And I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to recognize that far too many of our First Nations and Métis people remain on the outside of the economic life of our province or to offer a plan to address this significant failure.

And I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to assure parents that their children are learning the skills they need to succeed in today's workforce. I'm not supporting the Throne Speech because it continues the government's divisive policies of neglecting or penalizing Manitoba's farm families and rural communities.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to acknowledge the chaos in Manitoba's child welfare system caused by its policies or to apologize for the tragic abuse and loss of life caused by this government's political interference in the child welfare system.

And I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to deal with the problem of increased drunk driving or to acknowledge that the reckless behaviour has caused heartache from far too many families.

I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to deal with addictions treatment or to acknowledge that drug abuse and addiction are continuing to much—contributing to much of the crime that plagues our province, now known as the violent crime capital of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, while the speech does contain many good ideas offered by the members of the opposition, it fails to convince this House that they will actually be implemented. I'm not supporting this Throne Speech because it fails to acknowledge the government's 11-year track record of failure to keep other promises like ending hallway medicine, causing this House to realize that the promises contained in this speech are unlikely to be kept.

Mr. Speaker, the current government has failed in its promises to Manitobans and as a result, it is now clearer than ever that it will require a new government to deliver positive results on 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.

Mr. Speaker, this government has failed on so many fronts for so many families, and that is why I cannot support the government's Throne Speech. Thank you very much.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Like others, I would like to also welcome you back to the Chamber. I want to say the member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) did a stellar job in your absence, but you are our Speaker, we need you and it's good to see you back in your chair.

It's interesting to follow the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu). I was listening to her remarks about spending and deficits and all that and I think of another politician in the United States. Her name is Sarah Palin, and she once said that she could see Russia from her house in Alaska, and I have to wonder if the member for Morris can see the global recession from her house, if she's at all aware of that.

It seems unlikely given that in the midst of the greatest financial crisis that this country, the world has seen in the last 50 years that governments have to take the appropriate actions and we've stood on our record of 10 balanced budgets. And I take my hat off to the Premier (Mr. Selinger), who, as Finance Minister for that decade, played a pivotal role in that regard and our being re-elected to three majorities.

And I take my hat off to the current Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) as well for taking the correct steps to make sure that spending on core services is not sacrificed, like members opposite did

back in the '90s when the Filmon government slashed funding to the health-care industry and reduced doctor training spaces, something that we are feeling the repercussions of to this very day, not just in Manitoba, but across the country. So that's how Liberals and Conservatives do business: cut spending and drive things into the ground.

* (15:20)

Certainly, we know that that was their style in the Interlake in terms of infrastructure investment, something that we have reversed since we came to office, and I look to other countries. I look to Iceland, that first-world country that basically went bankrupt. You look to the situation in Ireland, in Greece, in Britain, of course, to the United States to the south of us. Manitoba is well positioned, probably the best positioned of all Canadian provinces and admired around the world for how well we have done in weathering this storm.

I want to look to a few examples of what I consider wilful blindness on the part of the Conservatives, and my first example would be the situation in the Interlake, the area—the region that I represent. The weather that we've experienced over the years—the last three years have been absolutely horrific, and we are programming. We have programmed in the past, and we're looking to program for the livestock producers again. And yet to hear members opposite in the media, talking to their constituents, blaming the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) for the fact that the federal government has yet to deal with this in their Treasury Board.

Our Treasury Board, our Cabinet approved funding to put toward an AgriRecovery program at the end of August—the end of August. Where is Ottawa? Where are they? The federal Minister of Agriculture was in Manitoba just last week, and I would remind the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) of that. He was here last week. Why did he come? Of course, to do a little campaigning up in the Neepawa area, as I understand it, but did meet with our Minister of Agriculture, and have we a program yet? Have we had any money committed from the federal government to date? Not yet. Hasn't gone to the Treasury Board. Not high enough on their radar screen.

Mr. Speaker, I guess that's just typical of members opposite. They can't see the forest for the trees or they just deny it. They just don't want to see it. They don't want to acknowledge the fact that

Ottawa has yet to step up to the plate, and this is most importantly, people in the Interlake cannot stand any more political posturing like this, wilful blindness on the part of members opposite. It's time for them to get the message to their counterparts in Ottawa to get moving on this file.

Now in terms of wilful blindness, I just have to look back to the last crisis in the Interlake back in '07 when the livestock producers were in the same situation, and we were lobbying for money for an AgriRecovery program. What happened? The Prime Minister called an election, and for the next three months—it wasn't until March of the following year that, finally, the feds got around to recognizing, oh, there's a problem in Manitoba. And, at the end of March, finally we made an announcement.

And throughout the course of that period, members opposite were running around the country telling everybody that the Province hadn't declared a disaster yet and that was why funding couldn't flow. It was absolute 'falsehead,' Mr. Speaker. There was no truth to it whatsoever, and they knew full well that this was just a little disinformation campaign they had out there to put the wrong message in the minds of producers. Rather than trying to contribute to solve this problem, it was all political posturing—typical Conservative approach to a disaster.

Since 2008, and it's in the Throne Speech here, combined payment to the agriculture sector have been in the neighbourhood of \$889 million through Disaster Financial Assistance, through AgriRecovery, through AgriStability, through crop insurance and so forth. So I stand proud as a member of this government. We have looked after the farmers in this province to the best of our ability.

On the part of—another example of wilful blindness would be on the topic of drainage, and the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) just yesterday was doing everything he could to deny any responsibility on the part of the feds in this regard. Drainage is all provincial as far as he's concerned. But there are numerous examples of federal participation in drainage.

I look back to the 1970s, again in the Interlake, the FRED program, which was put in place by two visionary leaders, of course, the Right Honourable Ed Schreyer and the late Pierre Trudeau. Those were leaders. Those two men, together, recognized that there's a role for all levels of government in development of infrastructure. And for members opposite to deny any involvement on the federal part,

just to defend their brothers in Ottawa, fellow Conservatives, pretty narrow-minded, pretty short-sighted but, again, typical thinking on their part.

Now, I give credit to the current government in that actually they are looking at a few things. There was the infrastructure program. One municipality, Armstrong, made an application for drainage works, and it was approved and completed. So, hats off to them; at least, they're acting a little bit. I wish members opposite would think in that vein.

There's the question of navigable waterways, which are federal jurisdiction, and that includes a lot of rivers and so forth. There's the need for Ottawa to start thinking from a disaster financial assistance perspective, from a mitigation perspective, as opposed to just remediation, paying for damages, repairing damages after the fact. If we invested some of that money up front, then the damages would be lessened. It would be money well spent. And they're slowly coming around to that, but we have a ways to go yet.

I look to a project in the RM of Bifrost as a good example, where, I believe, the feds are considering cost-sharing a feasibility study for the BASIC group, which is looking to enhance drainage in that municipality. Good for them; I hope they come across and actually do put some money on the table in that regard.

There are no shortage of drainage challenges in the Interlake. Of course, the Shoal Lakes' scenario comes to mind, and very difficult, very expensive problem to resolve. Here, again, if only Ottawa would wake up and agree to an AgriRecovery program, we could at least ensure that a feed supply came to the cattle in that area and those farmers could rest assured that they were in business for another year. But, I guess, when the Minister of Agriculture was here last week, campaigning in Inky Mark's old seat, that just never rose to the top. So we continue to wait and we continue to lobby ourselves on behalf of our farmers.

Wilful blindness; I look, again, to Lake Winnipeg. Here's a good example of Conservative planning gone awry, where they continue to preach here that removal of nitrogen is not necessary, even though, you know—Alberta, both Calgary and Edmonton, as I understand it, remove nitrogen from their effluent; Brandon does; our neighbours to the south in the United States do. How can we stand on our two feet and say that—call upon all of them to

contribute to the clean up of Lake Winnipeg when we won't go the distance in our own province here? So, that's going to be their approach.

Well, that's a pretty silly way of looking at things. And, not to remove nitrogen. Yes, it's true that the blue-green algae can fix nitrogen, but the green algae can't. So we're going to allow the lake to fill up with green algae instead. Fish need clean water to breathe. If you filled that glass full of nitrates and drank it, Mr. Speaker, you would die. Nitrates inhibit the transfer of oxygen into the body of the fish. So, you know, these things seem to escape them but, of course, they're trying to chisel it down a little bit, save a few bucks and turn a blind eye to the real problem in Lake Winnipeg.

