



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 9, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYERS

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Eighth Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), the debate remains open.

**Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman):** Mr. Speaker, as is tradition, I would like just to take a moment, Sir, to congratulate you in your election as Speaker of this Assembly. Indeed, knowing you and having known you for several years, Sir, and knowing of your background and hearing the many glowing remarks of the Inuit people, indeed, your mother and your brother, I know you will fulfill this duty with the greatest of distinctions, and for that I want to congratulate you.

I will also take one moment to recognize again the Deputy Speaker on his appointment and all our new pages, who will have the luxury of serving us again.

I will take one moment before I begin my remarks on the Speech from the Throne to congratulate Mr. Binx Remnant, our Clerk, who has served us with the greatest of distinction for very many, many years. Mr. Remnant is extremely well known in parliaments throughout the Commonwealth, an individual who has the utmost regard for some British traditions and is extremely well versed in the English language. That was his credit because on several occasions Mr. Remnant and his staff, who have to help you, Sir, indeed, as he has helped me over the years, when you have to write rulings and sort of pull apart information and put it back together and come back with a ruling in which you try to make sense to all the members.

But Mr. Remnant, with regard to him personally, I just congratulate him again for all his years of service and wish him all the best as he enters into his years of retirement. As we all know, Mr. Remnant lost his wife a little while back, and since then he has had to start out on a new career. He took up fishing, bought himself a boat and now he water-skis like James Bond a little bit. But, Mr. Remnant, personally, I congratulate you, and I want to thank you, sir.

It is an honour to once again be given the privilege to take a seat in this Legislature, and I want to thank the people of Carman for their strong endorsement in this last election. I promise to perform my best efforts on their behalf. I would like to say that it is certainly good to know that, despite some of the changes that took place on the 21st of September, the people of Carman were confident in my abilities and elected me to represent them.

I want to take a few moments to talk about the constituency of Carman. I understand time is extremely short this morning, and I will try and keep my remarks as such. As the members of this House are aware, Carman is a new electoral district. It consists, in a large part, of the former riding of Gladstone, which I represented in this House during the last session, and also the Lakeside and Morris constituencies. However, the eastern and northern portions of this constituency I have not previously had the honour of representing.

I would like to extend my warmest regards to my new constituents, as I did during the election campaign. I am sure that we will be able to work together to ensure all of the best for the Carman constituency. There are, of course, quite a number of communities in the Carman constituency, including the towns of Treherne, Elm Creek, Notre Dame de Lourdes and Swan Lake, Fannystelle, Myrtle, Miami, and, of course, the town of Carman, just to name a few. Each of these communities plays a unique and vital role in Manitoba. I have often envisioned

this area as a link between the eastern and western portions of this half of the province.

The Red River and Pembina Valley give way to the open prairie, and with it the miles of open and productive farmland. Here many of Manitoba's hardworking farmers live and work and continue to do their part in making this province a great place to live. I take much pleasure in representing this great farming constituency, and I will take the opportunity to speak more about agriculture a little later in my remarks.

The communities I call the Carman constituency home are vibrant and welcoming towns. Each is home to a number of interesting and community-building events. For example, this summer, the town of Carman had the pleasure of hosting the Manitoba Society of Seniors' 55-Plus Games. I had the good fortune of being able to attend part of this event. The games were well organized, well attended, and definitely gave the seniors who participated and the town of Carman something to be proud of.

Many of the towns, as has been the tradition in rural communities for many years, hold fairs and festivals in the warmer summer months. I think of the Roland Pumpkin Fair, the fiddle festivals or the Festival of Nations that take place in a number of different communities. This is an area steeped in history and tradition, as is evident by the large number of historical and agricultural museums and monuments that can be found in the Carman constituency.

These communities all have a story to tell. Each one has been blessed with a proud history. The town of Roland, the birthplace of the 4-H, has a museum dedicated to such. This is a sign of wisdom. To remember and pay heed to one's history and tradition is an essential part of successful development. I am proud to say that under the previous government, the value and dignity of the rural communities were recognized.

On this side of the House, we have a tremendous respect for the rural way of life. Certainly rural Manitoba is a backbone, the foundation of this province. With this in mind, the previous government initiated programs like

REDI to diversify and enhance our rural communities. That particular program provided support for 400 businesses. Over 2,000 jobs were created, and we witnessed over \$100 million in new capital being invested in the rural economy as a result of REDI.

Rural Manitoba now has one of the lowest unemployment rates in all of Canada. I would like to challenge the newly elected government to continue the efforts that brought this about and to maintain the strong rural strategy developed by the previous government, more specifically, by the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

I have sat as a representative in this House for over a decade now, and I have never been prouder of what the government of Manitoba has accomplished for our rural communities since 1988. I feel I can speak a bit about rural affairs as I have had the distinct pleasure of representing not just one constituency in rural Manitoba, but three of them. To my knowledge, I am the only living member to represent this many different constituencies and of only one other, who is a deceased member, to have rivalled this privilege. This was the Honourable Hugh Armstrong who served a number of terms around the turn of the century. He was originally elected in the Lakeside-Woodlands area, an area that has a long history of excellent representation, and in his subsequent years of service to this province he was elected to two other constituencies.

Each of the electoral districts that have honoured me with its respective seat in this House has had some overlap with its predecessor, but each has also encompassed some new territory. My hometown of Somerset, due to its geographical location in central Manitoba, has been shuffled from one electoral district to another. When I was first elected in 1986, it was the people of the Turtle Mountain constituency. In 1990, when the lines were redrawn, I found myself seeking election in the district of Gladstone. Now, nearly a decade later, I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve the people in the Carman constituency.

It has been most rewarding and very educational to have represented people from

Boissevain to Gladstone, from Treesbank to Fannystelle, Mariapolis to Myrtle. Despite the width, the wide breadth of the area that I have represented, there is a common theme underlying all of them. That theme is agriculture. Agriculture was the activity upon which many of the communities in the region were founded and continues to be the mainstay of their economies. Without the income and employment generated by farming, these towns and villages would be unable to exist. The stores and other businesses that have grown up to serve the population are heavily reliant on the farm economy. The vital position occupied by agriculture in Manitoba's economy cannot be emphasized enough, therefore, when a disaster such as this year befalls farmers, it is all the more destructive.

As we all know, the agricultural sector in this province is dealing with some profound hardships as of late. The grain and oilseed producers, many of whom call my constituency home, have suffered and continue to suffer as the prices of their produce has fallen to so low. The crisis they face today is one of great urgency. It is also a crisis that may well evolve into a much longer-term ailment if appropriate steps are not taken shortly.

\* (1010)

I must say I was dismayed, even offended, to discover that this government's throne speech contained only a two-sentence reference to agriculture. According to the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who only the other day waved a document in this Chamber with glee, given the immense hardships being experienced by farmers, this brevity speaks volumes. I would be ashamed of myself if that was all that I had to offer. Very brief reference was made to the troubles that have befallen our producers. No references were made to agriculture in a general sense, and no solutions were offered as they were to other issues.