And we know what they would do; they would work in the opposite direction. One of the first things they would do when they got back into office, I guarantee you this, would be to remove the hog—the expansion of the hog industry, the moratorium, in the Interlake. That would be gone the next day, and it would be back to the bad, old days there—and I'm not saying that there isn't a place for a hog industry. There is, and I would like to see the hog industry working effectively in the Interlake, but it has to be done carefully. Manure has to be managed correctly, incorporated into the soil and so forth, and that, sadly, has not been the case in that region, which is what led to the moratorium. But these guys would do away with it in a flash, and that's all part of their solution to Lake Winnipeg.

*(15:30)

I look to the fishery. I mentioned it just a moment ago. I was talking about fish. Well, we know what they would do with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, exactly what they're trying to do to the Canadian Wheat Board. In fact, they did a study of the FFMC a couple of years ago to see how dual marketing would work. Well, we know how it would work. We know how it worked before the FFMC came along. All kinds of—there was a cartel of buyers, they'd get together in Minneapolis or wherever, decide on the price and come back and it was take it or leave it, boys, up here. That's exactly where they would go with the FFMC if they had their majority government in Ottawa, which thank God they don't, and these guys opposite would go right alongside with them. We know that because that's exactly what the newly elected Conservative government in Saskatchewan did.

So there's their strategy for Lake Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, not removing nitrates from the water in Winnipeg, more hog slurry into the lake in areas like the Interlake and killing the FFMC to the detriment of the Aboriginal peoples who depend on the fishery for their livelihood.

Another example of wilful blindness is—and we hear the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) quite often going on and on about equalization, how we're a have-not and if they were in office that would all be over tomorrow. That's nonsense, Mr. Speaker, utter nonsense. Because, first of all, equalization is funded by all Canadians. This is a national program. Every one of us pays federal tax. We all pay the same amount and the deal is so that all areas of this country have the same standard of living. That's the deal. That's the nature of Canada, the very essence of Canada, and for them to suggest that they would go backward is ludicrous to say the least.

They keep referring to the conservative mecca in Alberta like it's the panacea to all and the example of the province that doesn't need equalization. Well, let's look at the facts here. Manitoba in total had roughly \$3.3 billion in equalization payments, which is equalization combined with the Health and Social Transfer payment. Of that \$2 billion was equalization. Let's look to Alberta. Their total transfers from the Government of Canada exceeded \$5 billion, Mr. Speaker. So there you go, 3.3 to Manitoba, over \$5 billion to Alberta, because the Health and Social Transfer payments are based on population. So don't tell me that Alberta, the have province, is standing alone when they're getting more money than we are from the federal government, not from the rest of Canada, and I'm not begrudging them that because I believe in equalization. I believe it serves a purpose.

Members opposite have been blowing smoke for years on this issue and they will continue to do so. But the fact of the matter is that all Canadians pay into equalization and we all deserve to get some of that money back given the fact that the federal tax rate is double the provincial tax rate, and yet we carry the can for the most part on the most expensive items such as health care, such as education, infrastructure and so forth. So equalization is there for all of us, and they should be ashamed of themselves to suggest that it should be put aside.

I look to the west-side bipole, another example of wilful blindness on part of members opposite, and

I can understand why, because they would like to basically scuttle the deal, not spend the money. That's their record with Hydro. That's what they've done in the past with the big dams, and they would scuttle this project on the west side and never get it done. I really fear they would go even further than that, Mr. Speaker, if they were ever elected to office, and I think they would put it on the market, to be quite honest with you. I—well, the record speaks for itself. That's exactly what they did with the telephone company, swore they would never do that, but the week after they were elected it was on the market. They would do the same thing with Manitoba Hydro, and the people of Manitoba better be aware of that. And the Leader of the Opposition, when they did it, that exact same—that exact thing in Ontario: privatize the power utility in Ontario. The member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen) was working for the Harris government there, is my understanding. So he's seen how to do it. The common-sense revolution in Ontario would be applied here and starting with the sale of the hydro utility.

And then we would go to world price for hydro which I think is something he also alluded to in some of his speeches in the past. Well, okay, every Manitoba citizen, be prepared to double your hydro bills. And we do have cold winters and I know that would be a considerable hit, but that's how members opposite would do business.

They keep, you know—they belittle the fact that in the United States there's a lot of people that lobby very hard against Manitoba Hydro, and I know this is. I've been a member of the Legislators' Forum. I've gone down there for over a decade now, meeting with North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and I know that there is a bias against Manitoba Hydro. It's not warranted, but it's there. Their strategy there is: clean coal, dirty hydro. That's their mindset.

People still believe that hydro dams in Manitoba are flooding hundreds of thousands of miles and displacing Aboriginal people and ignoring their needs, which is absolutely false, but that's the impression there is in the United States. And I can understand why. Go to North Dakota. There's huge coal deposits there, Mr. Speaker. So that's what they want to do. They want to burn that coal. Why not? And in order to do that, they have to disparage hydro and have done a very good job of it over the years. We're managing to reverse that to some degree and we are selling power to them, but to belittle that fact, that Americans in general are uninformed and still

think we do things the old way here, that is being deliberately, wilfully blind on this particular issue.

Going down the west side and preserving the east side for a UNESCO World Heritage Site will be pivotal in changing this perception, not just in the United States but around the world, and this is something that we have to make sure happens.

I see my time is running low here. I did want to speak briefly about the Métis policy. I will be the representative of St. Laurent after the next election, with their good graces, and it's of great interest to me. I did make a member's statement the other day telling of my ties back to the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, the first Legislative Assembly. I was a little surprised actually to see my ancestor Curtis James Bird was, in fact, a member of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. Well, that was good that there was that level of co-operation between the English half-breeds, as they were called back then, and the French Métis, and we have to make sure that those good feelings are continued as we go forward on this file.

And I think that in closing—I've carried this piece of paper around with me for about a year now. It's a classic quote that basically lays out the Conservative platform going into the next election. It's the member—the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) actually put this on the record and it bears repeating. In fact, it bears repeating day after day, where the Tories will put less focus on issues such as health care. Well, I guess privatizing health care, they'll certainly pay attention in that regard. Then they won't have to worry about it, and I'm sure there's a lot of wealthy Conservatives ready to cut into that 3- to 4-billion-dollar budget. Imagine the money they could make off of that. MTS was one thing. We're talking billions now, so that's certainly going to be on their agenda, is the privatization of the delivery of health care.

Roads aren't going to be too much on their agenda, it says here. Well, I think we've practically done, well, most of the roads, and quadrupling the budget to \$4 billion has been a step in the right direction. Other things they will put less emphasis on, social services. They certainly like to talk the talk in this Chamber, but, obviously, when it comes to walking the walk, their plans are different.

* (15:40)

Agriculture, imagine that. Less emphasis on agriculture. Well, we had an example of that in this

session. It took them a week to ask a question about agriculture. They were talking about football stadiums and, you know, power lines and football stadiums, and more football stadiums. Took them a week to recognize that there's a crisis in agriculture in this province, that people of the Interlake and the Westlake are suffering, have been suffering for years, are waiting for federal money to come across. But these guys never even put a question—never even put a question—for the first week that we were in here, for the first week. So obviously agriculture isn't going to mean much to them. That's been proven.

Rural depopulation—oh, well, that's not a problem either. And, of course, First Nations. Well, that doesn't surprise me; their record throughout their entire existence speaks for themselves on the topic of our First Nations people.

And I think I will close my remarks in that regard, Mr. Speaker. I want other members to have an opportunity to speak and that's a good point to stop on, showing the Tories for what they are to the people of Manitoba, what they should expect, should they be so foolish as to elect these people next October.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I feel very honoured and privileged to have the opportunity to speak in this Legislature on behalf of the constituents of Charleswood. I am very grateful to them and I feel very privileged that they have given me this opportunity to be here to represent them.

And I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak about the Throne Speech and to our amendments that we put forward. I also want to say that I am very grateful to my family, who are very supportive of what I do, and especially to my husband, Hal, who gives me great support that allows me to do this job.

I also want to acknowledge my constituency staff and my volunteers because without them it would be, you know, so difficult to do what I do here. And I also want to say that I work with a fabulous team of MLAs and legislative staff and I am amazed at their continuous energy and their commitment for the work that they do, and they come every day with a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of ideas and it's a pleasure to work with the people that I do have the opportunity to work with here.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome you back and to indicate that I'm very happy to see you back and to know that

things went well for you. I also want to welcome back the Clerk, the table officers, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the interns, the pages, and I hope everybody has a great experience in this session. You provide great service and we certainly appreciate it very, very much.

I want to congratulate those that ran in the municipal election and, you know, you have to really appreciate, very much, people that put their name on the line to run in politics at any level. And I want to congratulate all of those that ran, congratulate the winners and to also include in that Paula Havixbeck, who is the new councillor for Charleswood, and I wish her very well as she moves forward in her new job.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to address the amendments and I'm going to encourage the NDP to support those amendments because if they vote against the amendments, let's be clear about what they are voting for: they're going to be voting for higher taxes, higher debt, higher crime rate, worsening health care and a continuing failure in the major files that this government is managing. And Hydro is one in particular. So, if they vote against our amendments, let's be clear, they are voting for higher taxes.

Mr. Speaker, it is so interesting to sit in here and it's happened now for, you know, 11 years, and I'm surprised because every time a government MLA gets up to speak about their Throne Speech, about their record, about what they should be proud of, we barely hear a peep out of them because they spend their whole speech talking about the decade of the '90s. You don't hear them talking about their supposed good record and one would imagine that's because they don't have much to talk about.

And, you know, it's so interesting, they don't seem to realize how foolish they sound when they do that, that they stand up and talk about a government of a decade ago or they talk about, you know, things that are not relevant to their own government. The idea of a Throne Speech is to put forward your vision and then stand in here and speak to your Throne Speech. They don't speak to their Throne Speech. All they do is sit and talk about the opposition. I have never heard that, you know, in other governments and parliaments except for here in Manitoba. And it seems such a psyche that the NDP have here. And they're coming across as petty, and they're coming across as very arrogant, tired, weak and desperate. And it's because they're failing, Mr. Speaker. I think

it's because they are feeling desperate because they are failing in moving forward a good agenda and there are failures all around them.

Mr. Speaker, this speech was a collection of desperate pre-election promises, and they have had failure after failure. So we are not surprised to see that there was zero indication of any meaningful action from the NDP, and it really did show that they're running out of steam. You know, even the media were pointing that out. I don't think they got any good media hits from their Throne Speech. In fact, there was a lot of criticism. They've had 11 years to deal with violent crime, 11 years to manage the finances, 11 years to fix the problems in health care, and they haven't done any of that yet. And, if they were actually going to do it, they would've done it by now; they've had 11 years, they could have done it. But what we get out of them now is just some tired, desperate rhetoric.

And when you have a government that's tired, weak and out of steam and failing to meet any of the major challenges that confront the provinces, you know that Manitoba is still in for another rough year. They didn't seem to have any really good ideas coming out of that to tackle any of these issues. In fact, when I look at the comments that were made in the Throne Speech or the promises for health care, half of those promises came out of what they're doing in Saskatchewan and the other half came out of what they're doing in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the editorial right after the Throne Speech in the *Winnipeg Free Press* bears being put into the record here, and I quote, in reference to the Throne Speech, "It reannounced and buffed practically everything the government has announced in recent times, some of it dating back a decade. It was—it is—the throne speech of a government that is . . . running on empty and doesn't know it. That there was so much of so little seems to indicate the government after 11 years is stale, that its best-before date has expired." End quote. And that was the editorial board of the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment a little bit about education before I move on to some of the other sections in the Throne Speech. And I want to indicate that they've really lost 11 years in dealing with education. There have been so many opportunities to strengthen education. I know that there had been a good report that had been put together in the '90s about it. I noticed that the government hasn't really come forward with

anything new on their own, and now after 11 years they're scrambling to try to make it look like they are actually going to try to do something, but instead they've really taken some pie-in-the-sky issues.

And it's funny, whenever they are criticized about education, they immediately throw out the name of Duff Roblin, as if that's somehow going to insulate them from some of their mismanagement of this portfolio. And fortunately, Mr. Speaker, I don't think people are giving them much credit for—and shouldn't give them much credit—because they really haven't done what they really had an opportunity to do in education.

*(15:50)

And so what we see now is a lot of desperate announcements with little thought put into it. In fact, after a decade in government, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is still having one of the worst high school graduation rates in all of Canada. And that is pretty shameful because, in fact, the more children that graduate, the better their opportunities are going to be, because that is the best way for success for anybody is to finish school and to have the best shot at life and, unfortunately, this government has really dropped the ball on that issue and not done nearly what they could.

In Family Services, we see children that continue to be mistreated and some who tragically die while in the care of Manitoba's child welfare system, and yet this Throne Speech was silent when it comes to good ideas that would have improved child welfare in Manitoba. When we see the number of children that have died, it is very distressing, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that this government couldn't have taken one of the worst challenges before them and address it in their Throne Speech is pretty shameful.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP haven't moved beyond lip service when it comes to getting people off welfare and into jobs and, in fact, since 2000, the NDP has handed out nearly \$50 million in welfare overpayments. That money could have been better used in putting it into the area of child protection, and it might have done a whole lot better for children.

When we look at the whole area of poverty, the NDP sure like to talk a lot when it comes to, actually, a lot of things, but they like to talk about how they're helping, you know, the guy that isn't doing really well. Well, yet, with Winnipeg Harvest, there was a

report that just came out, and they are saying that their food bank usage is one of the highest in the country and it has been getting worse under this NDP government. There are 1,200 to 1,600 babies per month that they feed through Winnipeg Harvest. That is a really, I think, glaring statement about the NDP failure in the area of child poverty, and Winnipeg Harvest and the report on child poverty here shows that it has gotten worse under this government.

So no matter how much this government likes to put rhetoric and spin out there on all these things they so grandly say they're doing, they are not putting forward accurate information. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is an epidemic in Manitoba. There was a leaked report that we got about maternal child care in Manitoba and a report that was done, commissioned by this government. The government sat on it for a couple of years, didn't do anything until front-line people were so dismayed because they said there's a crisis in maternal child care. That's coming from people that work on the front lines, and so they leaked that report. What did this government do in a knee-jerk reaction? They commissioned a second report. So here we have got a government that is sitting on some pretty bad outcomes in terms of maternal child and this government is not doing anything about it.

Their rhetoric, their spin—they're hiding behind, you know, trying to make it look like they're doing something, and instead we've got outcomes for moms and babies that are not improving under this government. We've got teen pregnancy rates that have escalated. We've got neonatal deaths that continue to grow and unfortunately, we don't see any action from this government. We've got people in Swan River in the Minister of Finance's (Ms. Wowchuk) own riding that have to go to Saskatchewan to have their babies because there's nobody to help them birth their babies in Swan River. And that's now happened on a number of occasions. Why is that happening? Why is this government not doing something about that? You know, they're front-line workers that care and they're working so hard and they put together the information, and this government basically sits on it and ignores it.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech, it acknowledged even that Manitoba did not feel the effects of the global economic downturn as strongly as our neighbours. In fact, Stats Canada recently reported that Manitoba did not experience any

decline in GDP in 2009. Even with an economy that has held steady due to the resilience of the people and the businesses of our province, the NDP are projecting \$2 billion in deficits over five years. That's unconscionable; that's incompetent; that is negligent; and it is of huge, huge concern to more and more people as they hear about it. And in this Throne Speech, this government failed to outline any legitimate strategy to bring the Province's finances under control without increasing taxes. There is no way that they are going to be able to do some of the things they've talked about without raising taxes.

When we look, Mr. Speaker, at how much spending the government is doing, you really have to wonder why their outcomes in so many areas is so poor. And as we listen to this Premier (Mr. Selinger) dithering and fumbling and stumbling over the last couple of weeks in question period, we can see that he's really having some challenges dealing with the biggest files in the province right now: the football stadium, bipole, Hecla, Crocus, and the best he can offer up, then, is a fear-and-smear campaign of negative advertising, which is really backfiring in his face.

And people know that when you put ads like the NDP have put out there, people know what it's all about. If a government can't defend their record—and we see it by all the comments made by NDP members in the House—they can't defend their record. So the easiest thing to do is turn around and trash the other guy. So they're doing it in the House every chance they get and they're doing it in the media. Fortunately, I think Manitobans are becoming very, very aware of the poor record of the NDP, their constant spin and that they aren't able to deliver on what they're promising to deliver.

When we look at the debt in Manitoba, this government has increased debt by 74 per cent since they came into power. Well, makes you wonder how does that happen when this government says they're balancing the budget? How can you balance the budget, on one hand, and increase debt by 74 per cent? Only the NDP would find a way to spin that one.

Mr. Speaker, back in 1999, 27 per cent of Manitoba's revenues came from transfer payments, while today's figure is roughly 38 per cent. We've got a government that is so reliant on federal transfer payments that they are really putting Manitoba into a very, very precarious position. This government tends to want to look at everything

through rose-coloured glasses, and they don't really understand how economies work. And it's really starting to come home to Manitobans, in terms of their failures in many areas.