I wonder how this government could fill a throne speech so full of vague commitments to address an array of issues but fail to properly address agriculture. To ignore such an integral part of this province's existence is beyond an oversight, it is a tragedy, and yet they would have the gall to say that they represent all areas

of this province. If this is the case, stand up for the people you claim that you want to represent. Never mind this smoke and mirror trick. You cannot fool them when they are hurting this bad.

Fortunately for the government, they were astute enough to present their resolution that addressed the agricultural difficulties being experienced in the days after the Speech from the Throne. However, I would suggest that a very clear statement had already been made, a statement to the rural and farming communities of this province that said, and I will quote: Your government has not made your plight a priority of this mandate. They were instead concerned with discussing the childish politicking schemes like making laws against unions and corporations exercising their right to contribute to political parties of their choice. This is a sad indicator of a government dedicated to the people of this province. We on this side of the House will not let this government dub our farmers, our farming community and, ultimately, the whole of Manitoba's population.

It is for good reason that the farmers of this province perennially reject the New Democrats. They are not interested in having a party that cares very little about rural Manitobans and knows even less about their priorities. Today the grain and oilseed producers in Manitoba and the rest of Canada face a playing field that is so lopsided, they can hardly compete. They have done nothing to deserve this. They are the smartest and most hardworking farmers in the world. Their produce is second to none. Canadian wheat has long been the world's premium wheat.

The governments of Manitoba and Canada must do everything possible to rectify this situation. If this means increasing subsidy levels to assist farmers in their efforts to compete with giant American and European subsidies, then so be it. It is becoming increasingly obvious that playing by the rules is not on the agenda of our trade partners. At the same time we were reducing our subsidies, they were shoring theirs up, even undertaking dramatic increases. A fine thank you for our good faith.

In the debate that went on during the passage of the agriculture resolution, it was

stated over and over by myself and by other members of this House that the federal government must take a prominent role in developing solutions to the problems faced by producers. As each of us is aware, the federal government bears a large amount of responsibility for the current conditions in farming. They are in a position to offer monies to compensate farmers in the short term for the damage that may have occurred this spring. They are also in the best position to develop a concrete strategy to address a long-term threat posed by bloated subsidies in other countries. However, the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Justice have both chosen to look the other way. This is nothing short of a disgrace, considering the multibillion-dollar surplus that they say that they are enjoying this year and are expecting to enjoy in the years to come. There is no doubt that these excess dollars could be directed at improving, or shoring up, the prices that the Canadian grain producers receive.

On the subject of budgets and surpluses, the federal government is not the only one to need correction. Here at home in this Assembly, we have a government that is in the process of proving itself utterly incapable of proper budgetary practice. In an age when it is the norm to balance budgets, in fact it is required by law, this government chooses to take a big step backward and run a deficit.

For four years now the Province of Manitoba, under the direction of a Conservative government, has brought forward balanced budgets and produced a surplus. It was not easy to restrict our spending; major budgetary decisions at this level are always tough, but we took the necessary steps. Now Manitoba is on the steady road to recovery from years of overspending and fiscal mismanagement.

However, the members opposite are placing all this in jeopardy. Instead of continuing down the path of responsibility and prudence blazed for them by our government, they have chosen to go back to the free-spending ways of their past. Regardless of the recent commitments they made during the election campaign to maintain balanced budget legislation and keep the fiscal house in order, the New Democrats are now going to sink this province into the red. Of

course, this is by no means a new direction for the NDP. Whether they call themselves today's, tomorrow's or yesterday's New Democrats, they are little more than free spenders and tax consumers.

In the months since their election, they have been up to their old tricks, hiding behind a document that they would very much like to call an audit. The Deloitte and Touche review is being used as cover for implementing their Christmas wish list, a clever ploy to let them throw their hands up and declare their deficit a cold reality.

Fortunately, the people of Manitoba will not buy it. In fact, they are sure to see through the smoke screen that the government has put up to obscure its blatant mismanagement of the province's finances in just a few short months. You folks opposite must just shudder when you know Charles Adler is snooping around corners, keeping an ever-watchful eye on your spending habits. He and his listening audience know the true value of the hard-earned dollar.

Thanks to the strong and progressive fiscal policies put in place by the previous government, the Manitoba economy has never been in better shape. We now have the second lowest unemployment rate in the country, strong consumer confidence and an AA credit rating. Yet, the New Democratic government is willing to throw this away in an effort to accommodate its overspending habits. What a shame.

This government seems unaware of the damage deficits will do to Manitoba's economy. They seem unaware of the consequences that poor fiscal planning will have in the business community. Who will want to maintain, let alone start, a business in a province where deficits are prevalent, taxes are high and government responsibility is next to none? For that matter, how will any enterprise, especially small business, be able to stay in a province where minimum wage is being upped on a yearly basis? How can they trust a party who resolved at a recent convention to dramatically raise the minimum wage and, equally ludicrous, to shorten the workweek to four days?

It really makes one wonder where exactly this government thinks the investment and

creativity that fuels this province's economic growth comes from. It certainly does not come from amongst the ranks of the welfare recipients whom they seem bent on swelling. It does, however, come from small Manitoba businesses, entrepreneurs and the investment of out-of-province businesses that saw Manitoba as an inviting place to set up shop.

All of these enterprises were able to thrive under the economic conditions created by the previous government. They were able to provide decent employment to countless Manitobans. Indeed, under the previous government, unemployment in this province progressively dropped, reaching the lowest point it has been in many years. The opportunity provided this new government to build on its legacy is unprecedented. You have inherited a financially sound operation, a bank account with over \$200 million to it and a well-tuned economy. There is no need for a deficit. It is unfortunate that the members opposite wish to squander Manitoba's money, hard taxpayers' dollars. The throne speech presented by this government was, to be generous, a disappointment. It was unsubstantive and failed to lay out any kind of comprehensive or responsible plan for Manitoba, and I would sincerely hope that this administration has more direction than they indicated in the throne speech.

At that, Sir, I will take my leave and wish everybody here a very, very merry Christmas and wish you all the best as we enter into our new millennium. You have a great and wonderful day. Thank you.

\* (1020)

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today in the House, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your prestigious position that your caucus and this House have given you by electing you as Speaker. I also want to congratulate your Deputy Speaker that your caucus has chosen to stand in for you when needed.

I also want to express my sincere appreciation to the Clerk of the House who has served us as long as I have been here, for the decade

and a bit that I have been here, and also the Clerk's staff. I think the Clerk's staff have done an absolute marvellous job in directing the affairs of the House and the committees and the work that they have done in committees to guide us and direct us while we were in government. I know that they will continue to do the same kind of work for the new government that is in place.