One of their biggest failures—and there are so many examples to put forward in this area—is around the area of health care. And when I look back at 1999 and, you know, it's really interesting to go back into the 1999 campaign and to look at all of their election promises. And, you know, one of the big headlines on one of their own documents was: the choice for change Manitobans can count on. Well, something really happened here because one of their commitments was to end hallway medicine and rescue health care. I've probably got hundreds—examples of where they have failed in health care, and they sure in the heck haven't ended hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million.

In fact, that particular election promise was a major, major failure, but yet, you know, the NDP made a lot of promises in 1999. They've made a lot of promises in all the elections after that about health care and they even made more promises in the Throne Speech. Well, when they failed in so many election promises, why should we believe anything that they put into this Throne Speech, because they're not going to deliver on it? And the reason they can't deliver on it is because they have put their self into such a financial predicament on their own. They can blame the recession all they want, but the recession's long over, and these guys are going to run a huge debt and build up a monster debt in Manitoba. And where're they going to need to put their money then? Interest payments are going to be around \$200 million a year, then, when they take us into the glue more than they are. And what's going to happen then? It's going to jeopardize health care, education, family services, roads, justice. We're going to see all kinds of problems. They don't seem to understand that.

* (16:00)

And so what we've got from them every time we brought forward their mishaps and mistakes and failures in health care, we see a lot of denial. So what we have from the NDP government in Manitoba is a decade of denying a health-care problem.

And so, when we look at this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there have been some significant failures in health care. Although we see a lot of spin coming from this government—and, in fact, yesterday from a former Health minister we saw an incredible

amount of spin around the cardiac care program, and I read his words back today because I couldn't believe that, you know, a former minister would stand like that in the House and put such false information on the record. It was pretty interesting.

But we see that coming from this government all the time. They try to paint health care and what they're doing in a much rosier way than what is actually happening out on the front lines of health care, and we see that time and time again. So I'm not surprised to see in the Throne Speech that when it came to health care, the Throne Speech was defensive, desperate and full of re-announcements.

There was nothing in that Throne Speech that talked about a lot of the wait-lists that continue to exist in the health-care system. Diagnostic tests is one of them. The MR waits are higher than they were in a decade. It takes a very, very long time to get an appointment with a specialist and, as was pointed out earlier, it could be one of the longest waits in Canada. They made a lot of promises in 1999 that they were going to take all these diagnostic waits and slash them. Well, that hasn't happened, so why should we believe anything they say now? They promised all of this numerous times, and it just reinforces for us that we shouldn't be believing this NDP government anymore.

The Throne Speech laid out no plan to fix the shortage of personal care home beds, which is so bad that Winnipeg personal care homes have been directed to stop admitting residents from the community. So we have got all of these elderly vulnerable people stuck in the community with their families having to try to find a way to help their family member, their loved ones, because this government did not have the ability to look ahead and plan around the number of PCH beds we need in the system. So what's happening, the hospitals jammed up with patients that should be in a personal care home, the hospitals jammed up with those patients, and so we ended up with a big memo that went out to the community, that all of the PCH patients—or the patients in the community that needed PCH beds would have to stay in the community. So those numbers are growing.

We see hospital beds, expensive hospital beds, filled with patients that should be in personal care homes, but they're stuck. They're being warehoused in hospitals because this government did not plan adequately in terms of the number of PCH beds that they needed. So, instead, we've got hundreds of

patients waiting for personal care home beds. And that's bad for patients. For a lot of PCH patients who are vulnerable, having them in hospital beds is not, certainly, in their best interests, and it certainly puts a bigger burden on families.

As the Auditor General also recently pointed out, the quality of care in personal care homes needs attention and that four out of five standards were not being met. Well, I think this government really dropped the ball on this, and it was because of their own policy not to build personal care homes in the province that has created this problem. And because it was their own problem or their own strategy not to create care home beds in Manitoba, we've now got patients that are suffering—a very, very bad decision by this government.

Now, it was really interesting in the Throne Speech where the NDP finally admitted after 11 years that they better do something about admin costs in regional health authorities. You know, it's just—it's so ironic, and what a desperate attempt after 11 years in government, where they've allowed health-care bureaucracy to grow, where they have built all these fancy offices and headquarters for RHAs, especially in Winnipeg where they spent \$30 million on, you know, a Main Street Taj Mahal for the WRHA—while they've allowed 11 years of that, then all of a sudden on the road to Damascus prior to an election, we see some desperation here, where I guess they decided to admit their mistake, admit their mismanagement, and now they are going to address this ballooning bureaucracy.

Well, I guess they admitted to messing up. They've had 11 years and finally, grudgingly, they're saying that they are going to cut waste. I don't blame anybody for not believing this because, you know, they've had 11 years to fix it. They've made it worse, and I don't think we're going to see much movement from them.

In fact, it was a desperate attempt that makes them even look more incompetent than they are in this particular issue. And it really makes you realize, you know, why the public does get jaded when you see a government that has done what it's done around bloated health-care bureaucracies and, all of a sudden, they're going to turn around and oh, we're going to save them now.

There is nothing in this Throne Speech to give hope to more than 3,000 Manitobans suffering from multiple sclerosis. While Saskatchewan was forging ahead on clinical trials, instead this government

decides that they don't want to go down that road. So they're going to wait till Saskatchewan does all the heavy lifting, does the clinical trials which we desperately need done here in Canada. We are very aware of the death that occurred, and we want to indicate that that is even more reason why these trials should be done in this country, in this province, so that those kind of stories don't happen.

It was interesting to read from the Saskatchewan Throne Speech what they put in their Throne Speech, and I quote: Governments can choose to wait on the sidelines simply benefiting from the investment of others or governments can take an active role in advancing scientific understanding, and end quote. And I think what this government has demonstrated is they're willing to, you know, let others do the heavy lifting, when they owe it to 3,000 people here to do clinical trials here so that we can have the safe environment here in our province to do the kind of clinical trials we need to find out if this liberation treatment works or not. And that's the point of clinical trials. And this government is failing 3,000 MS patients and their families.

There's no admission in this Throne Speech that under the NDP, over the last 10 years, over 1,500 doctors have left Manitoba, leaving 180,000 Manitobans without a family doctor. This government has had 11 years to address this and they have failed. And yet it's one of the biggest challenges before us. How is it that we can lose 1,500 doctors in 10 years? That's 150 a year. Why don't they want to stay here? Why hasn't this government invested in trying to find out why doctors don't want to stay here? That destabilizes our whole health-care system, and this government has not even addressed that.

So we see that this government, you know, desperately comes into a Throne Speech and, you know, puts forward a lot of reannouncements, puts forward ideas from other provinces. And we see a lot of failures in health care that they should have been addressing and that they didn't.

There was no acknowledgement in the Throne Speech of one of the biggest problems we have in health care, and that is with emergency care in this province. The NDP government seems to have forgotten about Brian Sinclair, who died two years ago, and that was an extremely disturbing situation. We saw the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) hide behind her bureaucrats at the time, and when she finally did emerge after about a week, she covered up the truth of what really happened to Brian

Sinclair. And, in fact, in some of her comments she basically indicated that Brian Sinclair was the cause of his own death, and those were some of the comments that she was putting forward.

And it was interesting, I've been at the Health Sciences Centre recently, and I was talking to some nurses. And the nurses actually think that this government is stalling the inquiry—or the inquest, sorry, into Brian Sinclair's death because they don't want to face any of the information that comes out of that till after the next election. This is coming from the nurses that are working at the Health Sciences Centre in the ER, who every day are going to work wondering, where is the next challenge for us? Will there be another Brian Sinclair? Why do I have to put my licence on the line every time I go to work?

* (16:10)

This government has failed to address a very, very chronic nursing shortage in the ERs, and those nurses are going to work every day fearful of what they're going to face. And this government is doing nothing to speed up that inquest to correct some of the problems that led to this in the first place. And one of the biggest problems: they never addressed the nursing shortage there or in ICUs. And because of that, Mr. Speaker, we see a situation right now where we cannot do cardiac surgeries—where we cannot do cardiac surgeries because we have an acute nursing shortage in our ICUs.

In fact, when another document was leaked to us the other day, Mr. Speaker, it was written—there was a memo by a nurse, there was a poster begging nurses, there was a poster begging nurses to come and work because nurses could only do so much overtime. In fact, the minister over there that is heckling so much might like to know that there are 750,000 hours of overtime in the last two years in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. That is just south of a million of hours of overtime in the last two years in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Something is very, very wrong with this picture. And did we hear anything in the Throne Speech? Not at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, basically the Throne Speech is not something that we have any faith in. I hope the members opposite support the amendments because they are the right way for them to vote and there was nothing in this Throne Speech that I can support. Thank you.

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'd like to announce that for the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts previously called for tonight, November 23, 2010, at 7 p.m., the following report will be added for consideration by the committee: The Auditor General's Report: Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010. As this is an update of a report that is on the agenda, we have agreed to add it to this meeting.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's been announced that for the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts previously called for tonight, November 23, 2010, at 7 p.m., the following report will be added for consideration by the committee: Auditor General's Report: Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert, to continue with the debate.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in response to the Speech from the Throne read by His Honour Philip Lee, at the Fifth Sitting of the Thirty-Ninth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.

Before putting any thoughts on the record about the opposition leader's response to our government's Throne Speech, I would like to take this opportunity to express my pleasure to see you back in the Speaker's chair.

My short stint filling in for you at the end of the spring session has given me a much greater understanding of the very challenging job it is you do for us every day as our Speaker. I want to tell you that the first question period I proceeded over was terrifying. I was sure that Her Majesty's royal opposition could hear my heart beating furiously from their seats. I want to put on the record my sincere appreciation for the co-operation shown by all members last session while I served as the Speaker.

It was a challenge to act in your stead, to undertake the job you so capably fill—fulfill was a daunting task. I now look back on the experience with fondness and with gratitude. I know I was presented with a great opportunity, one people can only dream of. Thank you to all the members in the Chamber for their patience and assistance in making the job a very enjoyable one.

Mr. Speaker, I would especially like to welcome back the table officers. I want to thank them for the fabulous job they did in assisting me last session. We were faced with several challenging situations that were unprecedented. Last spring, I got to see this great group of people in action, and I can say without a doubt, they epitomize the true nature of the word "team." In taking on the role of the Speaker, I know that I had to be fair and unbiased in my rulings. Only now do I truly understand the importance of the Clerks; they worked very hard to ensure that I was provided with the most up-to-date research possible.

All members of this House are exceptionally lucky to be served by a staff who takes their job so seriously. I am extremely appreciative of the services they provided to me and the professional manner in which they undertook any task required of them. Thank you.

I'm particularly pleased to see you back to your old self, healthy and enthusiastic about the job you do, undertaking your role with grace and diplomacy. Mr. Speaker, I want to echo the words of one of our members who said that on all sides of this House you're held in great esteem and great affection.

In particular I want to personally thank you for mentoring me in my role as the Deputy Speaker. You've always made time for me and you've always willingly answered all my questions. It's wonderful to have you back and I wish you continued good health in the future.

I would also like to welcome the new pages. I hope they enjoy their brief experience in these hallowed halls. Over my seven and a half years serving as the MLA for St. Norbert I've had the opportunity to cross paths with several pages after they have moved on to new careers. They've all told me how much they enjoyed the job and that they often wished they were back here. I hope the new pages enjoy the job as much as their predecessors did. I want the new pages to know we're all very appreciative of the services they provide for us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the amendment to the Throne Speech that was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) on Thursday, November 18th, 2010. Subclause (j) of the amendment proposes we vote against this Throne Speech because, and I quote: It "fails to assure parents that their children are learning the skills they need to succeed in today's workforce."

I must admit, Mr. Speaker, I take great exception to this amendment, and I cannot in good consciousness support the amendment to the Throne Speech proposed by the MLA for Fort Whyte. I want all members to keep in mind that when the Tories were in power in the 1990s they horrendously underfunded the education system. I find it quite ironic that they are putting forward this amendment in consideration of the fact that they contributed no money to the teachers' pension account when they were in government.

Some Honourable Members: Shame.

Ms. Brick: They should be ashamed of the way they treated teachers.

I question their thinking in light of the fact that they fired 700 teachers in their term in office. The member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), the previous Education minister for the Tories, is on record saying that his government would cut music and art from the education curriculum. I don't think very many members are aware, but I'm actually a stain glass artist, and I can only say as an artist, shame on him. Music and art enrich our lives. I am left aghast that they think this is a good way to support the education system.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working hard to ensure that the education system is supported and working for the benefit of all students. On Thursday, November 19th, I had the pleasure of attending the 25th anniversary celebration of Winnipeg Technical College along with the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan). The Winnipeg Technical College provides technical education and training opportunities to both secondary and post-secondary learners. Both my daughter and my son have attended school there.

For my son, he combined his grade 12 education with training from the college in production welding. My son is an ADD sufferer. He would never have graduated from high school nor graduated from production welding without the assistance of Winnipeg Technical College. My daughter took courses in automotive repair. They both benefited

greatly from their experiences at Winnipeg Technical College.

* (16:20)

I know that many companies have used Winnipeg Technical College's customized training including Boeing Canada Operations, Bristol Aerospace, Canadian National Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, Department of National Defence, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Lotteries Corporation and the University of Manitoba. The college has been very responsive to industry requests to train people for specific trades. The college is appreciative of the support our government has provided to them.

One of the initiatives that has been well received by the college is the High School Apprenticeship Program. On January 1st, 2010, we introduced a high school apprenticeship financial incentive package to provide students with the ability to transition into full-time post-secondary apprenticeship training following their high school studies. This initiative is designed to encourage young people to pursue careers in the skilled trades.

Mr. Speaker, I was so very pleased to see our Premier (Mr. Selinger) announce today that youth in our province will be the beneficiaries of a new provincial initiative known as the Manitoba Youth Corps. The program will connect 2,500 high school students to mentorship and job opportunities.

The last position I held at the City of Winnipeg prior to becoming an MLA was as the program initiative coordinator for the Community Services Department. A large part of my job was overseeing all the Youth Action Centres in the city of Winnipeg. My staff worked hard with young people between the ages of 11 to 18 years to provide recreation opportunities and a positive alternative to gang involvement and criminal activity.

Many of the youth we saw were struggling with their place in the world. I found that young people were often looking for the assistance of an adult who could point them in the right direction to begin their future careers. They were looking for an opportunity to excel and, particularly, someone to mentor them.

I'm very pleased to see that the Manitoba Youth Corps will help to answer their challenges. The program will consist of two new initiatives, Manitoba Mentors, a youth mentorship program and Manitoba Youth Employment, a new program to match potential youth employees and employers.

The importance of mentorship and the concept of the Manitoba Youth Corps was a key recommendation of the Premier's Economic Advisory Council. The council, which was formed in 2001, has worked hard to bring together business, labour, Aboriginal and community leaders to assist government in developing economic strategies. This Manitoba Youth Corps program is all about giving young people a better understanding of the world and the careers available to them after school, said Bob Silver at today's announcement. He is the co-chair of the Premier's Economic Advisory Council.

The Minister for Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) acknowledged today that the future success of Manitoba depends on how well we are able to provide opportunities and hope to all young Manitobans regardless of the barriers they face. He stated that education, training and employment are a great equalizer and it is our responsibility to sure every single young person in this province can access the tools they need to succeed. To me, it seems, Mr. Speaker, that our government gets it.

In addition to ensuring that high school students can transition more easily from school to the workplace, we're also ensuring that the education system corresponds to the needs of parents by introducing report cards that report on children's progress in plain language. We will be coordinating in-service days to eliminate the need for parents to arrange for a multitude of different child-care situations. Our government recognizes that successful students accept their responsibility for late assignments, and so we are ensuring that there are consequences for late assignments and for poor performance.

In comparison to the Tories, we know that active students are healthy students and will be healthy adults. The opposition called the implementation of the recommendations of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures task force recommendations to ensure all students experience mandatory physical education program a gimmick. I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. It's definitely not a gimmick. In their term in office, their minister of Education wanted to cancel recess. I can't believe that. All the research shows that physically active children learn better.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

We're working hard to continue to make Manitoba's public education system one that we can all be proud of, a system that works for every type of learner and one that is reflective of the population

that it serves. We're going to ensure that our public education system is one that helps to make our students successful. Despite what the opposition says, we know we're on the right track. We've increased our graduation rate to over 81 per cent. We're going to keep working to ensure the success of Manitoba children in the future.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am very happy that our government recognizes that health care is a priority for Manitobans. To people residing in south Winnipeg, the Victoria Hospital plays a key role in their lives. On November 4, 2008, the Minister of Healthy Living officially opened the redeveloped oncology department at the Victoria General Hospital. The \$10.5-million Buhler cancer care centre quadrupled the amount of space from the previous oncology department. I've heard nothing but rave reviews about our new centre for cancer care in south Winnipeg.