I also want to congratulate the new Premier (Mr. Doer) and his government for winning the election. I think you have a tremendous challenge ahead of you. It is very apparent that the path that you are going to have to follow simply by direction of the general electorate—and if you do not, you will not be there next time—but the path has been set for you by the previous administration over the past 10 years. The economic direction that they have indicated and the balanced budget proposals that have been put forward are going to be demanded by the electorate. That, I think, is going to be your main challenge. Your second challenge is, of course, going to be to ensure that we have a sound agricultural community and a food production process in this province that can be maintained and continued.

I read with some interest this morning that—and maybe before I continue that, I also would like to thank all my constituents for placing their confidence in me and in re-electing me to this House. I also want to thank my wife, Dora, for the tremendous amount of patience that she has in encouraging and supporting my efforts to serve the people of the constituency of Emerson. I welcome the addition to my constituency of the municipality of La Broquerie and all the people and communities within that municipality, and I, with some trepidation, had to let go of the St. Malo area and that part of the De Salaberry municipality. They were people whom I enjoyed working with during the 1997 flood and many other issues that we had to face.

I want to say to this House that the 1997 flood and the 1999 flood were of equal importance to the people involved. I think we should not soon forget that, like the disaster assistance program that was utilized in Quebec during the ice storm in Quebec, during the flood, in Manitoba during the 1997 Red Sea flood, there need to be the same programs put in place

in western and southeastern Manitoba and even parts of the Red River Valley this year in 1999.

We have many people who are suffering severely, but the federal government has walked away and said they have no responsibility. The disaster assistance program does not cover those areas. I think it is absolutely imperative that the Premier (Mr. Doer) of our province make sure that the Prime Minister is aware of their responsibility and the responsibilities that they have taken during those crises to see that our people in western Manitoba receive the same assistance as did the people in Quebec two times, and the Red River Valley at other times, and in other parts of Canada.

That program, disaster assistance program, would cover most of the costs, including the acreage payments that have been made to the producers to cover their losses during this year, and I think that we should not lose sight of the difference between farm aid and the disaster assistance program. I think this Premier made a severe mistake when he went to Ottawa and suggested that we needed to add into the disaster assistance program and become part of the \$300 million that the minister is now in Ottawa asking for, and I think you should. We are not the government; you are the government. You are the newly elected people; you need to put the thought process in place; you need to give the direction, and you need to tell the Prime Minister what his government's responsibility is to the people of Manitoba.

The second issue I want to raise during the few minutes that I have been allotted is this whole matter of farm aid and how we deliver farm aid. I think it is imperative when I read the headlines and the editorials this last week: The real farm crisis. Farmers tired of federal aid facade. Provinces seek federal agricultural aid. Ontario threatens to withdraw from farm aid program. Young farmers looking for signs, federal panel told. I think the sign that they are looking for is some freedom to produce under the trade agreements that Canada, the United States and its trading partners have signed over the last two to 10 years.

The FTA agreement has some parameters around it. The WTO agreement has different

parameters around it, and it forces us into a competitive position whether we like it or not under those rules. I think that this government that is sitting now, opposite to where we used to sit, needs to recognize that there is a tremendous difference and tremendous changes that have happened over the last 10 years, and I think it is imperative that what is being said in the Winnipeg Free Press editorial today is what this government should be looking at.

It says that farmers also need to know what they will have, that they will have the freedom to choose their crops and their methods and their marketing strategies for their own best advantage without awaiting the dictates of bureaucrats. City people may not be terribly moved by the news that some farmers will lose their farms. I think that really tells the whole story. That is where we are at, and that is why it is important that the resolution amendment that we moved in this House during the crisis debate in agriculture needs to be strongly considered, Mr. Speaker, because we said: What we should give our farmers is the same parameters in the marketplace in the subsidy war that farmers in the United States and in Europe and Japan and our other trading countries receive. We need to put them on the same level playing field.

There are those that argue, and there are those within this government, and I am including the Premier, that argue that this country cannot afford to do that. Well, Mr. Speaker, I say to you this country cannot afford not to do it. The huge amount of money that the farm sector brings into the balance of payment schedule, \$21 billion, \$22 billion a year and growing, in farm agricultural trade and that is the contribution that the farm sector makes to the balance of payments in foreign currency earnings, is not well enough understood. But when I hear people say that we, this country, cannot afford to participate in the cheap food policy that was negotiated during the WTO and agreed to by all those players, and our farmers subjected to those rules, that we cannot afford to play by those same rules, then we should not have been part of the deal.

So I think it is imperative that Ottawa recognizes—and the provinces should not be involved in this trade war. It should only be



Ottawa as the U.S.A. is, as Europe is, as Japan is, as all the other countries are without the involvement of local economies.

But these people that now govern this province do not understand that. They do not understand that, so they run with hat in hand and say: Our farmers need \$300 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, they might well need \$300 million, but I make the case to you that that number will change virtually every day. They need \$300 million to cover the losses in 1999 which has virtually ended the calendar year. But the crop year that we are into has only half ended, and the commodities that we are selling now are being sold at virtually half the prices that we sold our crops in '99 for.

So what will the requirements be in the year 2000? Well, I say to you that the issue is equalization and balances of support for our agricultural community that the other trading nations receive. We have got to underpin our farm sector at the same level that they do. We should stop talking in round global numbers of dollars that are required. We should say to the U.S., we are going to support, we are going to provide the acreage payments that you do. We are going to put in place a loans program that you do. We will put in place the same set-aside programs you do. We will compete with you on an equal basis.

\* (1030)

Then we will get to some true negotiations internationally within the farm sector and the trade disputes. I would suggest to you that if all those trading partners negotiated and came to that same understanding and a deal, within a very short period of time the subsidies would disappear and the draws on the treasuries of all the trading nations would lower dramatically. It would not be surprising at all to me to see that the support for agriculture would be zero in under less than a decade.

I think that is the issue that we need to address. That is the real and fundamental issue that we need to address.

The second issue that I want to bring to the attention of this government is something that

has not been said well enough. That is that we have an area in this province in the Red River Valley that constantly overflows virtually every year now, either by the overflow of the Roseau River or the overflow of the Red. That is what we call the Roseau Lake area, just east of the Red River, including the St. Jean-Letellier and right up to the Morris area. I think there is some real need there to ensure that proper drainage is put into that area, that the Marsh River is restored to its original state and that area of farmers be designated a disaster area as long as they will be flooded every year. They have been flooded the last five out of six years.

I think that there is a real need there, and it has been totally overlooked by this government in its desire to provide some assistance or impress upon Ottawa the assistance.

I will say some other things at a later date when we reconvene this House about the agricultural community and some of the needs in the agricultural community. I know my colleague from Portage la Prairie wants to put a few words on record, so I turn the meeting over. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the few minutes that you have allotted to me to make these comments. I wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, it really is truly a pleasure to rise in this Chamber as each and every day we as MLAs enter this building, and a magnificent building it is. The Manitoba Legislature is reputed to be one of the finest buildings in all of North America. It energizes us all to have the opportunity to serve the public in the position of MLA.

I want to congratulate and compliment all members of the Legislature, who have in fact won approval from their constituents to serve in the capacity of MLA.

I want to congratulate the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), who has achieved the highest elected position at the provincial level. His representation from Point Douglas is very notable. I want to perhaps say to the honourable member for Point Douglas that he is representing a constituency that is one of

the 24 constituencies originally represented here in this Chamber. So he has in fact an historic position. My memory also serves me historically that Point Douglas was the constituency that was the site of the first public school in all of the province. In fact, leadership shown in that sector I would hope to be continued.

My memory also serves me right as far as historic nature. The constituents of Point Douglas have been ones that have always shown an interest in politics, especially one evening when having visited the Legislature earlier in the day had been ruled out of order by then Speaker Dr. Bird. Dr. Bird had ruled appropriately insofar as constituents from Point Douglas had in fact brought forward a motion that was indeed out of order. However, believing to be proactive, those constituents later that evening lured Dr. Bird—on the premise that there was a sick constituent—out of the Legislature. Dr. Bird being that of a very dedicated physician went with those individuals; however, those constituents wanted to show their displeasure upon the earlier ruling that day, promptly tarred and feathered our Speaker of the House. I would hope that the constituents in Point Douglas do not want to resurrect that frontier-type judgment should the honourable Speaker rule in favour of something such as that.

I also want to say at this time, it has been indeed a pleasure to have the guidance of Clerk, W.H. Remnant, more affectionately known as Binx. He has served this Chamber well, as has his support staff at the Clerk's table. I want to wish Binx all the very best. He will be fondly remembered. I wish him well in his retirement, which is imminent. I also want to congratulate at this time Garry Clark, who has been appointed to the position of Sergeant-at-Arms, and also Dennis Huyda, who has in fact assumed that previous position that Garry had as Deputy Sergeant-at Arms.

Welcome to the Chamber. I wish well not only yourselves but the staff which you are responsible for.

I want to say to all members that in fact entering this Chamber—a very unique Chamber it is—we are the only Chamber in all of the land where the benches of the honourable members of

this Chamber are fashioned in the horseshoe manner. It is one that is known to be more conducive to open dialogue without the fashioning for direct conflict or opposites.

My time is limited, but I do want to say to all members within this Chamber is that in fact we must always reflect the interests of our constituents and behave in a manner that is respectful and with the dignity of our office. I would encourage all members to remember that we are a select few representing less than 1/100th of all Manitobans with the privilege to serve. It is indeed a privilege to represent the constituents of Portage la Prairie who in fact also are one of the original 24 MLA positions in the 130 years.

Now I know at this point the dean of our Legislature the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) would like to put some very choice words upon the record, and I secede my position and give the floor to that honourable member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I want to at the outset thank my honourable colleagues, all three of them that spoke this morning, that did make it possible for me to once again add a few comments with respect to the throne speech. It is always a privilege and a pleasure to speak to the throne speech. It is one of those few occasions where we have the widest latitude. You know, we are speaking to a specific bill. We can speak our hearts. We can speak what our constituents wish us to speak about, and I always enjoy these two occasions, this and the budget speech that enable us under our rules to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to as others offer you my very best congratulations, to all officers of the House, to all members, old and new, that have been re-elected to this House. It is a unique gathering. Out of our million people, 57 people are chosen from time to time to represent them in this Chamber. So while we are no better than any of our constituents, we do have that special status of having the privilege of representing them in this Chamber.

\* (1040)

I want to, in the few minutes that I have, first of all acknowledge there has been a fundamental change in the status of the House. I mean, we are no longer on that side; they are no longer on this side. I, for the third time in my career, find myself on this side of the House. I always kind of refer to that as a kind of undergraduate work for the time that we prepare ourselves to return to that side of the House.

I think it is fair to comment on: how did it happen? What happened on September 21? The honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale) gave us some thoughts on that subject just yesterday. You know, in all our contributions in this Chamber, there is always an element of truthfulness in the positions that we put forward, although somewhat slanted or biased from the point of view that one has and what one brings to this House, but certainly it is no secret.

I, although confident in the policies that I was proud to be part of over the last 11 and a half years, did have that uneasy feeling in about midsummer last summer when, throughout the city of Winnipeg, these billboards started dotting the landscape of a fine looking Leader of the New Democrats (Mr. Doer), of Today's New Democrats, not in that garish Halloween colour of orange and black, but in that peaceful Tory blue that fitted into our beautiful, unpolluted climate, sunsets, you know, that only we in the Prairies and here in Manitoba enjoy, dressed not in a woolly cardigan, with funny slacks on like most . . . but in a conservative blue suit, blue shirt, blue tie. Promising what? That he would carry on the successful government policies of the Filmon government, and he said that.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that was not an original thought on the part of the members opposite. It followed the very successful example of the current British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who did what to succeed? He promised the Brits that he would continue the policies of one Margaret Thatcher, which he has done and keeps on doing.

My role is providing not just obstructive, but I believe it is important to provide constructive advice from this side of the House, which is what I will attempt to do in the next few

moments. The measure of success they will have is to the degree that they can carry that out.

Speaking about my favourite woman politician, Margaret Thatcher, by the way, I should indicate that, as I am sure the ministers and all members opposite, we bring to our offices little different things to dress up the offices, family pictures, pictures of important occasions like perhaps our first swearing in to this Chamber. I always treasured in my office, the Minister of Agriculture's office, Room 165, a fine picture of Maggie Thatcher that had a prominent place on my wall. Shortly after the change of government, I had occasion to revisit my old office at the request of the current Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), who sought some advice on some ongoing agricultural issues. I, in a moment of generosity, offered to bequeath this picture of Maggie Thatcher to the current Minister of Agriculture.

She thought about it but turned me down, but I do now want to see this message being brought to the First Minister, the Premier (Mr. Doer). If indeed he wishes to have it, I would gladly offer up that picture of Maggie and provide it for him for his office. As a matter of fact, having personally met the former Prime Minister, I bet you I could persuade her to kind of autograph it with the kind of thing, give him hell, Gary, that kind of thing, you know. She would not know which Gary he was referring to, but I would try to do that for this picture.