I was extremely pleased to take part in the opening ceremony just recently for the new—the first phase of the new, 1,200-square foot, \$20.5-million emergency centre addition at the Victoria General Hospital. This new centre will ensure that emergency health-care services are streamlined and that patient comfort and care is given the highest degree of attention.

My constituents in Fort Richmond and St. Norbert have expressed numerous times to me that they are very happy with the attention our government is paying to the health-care system and the Victoria Hospital in particular. The space is very large. It was designed to meet the urgent health-care needs of our community.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm so pleased to sit on this side of the House where providing timely, affordable health care is a priority. Every day in this job I endeavour to do the best I can to represent the interests of my constituents and to validate the faith they have shown in me.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm so pleased to be able to sit on this side of the House, this side of the House where we recognize that cyberbullying is something we need to address, where we also recognize that stalking is something that we need to address. We are looking at the changing world that we have in front of us and I'm very, very pleased to be able to say I definitely will be supporting this Throne Speech.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I do want to welcome back the Speaker, of course, and I know my father, who I just lost this past spring, told me very clearly that the best thing that you can have in life is that—your health. And I know the Speaker has won that first battle and we wish that he has a long and healthy career.

Also, I want to congratulate the member from St. Norbert on a job that she jumped into and—as the Deputy Speaker—I congratulate you for a job well done in—pushed into that position.

Also, I want to welcome the pages and the table officers back, as well as the Sergeant-at-Arms and, of course, the people down in Hansard. And I know sometimes I have a tendency to speak a little bit fast. That's because of my background being an auctioneer. I know sometimes they give me a call and say, what was that that you said? So, anyway, we do appreciate what they do for us and, of course, they want to make sure they get it right. So I do appreciate the calls that we do get from them in order to make sure that it is recorded properly.

Also, in regards to the people in the municipal election that ran, some of those incumbents were defeated and there's some new people, new faces. I know that in two of my municipalities we had one retire, a fellow from the RM of Rockwood, Mr. Garnet Thievin, who did an outstanding job over the years that he was there as a councillor and a reeve. He's been replaced by a fresh face, Jim Campbell, who is going to do just an outstanding job and, certainly, we wish Jim all the best.

Also, in regards to the RM of Rosser, we had Alice Bourgouin, that was the reeve from—of Rosser. I know that she was at the forefront in regards to CentrePort and negotiations there. Also, in regards to a casino and gas station that was built by the First Nation people in her municipality, she took that issue as well very seriously, and I know that she handled it just outstandingly in the position that she did there.

* (16:30)

And I want to just pass on my best wishes to Frances Smee, the new reeve for the RM of Rosser, and I know that she's going to just do an outstanding job. She has a great sense, a great sense of pulse for what's going on within that municipality, and I think that she's going to do just an outstanding job as the new reeve for the RM of Rosser.

Also want to thank the people of Lakeside that—that's allowed me to represent them here in this

Chamber, and I'm certainly very pleased to do that—and I know this is my eighth speech that I've been able to respond to in regards to the Throne Speech. And, of course, my family, without the support of them and especially my wife Gail, I certainly appreciate all that they do to help my job just be that much easier. Of course, all the staff that provide us with the good guidance that we need.

Also, I want to pass on my best to the two members that, on our side of the House, that have announced that they're not going to be running again: the member from Pembina and, of course, the member from Portage. I know that they have an awful lot to offer that they've brought forward in this House, and certainly I want them to enjoy what's best for them in the next chapter of their life. And certainly I know what they have left in this building and, of course, the people they represented in Portage and Pembina, will be a legacy that they can be very proud of. In fact, the fact that they can stand proud on what some of those accomplishments that they did get done.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I know sometimes in opposition it's very frustrating. I know being seven and a half years in opposition myself, I know that, well, I—we're hoping to change that—we're hoping to change that. I know we have an awful lot of work to do, and I know that those roadblocks are going to be put up in front of us, and we've seen some of the negative advertising that's been coming forward from members opposite. That's certainly not the avenue that we want to go down, but the sling has been—and the gun has been loaded. So they've taken that first shot, and certainly we're going to do our best to make sure that we do everything we can to get into power, and I know they're going to do everything they can to keep us from going into power.

But I know that when listening to the member from Gimli earlier, he said that when the Conservatives was in power that he didn't know whether or not he had a job or not, and most teachers that have been there two years have got tenure. In fact, most teachers that run for provincial politics—and most of them take a leave of absence—they have a job to go back to whenever they decide they want to get out of this game. Some more sooner than others and others not quite so soon. But I mean, they can take a leave of absence so they do have that job when they go back and I think that's great. I mean, that's one of the things that I know, as an

administrator of the school division, that certainly that I was supportive of. I know that there—it is a stressful job, but I also think it's very important to those teachers also have the opportunity to make sure that they do run for office.

So I do wish the member from Gimli well in his next endeavour to go back to that job. If we can help him in any way to get there that much sooner, be happy to do that as well. So I know that, you know, he does have a passion for education, so we're going to ensure that he gets there just as soon as he possibly can.

Also, I know that the government, of course, in their Throne Speech, you know, talked about a lot of things, but nothing that was—that really impressed us enough in order to feel we could support it. And I know that one of things I was looking forward in my particular riding was the fact—that was hoping that they would talk about the Shoal Lake issue. And we have roughly over a hundred thousand acres of land that's been under water. Since 2001 we've been bringing this issue up. And, of course, a lot of those issues have been brought about by drainage of a large amount of land into one lake, which is—was three, which is now one.

It's just a huge issue for us in our particular area, and I just feel that the government has missed the opportunity. I know that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and some of the Cabinet ministers were in Ashern when they were asked about this particular issue, and, of course, the response was—the people that made the presentation to them actually had to tell them where the Shoal Lakes were. So that, again, was very upsetting.

I know I wrote back to the Premier of the province on June the 29th, the day after they closed Highway 415 and 518 because of the high water levels. We didn't receive a response back to that letter until September. And that's so unfortunate. We did ask him to come to a public meeting, which was held in Woodlands. None of the Cabinet ministers could make it, nor the Premier, but I can tell you—I can tell you—that the disappointment of those people in regards to no response from this government—and I know that there has been a number of letters wrote to this government as a result of no action on this file. That road has been closed since June the 28th. There's been no initiative to try and open that road. There's families that are moved from that area because they go to school in Teulon and they've had to drive 120 miles to get their kids to school. That's

unfortunate, so what they had to do is relocate through no fault of their own, and plus the economic hardship that's been placed on those people is severe.

Those cattle producers that have had to take their cattle out of that area, relocate them to other areas, and a buyout is not an option—is not an option. What it's going to do is actually like a Devils Lake, Mr. Speaker. There is no outlet for this particular lake, and what we've seen is that water level since August has 'rosen' almost two feet from what it was in that point in time. And I know one of the long-standing farms there. It was established back by the Richardson family. It was called Blue Meadows Ranch since that time, and I can tell you out of their 9,000 acres, 4,000 of that is under water. That's a huge amount of land that's been lost because of the water level, of where it is today.

So I know that that issue is paramount for us and we've been asking questions on this. We've been writing letters on this, and I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) has talked about this with some of his Cabinet members, and I had an opportunity to express my concerns with him. And I know that we need answers for those people, so they can make their financial plans for the future and on down the road. So we encourage the government to make a decision on that, sooner rather than later.

And a drain is what is going to have to be done there because the water will come to Winnipeg if it comes on its own, and it won't be the way we want it to come. We can build a diversion or, if we had a time-released mechanism on the existing drains that are there, where we could drain some of that water in the fall, get it off the lake and lower that lake level to get that land back into production. It will be years before a lot of that land will, in fact, be usable again as pasture land or hay land, and it's some of the best land for agricultural purposes, especially with some of the land that's used for hay. And I know there's just a natural protein in it. They don't need to fertilize that land. It's land that is very productive and very conducive to the cattle producers of this province.

Also, in regards to the lakes, and not just the Shoal Lakes, but Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba. As we know, about two weeks ago, three weeks ago, we had the water levels at the highest level they've been at, and I know the member from Gimli was at that meeting. And I know there's a number of people in that area, in the Winnipeg area, and also the people on Lake Manitoba that's suffered severe damage to not only their cottages but their homes, their roads,

and I know that that issue needs to be dealt with. And, again, there was no mention in the Throne Speech from this government, and we know that those actions need to be taken in order to make sure those families, in fact, are protected from the high water levels.