So that is how they got there, and before they get too overly confident, Mr. Speaker—while I certainly acknowledge, as all of us do, that we are in opposition, that the people of Manitoba have spoken, but in how loud of a voice did the people of Manitoba speak? A thousand votes selectively placed would not have brought about the change in government. So while you have a comfortable majority in Manitoba, politically speaking wise, beware of your ongoing success on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, it is not us, it is they, themselves, that coined the words "Today's NDP." That is not propaganda coming from us. In fact, we watched with some interest the kind of struggle that went on within the New Democratic Party when the current Leader, their

Leader, Mr. Doer, attempted to bring the Today's NDP concepts into play in that party, versus yesterday's NDP, the same kind of struggle that Mr. Blair went through with the Labour Party in Britain. Now, to his acknowledgement, he succeeded, and I think every member opposite has to be thankful that Mr. Doer's, the current Premier's, view of what was required for acceptability in today's politics was right and prevailed. That is why you are enjoying the ministers' offices that you are sitting in.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to talk. Our trouble is we have just now experienced 60 days or two months of Today's NDP. We have to have some benchmark to measure with yesterday's NDP, and it is an awesome and a worrisome thing to all of us and to Manitobans that their very first serious bit of political action is to try to denigrate and try to back away from the most important accomplishment of the past 11 and a half years, and that is bringing Manitoba's fiscal affairs into some semblance of order, while the current debate about whether we left them a deficit or not, that will fade into insignificance.

Two years from now, three years from now, more importantly four years from now when the people of Manitoba have a chance to once again express their confidence or lack thereof in their governance, people will remember the Filmon legacy. They will remember that for the first time in 30 years not only were balanced budgets a fact, but we were actually reducing the debt by \$50 million, \$75 million, \$150 million. That is what the people will remember.

They will remember a few other things. Where is my good friend from Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)? He will remember that when the Pawley administration's second term was cut short for many reasons, one of them was their total mismanagement of Autopac. Remember when we used to have 400 or 500 people demonstrating in front of this building, because every year our premiums were going up 10, 12, 15, 20 percent? That was happening. What have we left them? We have left Autopac in great financial shape. My colleague the member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) who sat on that board can report to you that there is a very

significant surplus in place that allows rates to be going down.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was not a particularly easy thing to do. We had to take on the lawyers of this province in doing so, but that is a measurement by which they will measure the performance of the Filmon years versus yesterday's NDP, and, of course, the question mark is on what Today's NDP will do.

Another item which we do not often raise is the Workers Compensation Board which yesterday's NDP used as a social program, ran it into over \$200 million in debt. I remind you, that fund is contributed solely by the employer, no employee contribution, no taxpayers' contribution. That was borne solely by the employers, the businesses of Manitoba, and their rates were going up 15 percent, 20 percent every year, making it more and more difficult to do business in the province of Manitoba.

The Workers Compensation Board is now in balance. For the first time the rates have been stabilized and, in fact, are being lowered. These are but a few of the kinds of things that we will be measured against, the performance of this government, this so-called Today's NDP. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the First Minister (Mr. Doer) is going to join us in this debate shortly, but I do want to—you know, there are so many new faces here on both sides of the House, even on that side of the House. You do not know what yesterday's NDP was up to, and you need to be reminded.

\* (1050)

I was reminded of that by the Minister of Industry and Trade (Ms. Mihychuk) who the other day got up in the House. I give her full credit. She answered the question in an appropriate way when she was asked about her presence in Seattle. She was there to help profile the important agricultural issues, to try to resolve some of those issues because at least she is one of Today's NDP who recognize that liberal trade is extremely important to Canada, extremely important to Manitoba.

Yesterday's NDP, how did they behave? It was not long ago when, on a fine spring day,

they, with a deputy premier of this province and a mixture of other cabinet ministers and caucus members, wandered down to the United States consulate on Donald Street, pelted it with rotten eggs, then participated in burning their American flag, doing that to our biggest trading partner. I mean, that was the actions of yesterday's NDP. Is that how we improve trade relations? Then we wonder why after 60 years in Winnipeg, which was privileged with the prestige of having the American consulate office for western Canada located in Winnipeg, in 18 months they moved their offices to Calgary. They really do not have to put up with that kind of action.

There was again another occasion. This is a rather sad story where a minister of the Crown, Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs, went on public television to with scissors cut up his Eaton's credit card and advise all Manitobans not to shop at Eaton's. Well, where is Eaton's today? Can you imagine? That was yesterday's NDP. That is because there was a bit of a labour dispute looming between Eaton's and organized labour. But yesterday's NDP could not separate themselves from their responsibilities. That is why I am hoping Today's NDP will be able to know when they are acting on behalf of all people.

Well, then, of course, my favourite one. This goes back a little bit more. I recall the then Liberal Leader was sitting right in this seat here beside me. The Premier of the province of yesterday's NDP pontificated about the fact that really, in the society that he imagined for Manitoba, nobody, no employer, should make more than two and a half times than his lowest paid employee. That was the egalitarian view that was being presented.

I have never discussed this with Mr. Asper, who was then the Leader of the Liberal Party, but I got a hunch that he was listening to that and said: holy mackerel, I have got miles to travel and bucks to make, I am out of here. And he did just that. And has this province been the poorer for it? I think not, Mr. Speaker. I think that we can all be proud of the accomplishments of any of our entrepreneurs who made Manitoba a better place to live in, provided more jobs, provided more investment opportunities for the

province of Manitoba. But those were the kind of antics that yesterday's NDP indulged in.

Here comes the Minister of Mines (Ms. Mihychuk), whom I have a lot of respect for.

**An Honourable Member:** Ask me a question.

**Mr. Enns:** She is a little concerned about me because her mother-in-law just lives up the road from me, and I keep a watching grief. I mean, if she steps out of line, I report to her mother-in-law, who is a very fine lady, Ms. Jean Marshall, a fine lady. She has some background in the mining industry, and I think it is appropriate that she has it.

Can you imagine the policy that was in place of yesterday's NDP? Yesterday's NDP had a policy that said to the risk-capital people, to the prospectors, mining is a high-risk thing: if you find a mine, we reserve the right to get 50 percent of it. Well, within a few short years, all exploration of mining dried up. That policy to this day is still hurting us.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am assuming that the Minister of Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) will carry on those successful changes that we made in our mining policy. I am hoping that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) will carry on the successful policies, fiscally and financially. If the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) were here—health is not an easy subject to deal with for any government, but if he is smart and will do it, they will continue, they will carry out the policies of my colleagues in the Health portfolio. It was not easy to bring nine strong-willed boards of governors, governing the nine different hospitals in the city of Winnipeg, under one authority. They are not going to change that. They are not going to change the regional health system that has been developed. In fact, their only hope for some measure of success is if they carry on and continue those policies and let those policies come to fruition and allow the thought that was put into those policies to bring the full fruit of their capability.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to watching the performance of Today's New Democrats. I will be interested to remind them from time to

time when they are backsliding. They are backsliding on a number of the issues, but I see the First Minister (Mr. Doer) has entered the Chamber, and I do, just simply in closing, want to repeat my offer directly to him, having so successfully patterned his career after the British Prime Minister, Mr. Blair, who promised the people of Britain that he would essentially carry out the same policies that Margaret Thatcher carried out.

You know, one of the things that Maggie did, she privatized the London tube. Tony Blair has not changed it. This minister is not going to change MTS either, is he?

There was a time, and he remembers, when, with yesterday's NDP, we loved government ownership. We ran Chinese food companies, door and window factories, logging companies, forestry companies, bus companies. Bus companies, talk about bus companies. You know how the government ran the Flyer bus company? It cost us \$240,000, \$260,000 to build a bus, and then we sold them for \$160,000 to Boston. Every year, the Minister of Finance would come into this House and ask for \$10 million, \$11 million, \$12 million to keep American Flyer bus company alive. Since it has been privatized, regrettably—I should not say "regrettably"—to a very entrepreneurial European Dutch firm, Flyer has never looked back. We have become the largest bus manufacturer on the North American continent.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no end of examples like that of which from time to time I will remind all members opposite, but I say to the honourable First Minister: you have a very serious responsibility on your shoulders in keeping your pledge to your own party that you are representing Today's NDP and not yesterday's NDP.

That means agriculturally as well. Do not kid around and play with the business of turning the clock backwards to monopolistic marketing structures in the province of Manitoba. You would do this province no end of harm.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity in putting these comments on the mark.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I consider it a privilege to rise in this Legislature to have an opportunity to again speak on the Speech from the Throne. I think all of us come to this Legislature with a sense of pride and I think a sense of humility in terms of the responsibilities that we have been given and the opportunities we have been provided with our election to these great offices. I rise again today in a different spot in this House.

\* (1100)

This is my fourth role in this Legislature in the 13 years I have been here, and I am very proud to rise again. No matter what our roles, I consider all MLAs equal when we are dealing with the matters of this province and the concern we have for our constituents. I want to start by paying tribute to all the members of this Legislature. Whether we disagree or agree on matters of policy or on matters of substance, we all are committed to our constituents, we all are committed to democracy, the principles of democracy, we all live or politically die by the wishes of our constituents and our collective constituents.

I think when we walk into this magnificent building every day to work on behalf of the people that elect us, it is sometimes hard to remember, because we are in a hurry, but it is important to remember I think that this is not a job, but a privilege, and even though we are in different political parties, we have a great privilege and a great responsibility.

I was going to start by mentioning the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), and why should I stop now? I have got it on my notes. I have not been able to afford a speechwriter, so I continue to write my own speeches, much to the chagrin of people.

**An Honourable Member:** Stick to it.

**Mr. Doer:** I think I will. I think I will stick to writing some notes down and speaking from the heart, if I can.

I want to pay tribute to the member for Lakeside, his 33 years, the dean of the Legislature, the elder of the Legislature. In the

aboriginal culture, you know, actually there are many things we can learn from aboriginal people, and one of the things we can learn is the respect that people have for their elders, the wisdom that that brings to all of us.

I saw the picture of the honourable member for Lakeside on hockey skates yesterday. No ankle bending there. Some of us are playing the back nine of life or playing in the third period or some of us are playing into overtime, and I am one of those, but we should respect the wisdom of each other. We should, Mr. Speaker, I think, in respecting the wisdom of each other, be prepared in our parliamentary traditions to accept the wisdom of others or reject the memory of our elders if it goes at variance from our own memories.

I just caught the last five minutes of a wonderful speech. I remember the first time hearing the member for Lakeside and being very impressed with his speaking ability. I remember hearing him often and being always, always impressed with his speaking ability and his ability to articulate, but sometimes I have to have some reality check to his memory or his selective speech to perhaps his own colleagues and our colleagues to make sure that in this parliamentary tradition, the record sometimes might have to be set straight.

So I want to start off by saying to the member for Lakeside, congratulations again on your 33 years, but having researched your speeches from the past, I remember his comments about this bus company. I thought it was interesting, because it was the Conservative government that first, under the Roblin years, established a loan guarantee credit and financed a private bus company here in Manitoba. So, you know, when we talk about the former socialist hordes and yesterday's NDP, it is yesterday's Conservatives that financed the bus company.

Mr. Speaker, this is the best part of the debate. We should not have written speeches. We should be able to debate these issues, because it was the NDP and Eugene Kostyra that sold the bus company, the Flyer bus company, to Den Oudsten, and now it has doubled and tripled

in size after the ill-fated decision of the previous government.

It is perhaps an interesting lesson, because I recall about six months ago the free enterprise Conservatives were buying a gas company and not even bringing the debate into this Legislature, not even into this Legislature. When we attempted it at one-third the price a few years ago, supported by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), it at least came into this Legislature for a legislative debate. Let us remember that this Legislature, not the back-room offices of deal makers, should determine the finances of this province, the risk of this province, the ownership of this province. I say to members opposite, when a decision is made for a Hydro corporation to buy a gas utility, it should be debated on this legislative floor. We should have the courage of our convictions to come forward in a democratic forum, this Legislature, not for back-room kind of deals to be made.

I also want to pay tribute to the member for Brandon East, who was competing with the elder for Lakeside for the longevity award in this Legislature. I know we have been well served with the election of the present Brandon East representative, but I also want to pay tribute to all my predecessor MLAs on our side, particularly the member for Brandon East, who decided with a lot of pain and anguish to step down. He wanted to be toe to toe with the member for Lakeside for years on end. I really respected his advice and his counsel over the years. I just want to say thank you to Len and Alice Evans for all those years in office.

I was saying to a group of bankers today—I meet regularly with them, of course—a group of financiers last night, it was kind of interesting, when you consider the original Maple Leaf deal, and the member for Lakeside alludes to the agricultural policies that he would argue led to that decision, but here you had Jim Downey, Bernard Christophe and Len Evans involved in making that deal go forward, along with the Brandon City Council. I would love to have been a fly on the wall to watch that conversation. But it is Manitobans doing what they do best, and that is co-operating for the success of all of

our citizens. I think it is kind of interesting to remember that today.

My new job as Premier is certainly exciting, and it certainly is a responsibility that I think you can only appreciate when you finally get into the job. I have been in that office visiting premiers before. I have had the opportunity to be in cabinet and to be in that office and to be in opposition and be the Leader of the third party, but certainly you get a sense of responsibility even beyond cabinet, I would say, of Manitobans, 1,100,000 Manitobans. I think all of us, no matter what our political stripe, know that we are all committed to each and every citizen and that every day we have to get up in the morning and put what is best for our public and for our constituents and for our province ahead of all else.

I want to pay tribute to the former Premier, who, I know, worked tirelessly on behalf of all of our citizens. I had the privilege of working with him on many projects, because we obviously put Manitobans first. It is kind of a system where we are still now getting used to calling each other the right name because of the longevity that he had and is to be congratulated for. Janice Filmon as well, I pay tribute to her and Gary for hosting the Pan American Games at a Pan American Games function just last week. Both of them I know worked long and hard hours on behalf of Manitobans, and a lot of times I know that they had to put Manitobans' families first and their own family's priorities second. I know they always tried to balance those two conflicting pressures.

I want to thank them personally for the job that they both did on behalf of all of our province.