And I also know that, in regards to the water levels, I know that Manitoba Hydro is storing a large amount of that water, and I know that that is again been brought forward to the government so that they can understand the damages that, in fact, will result from the high water levels, and I do want to make sure that the government does, in fact, address those.

In regards to the hydro line on the west side as opposed to the east side, we made it very clear our position on this in regards to the line going on the east line. There's a road being built on the east side; it's not too complicated to put a hydro line right down beside it,. And I can tell you that the money that would be saved would be a lot of money that could go to some of these other initiatives that we've been talking about in the previous messages.

I know that the numbers aren't in and we have been asking—our leader's been asking—what those two numbers are. We ask from last year, this year, and I know that the original numbers were \$2.2 million—billion; now it's \$4 billion. We really don't know what those numbers are, but we do need to get those nailed down so that, in fact, the public and the people of Manitoba will, in fact, have the opportunity to make a decision based on the true numbers, not the artificial numbers.

* (16:40)

And I also know that the Bipole I and Bipole II, that actually are part of my area, and I know what has happened there. In fact, in May of 2009, the Hydro minister at the time, the current Premier of the province was taken aback by the questions I asked in this House, and that was on the land leases that's underneath these towers. The farmers have been farming those. They've been pasturing them. They've been cutting hay under them. What did the government do? They wanted to put a lease on that property for a backdoor tax on the farmers who've been maintaining that property.

I give the Premier (Mr. Selinger) credit. He acted on it. He got it squashed, and now what has happened, it's reared its ugly head once again this summer. They sent out threatening letters through the department of Manitoba Hydro. Our critic, the

member from Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), asked the CEO, Mr. Brennan, in public accounts some three weeks ago what his position was on that, and he made it very clear that he didn't know anything about it either.

Unfortunately, there's things going on within the department that we find very disturbing, and this is a message. This is a message they're sending to all Manitobans in regards to Bipole III that again is going right through prime agricultural farmland. That's just unfortunate and what's happened now—in fact, the motion's being debated over at the Manitoba municipalities in regards to Bipole III, and it's sending the wrong message out to those producers who have the—want their voices to be heard, and they haven't had the opportunity.

I know in the committee we did ask that the past chairman of the board, Mr. Bateman, be allowed to speak along with a producer so the voices would be heard in committee. That was turned down, Mr. Speaker. That's unfortunate, and we have the avenues that where those people want to be heard, but they haven't had that opportunity. So we're encouraging the government to listen to those producers. Let's don't put more backdoor taxes on what's already out there. Let's try and work with the people that are there.

Unfortunately, my people feel betrayed within the constituency of Lakeside in regards to Bipole I and Bipole II. Whenever they—some of them had crops on that land. This year, there's a few of them that caved in to the government in regards to these leases. They were afraid that they were going to have a lawsuit against them. They were afraid they weren't going to be able to get that land, get the crops off that land, so what they did, they sent in the money so the government would be able to not come and foreclose on them in that particular piece of property.

So, unfortunately, some of our producers are saying, you know, is this what's going to happen to our other neighbours to the west if they bring this line down? We don't know. The deal has not been completed. The government hasn't been transparent on it so, certainly, we know that in regards to what the CEO, Mr. Brennan, has said, that he's prepared to renegotiate with some of these producers that have already sent their payments in. And I know that a number of those producers I have talked to—actually, because of the size of the equipment, a number of those acres have been overseeded, oversprayed, overtilled, which is actually costing them money to

farm underneath these towers, which is very inefficient, but they don't want someone else to come in there and farm that land or to have the government say they're not going to do anything about it. So they want the land tilled. They want it maintained, and that's going to be a cost that Manitoba Hydro can't afford, and it's going to be a backdoor fund because our hydro rates will have to increase. So what we're saying to the government is let's pay attention to what's going on, take advantage of those farmers that want to farm that land and not charge a lease on that particular piece of property.

Also, I want to talk about the backdoor taxes on our producers in the dairy and poultry. And I know that the government has wanted some of that revenue so they figured out a way that what they're going to do is charge a 10 per cent tax on transfer of those quotas. I mean, they have not delivered on it yet, which is a lot of things they have done in regards to the Throne Speech, but the intent is there. So it's the message that's been sent out by the minister, by this government, that what they want to do is put another tax on our producers, our dairy producers, our poultry producers, one of the more successful—one of the more successful ventures in agriculture.

So what do we want to do? We want to just kick 'em, put 'em down so that they'll maybe just go away, and that's unfortunate, But they're not going to do that. And I know the minister's going to do the right thing; he's going to withdraw that. And I know that his budget's been cut by 10 per cent, but this is not going to give him enough money to help him out in the long run as a result of transferring the permits.

Also, I know that in regards to CentrePort—and there wasn't much in the budget in regards to CentrePort. I'll come back to agriculture in just a minute so don't think I've left it because I will be back, but I want to make sure I get through as much as I can on some of the notes, but I will be back to agriculture.

On CentrePort, I strongly believe in this. I know the member from Arthur-Virden brought forward the amendment to the legislation to make sure it's a trade-free zone, and I was very happy to second that motion and make sure that, in fact, it did happen and did come to fruition with regards to making sure that CentrePort does move forward. And I know that the City of Winnipeg has backed down on the expropriation of that property from the RM of Rosser. I certainly want to commend the City on that.

I know they've had a change in administration, and certainly that is a large part of the taxation for the RM of Rosser. In fact, I know there's been nine properties sold according to the new CEO of that particular CentrePort venture. And we can see the buildings, we can see the buildings moving forward and it's going to be a capital asset that's going to continue to give forever and ever in regards to this province. The jobs it's going to create is also very important, certainly something that we on this side of the House are very proud to support and certainly that we want to make sure that—in fact, I know that some of the spinoff is already happening in the RM of Woodlands. They built an industrial park there and they in fact have started building a number of businesses on that particular site. So I know that some of the Capital Region will benefit from it as well.

And, also, I do want to put on the record once again in regards to the traffic. And we go back in not only our government, the NDP government, the Liberal government, land has been purchased on Highway 227 for the alternate route for 16A, for 16A to come through Warren, Stonewall. Instead of buying up new land and taking No. 1 Highway and moving that over and upsetting a number of those businesses, this is an alternate route. It's a safe route that certainly the government should have a look at. I did have the assurances of the minister of transportation and infrastructure as well that they would have a look at that and also continuing that through to Beausejour on Highway 44 through Lockport and, of course, through Selkirk. And it would be a benefit not only for all those communities but also take some of that heavy traffic through the city that we can certainly bypass by taking it on that alternate route. That was known as route, as 16A. So certainly very important in order to make sure that we do have those tools.

And also I do want to put on the record to make sure that Winnipeg and all people in this House understand back in history, the evacuation route for Winnipeg is Highway 227. That has been and always will be unless some government changes it so we need to make sure that in fact we do have a safe community for Winnipeg and that surrounding area, so that would be one of the avenues that would certainly be—certainly worth discussing.

Also, I want to come back to the member from Interlake and some of the comments he put in regards to the fishermen. And the fishermen in Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba have made it very

clear they want a market for their mullets. They're tired of leaving them on the lake. They want an opportunity to market those fish outside the Freshwater Marketing Board. Unfortunately, the government has taken the position that they don't want this to happen.

I know that a number of my constituents who do fish on Lake Manitoba have a large number of mullets that have been very successful. In fact, Robert Gaudry, for example, did market some of those fish, and he did pay the royalties to the Freshwater Marketing Board, but it was \$60,000. Sixty thousand dollars is an awful lot of money for people in my area. I know that maybe that's not a big number for some of the city folk, but for us in rural Manitoba that's significant. That's two or three jobs. That money stays within the community, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, when that money stays in the community, it creates a vicious cycle so that that cycle then continues to support the grocers, the gas stations, the car dealerships, and it just goes on and on in regards to housing, a number of those other issues. And I know that those fishermen have made their position very, very clear and we certainly want to encourage the government to make sure they do listen to those fishermen. And I know that the member from Gimli has also been involved in some of those discussions. He is at the Cabinet table. We urge him to carry that message forward to his government and make sure that those fishermen, in fact, their voices are heard.