I want to thank former Premier Pawley, whom I consider to be an honest person, a man of integrity, for giving me the opportunity to serve in cabinet and in government. I had the privilege of negotiating The Forks arrangement. I had the privilege of working on business improvement zone legislation. I had the privilege of trying to eliminate multiparty lines in agricultural communities as minister responsible for the Telephones, a plan that was carried on by the Conservatives after. It did not make any sense

to me to see farm communities and farmers denied opportunities to be on the Internet, to be on the e-commerce, to be on the commodity markets right in their kitchen and right in their families. I was proud of the work we did to eliminate the party lines through two different governments and I thank former Premier Pawley for that privilege. It was certainly an honour for me.

\* (1110)

I would like to also pay tribute to former Premier Schreyer. His contributions to the establishment of hydroelectric power and Manitoba Public Insurance and other entities in this province have been very, very valuable to the people of this province. Hydro has the lowest rates in the world right now. Manitoba Public Insurance has \$800 million or more invested in hospitals and schools and municipalities in this province. Former Premier Schreyer had a vision that we should keep our money in our province to benefit our own communities and our own people rather than having it go to New York or Zurich or some other place, and I think when the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was being somewhat critical of public investment, notwithstanding his decision on the gas company, I think it is important to pay tribute to a mixed economy, to a mixed economy of Crown corporations that have been established by our predecessors and have benefited greatly from the investments made over the hundred years by our predecessor premiers.

I want to pay tribute to former Premier Lyon. In the Speech from the Throne that we are voting on today, we have a section on using the notwithstanding clause on child pornography. Former Premier Lyon and former Premier Blakeney and former Attorney General Romanow came up with this idea to break the logjam between the provinces that believed in the parliamentary traditions of democracy that reside totally in this Legislature versus ceding some of those rights to the Supreme Court of Canada through the establishment of a Canadian Charter of Rights and obviously the goal of repatriating the Constitution back to Canada.

I want to pay tribute to former Premier Lyon for that contribution to our country and our



province. It is important to reflect that when we build on a Speech from the Throne, even though we have ideological differences—although I think that sometimes the former Premier's speaking ability got in the way of some of the things they actually did in government, but the history will record it appropriately. But that contribution that he made to our country and to our province we are building on in this Speech from the Throne. We are building on it because we are not going to allow the Supreme Court of Canada to rule in favour of a person who possesses child pornography against the rights of children and against the rights of families here in Manitoba.

I also want to pay tribute to former Premier Roblin. I have had the chance to meet with him on numbers of occasions. People talk about Duff's Ditch and other contributions he has made to this province. He is a person whom I had dinner with last May, and I have had a chance to meet with him again with the Youth Vision conference. It is a privilege to meet him again on any occasion. It is interesting, when we look into the next century, a lot of what we are saying is having an economic vision that is tied to an education vision. One would argue that that was the vision of Duff Roblin when he was Premier of this province, and we are indeed challenged to make Manitoba a province that competes in a changing global economy with our greatest strength, and that is our people.

You compete with your greatest strength with an electronic era that is changing and changing. I mean, a hundred years ago land was important. Fifty years ago, plants were important. In the next century it is people and knowledge and information, and we cannot fall behind other jurisdictions in this world and expect to compete with e-commerce, with knowledge, with electronics, with the world economy. We compete with our best asset and that is people, and you compete with people with an education and training strategy, something we have put forward in the Speech from the Throne today and that builds, again, on the vision of Roblin and, we believe, builds again into the next century on the views strongly held by Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, you should be very proud yourself, Sir, as being the first elected Speaker in

this province. If I might say so, I think you were the first person to vote for the first elected Speaker. I noticed the ballot going in the box first, so there are two firsts that are being maintained by the honourable Speaker. I know it is hard to call a six-foot-two Inuit man who weighs 220 pounds Madam Speaker. I want to say I am getting out of that habit, Mr. Speaker. I have almost gotten totally out of that habit, and I will work at it as vigorously as I can. But I want to congratulate you on this great occasion.

We think that Manitoba was long overdue for an elected Speaker. We think that after the controversy of '96 we could have moved ahead in '97 but, failing to do that, it was useful that we co-operated at the end of the last session to bring in the rules that enabled us to elect a Speaker. There are a few things that we did not encounter in the rules. What if there is a tie and a few other things, but we can work on those rules. It went very, very well.

I want to congratulate you, Sir. I know how proud your family was, your mother, the famous Tootoo artist from the Arctic. Your mother was so proud that day, and we were all very proud of your election. Then to visit a couple of days later with the new Premier of Nunavut and to see the pride of the Nunavut delegation on your election I think again helps us in a human way build bridges to where the Golden Boy faces, and that is to the North, to the future. We should build our country again to respect the North, and congratulations to you on this election.

I want to congratulate the pages and the staff who are here today and here every day. I do not know how people can listen to us speak and not want to speak themselves. It must require a special discipline. I do not want to even know what goes on in terms of the kind of assessment of what we are saying. That is better left at the table with the notes and never to be repeated.

But of course I must pay tribute, and I will do so later, to Mr. Remnant, who is retiring later this month. I want to thank him for his contributions to this Legislature. Again, he has gone through some amazing decisions with all of us, the minority time when the challenge was being made on the Meech Lake Accord, the challenges that were being made in the Tele-

phones closure debates and other debates that have taken place.

I dare say that in terms of decisions that will either stand the test of time or be eroded by other decisions of this Legislature or other Legislatures, I think will be fascinating to watch. He certainly has helped all of us, particularly all of us when we are new. But you always know you are in a little trouble when he departs his chair to the Speaker's Chair; you know there is an intervention to come shortly. It is very, very important to have that continuity of expertise, and I want to congratulate him for that.

I think it is important in the Speech from the Throne to start off with some of our challenges. I think it was Roosevelt, and I want to paraphrase Roosevelt, that talked about the test of a true society. A good government is not what they do to add to those who have much or enjoy a great deal in our society, but the challenge is for all of us to see what we can do and achieve for those who have little.

So when we start this Speech from the Throne, and I have already congratulated the former Premier, I hope—

**An Honourable Member:** I was listening.

**Mr. Doer:** Okay, good. I am glad you were, because I want to get into the more interesting stuff later on, as you would expect. [interjection] High road, high road, honest disagreements.

**An Honourable Member:** We are just following the leader, the elder.

**Mr. Doer:** We are following the leader, the elder, a little bit of both.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that when we start off this Speech from the Throne, we know that we have a great deal of challenge ahead of us. Yesterday there were articles about Cross Lake, a community that many of us have visited in the past, where the suicide line has been cut off. The incidents of suicide are unacceptable in any community in Canada.

The situation of poverty and unemployment and health and lack of health services and lack of

economic opportunities speaks very directly to all of us as we sit here with this great privilege in this Legislature, the challenges that we must and will overcome as we move into the next century with all the prosperity in the world and the great prosperity of Canada, the country that is by all measures the greatest country in the world and the greatest quality of living of any country in the world. Surely we can find a way to pass on that quality of living and that quality of opportunity to all of our people. Surely in this Legislature we can start to make a difference for the people of Cross Lake and other communities in a similar situation.