*(16:50)

Also, the member from Interlake also talked about transfer payments and how proud he was that we deserve those as Manitobans. I say that's wrong. What we need to do is be very proud of the fact that we want to become a have province, not a have not province. We don't want to live off transfer payments. What an idea. Why would we want to live off transfer payments? Let's make this a province that we're proud of, that we want to make sure—and I know the member from Minto. I mean, he made it very clear when he was running for the leadership candidate race that what he would do is tell everybody what a great job we were doing, we'd tell the federal government what a bad job we were doing so we'd make sure we get more transfer payments. I'd be saying let's roll up our sleeves. Let's do a better job in making sure that we have a great province here. We have a strong economy. We make sure that what we have is something that we can hand off to our grandkids and our great

grandchildren, not live off transfer payments. You're on the wrong track. We're going the wrong way. Turn that bus around, get it going down the straight path to success, and make sure that we're going to have something for our grandkids.

What we saw was a half-a-million-dollar deficit in this year's budget. Also, what we saw in the future is a \$2.5-billion deficit by this government. What kind of leadership is that? We want more and more debt. We want to just spend the money, and maybe we'll get somebody to bail us out. Let's talk about things that are going to make our province better, make it successful and make it there for our kids and our grandkids and something they can be proud of. Unfortunately, we have not seen that from this government.

Also, I want to come back to something that the member from Charleswood talked about, and that's with the personal care homes. I know in my community, my hospital is full. We have to send people from my area to Winnipeg, and I love those people being there in my hospital. I think it's fantastic, but most of them are waiting for placement within a personal care home. It makes it so difficult. When we have an emergency in our home area, we have to say, we got no room for you. We got to take you and put you on the highway bus to Winnipeg. Fill those emergency services. We have such a shortage. Our personal care beds, it's been the No. 1 priority, No. 1 priority for our RHA since 1999. Since 1999, our RHA has been asking for increased personal care beds, and we have not seen one increase, one increase in our RHA in regards to personal care beds.

An Honourable Member: Riverton.

Mr. Eichler: Riverton's not my area. But it is part of the Interlake, but I do appreciate that they did announce Riverton and I hope that they do get those increases in those personal care beds. And also I know that our RHA, which is one of the better managed—and we got a great CEO there. Kevin Beresford is one of the fantastic operators as far as I'm concerned of the RHAs, but guess what happened. They had a \$1.2-million deficit and they tell us at the meeting that we're one of the lowest. So I checked with my health critic, the member from Charleswood, and I can tell you that she said: You know what? It was probably one of the lower. But guess what? Where's the Winnipeg RHA? I don't even know what those numbers are, and I'm sure

most of the government can't tell you what they are either. The unfortunate part of the fact is that I don't think the government realizes what's going on in their own backyard. All they know is that what you can do is offload some of that responsibility to the RHAs and also in regards to the same thing happening with education tax.

Education tax, I know on my particular bill, my bill's around \$4,000 a year. Anybody can google it, and \$2,200 of that is education tax. Education tax, I tell you that this government, it's another way—and I can tell you as an administrator of a school division, nothing upset us more than having to go to the taxpayers and say, we need more money. School divisions want the ability to be able to run their divisions and not have to backdoor tax every opportunity they have for when they want a new program. We need leadership from the government, and that's something we have not seen from this government.

And I know that they talked about what a great job they've done for the farmers in regards to the education tax. They have to apply for it. A number of producers don't even have the money to pay the tax in order to get the tax back. I asked the previous minister of Agriculture what it cost to administer that. You know what the answer was, Mr. Speaker? It was \$1.2 million, \$1.2 million to operate that program when all you have to do is walk down the hall and now you can do that. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) can walk down the hall to the previous minister of Agriculture and say, here's your cheque. The farmers don't need to pay the taxes so they can get it back. Not an innovative idea. Not a hard thing to do, and I encourage the minister to do that. Walk down the hall; give your Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) a cheque for those farm properties that is coming to them anyway.

A lot of those producers, and we know that the Interlake and parts of my region and West-Lake regions have been very hard with excess moisture, and I brought this up yesterday in question period and again I brought it up in my opening comments in regards to the diversion of the waters in the Shoal Lakes. But a lot of those producers just don't have the money. They just don't have the money. A number of our cattle producers have had to sell their cattle off, and I know the federal government made their announcement in regards to transfer of equity and holding that over so they can buy those cattle back if, in fact, a lot of them do.

The part that I'm concerned about the most is the age of those producers. And a large part of that land is going to become 80-acre parcels, and that is a concern for me. And I know the land will be sold. I mean—but the problem that we have is that most agriculture producers can't survive on a hundred head of cows any more. They can't survive on those small farms. So what we're going to do is see a large exodus of people moving out. I mean, 80 acres, you can buy 80 acres of marginal land for roughly around \$35,000 to \$50,000, what you pay for normally a lot within the city of Winnipeg. So they're saying, geez, this is a great opportunity, but once they get out there, what's going to happen to that land?

That land will be out of production forever. It's not viable for a hobby farmer to run 10, 12, 15 head of animals anymore. It's just not viable. So what we're setting up for the future is fire hazards. We're having the opportunity for those people to put a large number of land into vacancy, which is not going to be productive anymore. That land will then be out of production forever, unfortunately.

Also, I just—time flies when you're having fun. I just also want to point out that—I just also want to point out, coming back to the agricultural part, that agriculture didn't even make the spring budget speech, so there was very little in there in regards to agriculture and those people in rural Manitoba. And, also, I know that the minister had his budget cut by 10 per cent. That's unfortunate, but let's not forget about where our future was and where it's going to be, and agriculture's a very important part of that.

Also, I want to encourage the government to come back to rural development, to those initiatives that was brought forward by our government. A lot of those were very good ideas and very good initiatives, so I want to just ensure that we on this side of the House are asking for support from this government on the amendment brought forward by our leader in order to ensure this Throne Speech does actually have some meaningful consequences to it.

And, with that, I just want to conclude my comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the

record in regards to our government's vision for moving Manitoba forward. And I certainly have a whole bunch of new material that I'm going to have an opportunity to speak to after listening to the member from Lakeside, after listening to his speech.

First, though, Mr. Speaker, let me welcome you back to this Legislature. I know that we were all very worried when we heard the news about your diagnosis and our hearts were with you as, you know, you went for your surgery and your treatment. And we are certainly blessed to have you back with us. You do a phenomenal job in this House and we are blessed to have you back with us.

I echo the words of the MLA for St. Norbert in wishing you—having you back because I know that she was probably happier than anyone to have you back. She did an incredible job. I don't think anyone would want to do—be thrown into that, you know, into that position. And I know she relied heavily on the professionalism and expertise that she had from the staff in your office that were working with her. And we really are pleased that she had that opportunity, but we're absolutely delighted to have you back.

I'd like to welcome the pages to the Manitoba Legislature and to this Chamber. What an incredible opportunity for young people to have the experience of working in this Legislature and for us to have you with us. We truly appreciate having you here, and I know you're going to see things and learn things that you may surprise you from time to time. But, overall, we're hoping that your time with us will be a learning experience in regards to the democratic process and you get an opportunity to see how laws are made and you get to hear some pretty interesting stuff in this Chamber. And we really appreciate having the pages with us. Welcome.

I want to thank the table officers and the Sergeant-at-Arms—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have 27 minutes remaining.

The hour now being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 23, 2010

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Radisson Hecla Oasis Resort	
		Borotsik; Blaikie	165
		Borotsik; Bjornson	165
Bill 7—The Polar Bear Protection Amendment Act (International Polar Bear Conservation Centre)		Wawanesa Child Daycare	
Blaikie	157	Rowat; Howard	166
Bill 202—The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Amendment Act		Rapid Transit System	
Taillieu	157	Gerrard; Selinger	167
Petitions		Members' Statements	
Mount Agassiz Ski Area		Canadian High School Rodeo Finals	
Briese	157	Maguire	168
		Flin Flon Culture Days	
Auto Theft—Court Order Breaches		Jennissen	168
Goertzen	158	Harvest for Kids	
		Dyck	169
Bipole III Project		Frontier Mosakahiken School	
Pedersen	158	Whitehead	169
Taillieu	159		
Rapid City Reservoir and Catwalk		Heather Todoruk	
Rowat	159	Briese	170
Tabling of Reports		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Annual Report of the Manitoba Text Book Bureau, 2009-2010		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Allan	159	Throne Speech (Fifth Day of Debate)	
Oral Questions		Selby	171
Manitoba Hydro		Taillieu	173
McFadyen; Selinger	160	Nevakshonoff	178
Football Stadium		Driedger	182
McFadyen; Selinger	163	Brick	187
Phoenix Sinclair Death		Eichler	190
McFadyen; Selinger	164	Allan	196

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>