\* (1120)

I also think that child poverty, and we get into a debate about: what is the child poverty line? Is it this much or is it that much? Child poverty is unacceptable. Families that have to go to Harvest so their kids can eat is not the Canada that I know and not the Manitoba I believe in. So we do not pretend to have a magic wand just to wave over the child poverty problem and challenge in Manitoba upon our election.

I want to again say that child poverty, whether it is dealing with the minimum wage on an annual basis as recommended by the Social Planning Council, whether it is dealing with nutrition for babies that has been reduced by 19 percent in this province, whether it is dealing with other areas that can make a difference for kids and children, surely we should work together to resolve every day. If every day another couple of hundred kids can go off of child poverty and stop using the food banks, then we can go home and sleep a little bit better at night. If we cannot do that we should stay awake at midnight thinking of ways to make a difference for kids.

So let us again pledge ourselves not just to pass resolutions in this House or not just to write speeches from the throne but make a difference for real families every real day in this government, and again we pledge ourselves.

I want to say to members opposite that I think it is very important to take the Manitoba tradition of working with people that, as I say,

need a government to make a difference. We are doing quite well. A lot of families are doing very well. The TSE is booming. The New York Stock Exchange is booming. The Nasdaq with the high tech stocks is going out of sight. There are people making a fortune every day. I think it is very, very important for us to try to make sure that some of those resources get to people that need it the most, and that is really what we are pledging ourselves to do.

I would ask members opposite to think about that, because this week did they ask questions about child poverty? Did they ask questions about the situation in Cross Lake? Did they ask questions about frozen food or SmartHealth or Faneuil?

On Monday we got questions on the Bostrom report, and we got questions on the workfare bill that would have disenfranchised people with disabilities here in Manitoba. [interjection] Well, that is why we have debates. That is our view of it. That is our view based on David Martin. That is our view based on the advice we had in the committees. I would ask people in this Legislature, all members in this Legislature, let us not work in a divisive way against people that need our support.

Aboriginal people, First Nations people have got one report recommending a few additional gaming opportunities to take advantage of some economic growth. Surely to goodness we should try to work on making that work instead of try to drive wedges against them. Surely we will do better if we are not meanspirited. We could have a parliamentary disagreement here, but let us not be meanspirited to the people that are on the lowest rung of the economic and social ladder and need to be given opportunities for their families and for their communities. Even if they are small opportunities, even if you disagree with the opportunity itself, and God knows there is a good debate to be had on gaming, at least that is what the communities want to move with, that is what has been recommended by the previous government. Let us be charitable. Let us be charitable in this Legislature and move ahead.

I want to say to people that I would like our Legislature to have a new civility to each other

in terms of the people. In terms of the political debate, I understand the partisan requirements and the political disagreements and the ideological differences that we hold. Let us have a new civility. I do not think this Legislature should be used to deny people who want chances an opportunity. Nor do I believe this Legislature should be used, by the way, to use the power of government to trample the rights of individual citizens that are participating in political parties of their choice as an individual citizen.

I have to say, and I want to say it now: I thought what happened last year—where the government used the power of government to go after an individual citizen named Brian O'Leary for something that he had already admitted and used the power of government and the expenses of government and the power of selective information to tarnish him, to try to tarnish me—was the greatest abuse of power I have witnessed in this Legislature. I expect to be held accountable by members opposite. I expect they will play hardball in doing that, but I do not want to ever see any minister on this side ever, ever, ever use the power of government to run somebody's reputation into the ground because it might benefit us politically.

Opposition disagreements, yes, but do not use the power of government. I consider that a statism that is beyond the civility of politics that we should bring to this Legislature. That battle is over and the people that participated in it, the public has dealt with. But I think it is a lesson for we who are now in government and a lesson for all of us in the future: do not use the power of government against an individual citizen participating in democracy on the basis of their own beliefs. I really believe that very strongly.

I would like to bring more common sense to the decisions we make. I think it is important. Let me give you an example. This is something you should pay attention to and we should pay attention to coming into government. Because, you know, you get schemes every day coming to government cabinet ministers. I know that members opposite had them. I know in the first day of office, even before we were sworn in, every day I was told another company, another operation, another worthy sports team or cultural group in our community would fold if we did not

write this huge cheque immediately to save them. I know all these other schemes come to us every day.

Let me give you an example of what I consider to be a lack of common sense in government, and that is frozen food. Now let me give you an example. We raised the issue of frozen toast from Toronto so they started preparing frozen toast in Riverview. The agricultural members that are across the way, you know, farm members that are across the way, let me also tell you what was happening with this boondoggle called frozen food. We would take oats—[interjection]

Well, maybe the member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) supports this: taking oats from Manitoba, shipping it to Markham, Ontario, adding tons of water to the oats to make porridge, freezing it and taking blocks of frozen oats from Markham, Ontario, back to Manitoba to rethermalize in our kitchens to serve porridge in this province. And you wonder why this thing was out of control. Now I know why members opposite are not asking the questions—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Jack Penner:** It is very obvious, Mr. Speaker, that under the rules of debate in this House, the knowledge brought to the debate needs to be proven. We also know that the oat industry has grown dramatically in this province, and it is because you are able to manufacture and create value that the oat industry has grown, and for this Premier (Mr. Doer) to single out the oat industry as a negative aspect of technology that has been designed to freeze part of the crop that is grown and market it internationally is unbelievable. I cannot believe it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is obviously a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** The Premier of Ontario thanks the member for Emerson for his great support of taking Ontario water, adding it to our oats and

paying for the freight of frozen watered oats from Ontario to come back to Manitoba.

I am going to move on because the more the member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) talks about it, the more he proves our point. So I would like to thank him for proving our point that common sense should prevail in decision making here in Manitoba.

I have talked about civility and common sense community. We think it is important to work on our community of government and work with the North and the rural communities and our inner city. We will have lots to announce in terms of the inner city as we proceed, but we recognize that these are long-term issues. Housing, poverty, recreation, security and safety of people, and education, training and opportunities, we believe, are long-term issues that need long-term action. So we will do everything possible to make a short-term difference, but we will try to keep our eye on the long-term differences that can make a difference for people in our communities and in our inner cities. It is going to be a task that we feel is crucial because we believe that Manitoba and all communities are only as strong as their weakest link. The people in the inner city are not weak, but we need housing, we need recreation, we need opportunity, we need education and training, and we are going to work on them.

\* (1130)

We also believe in a style of government that is co-operative, that listens to people, listens to segments of our society and tries to work in a co-operative way. We want to bring business, labour and government together. We want to work together with all producers on the agricultural crisis. We were proud of the fact that the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) joined us and joined all the producers to go to Ottawa to argue for support to deal with the subsidies provided by the Americans and the Europeans.

I was proud of the fact that we worked together, that all producers worked together. We do not want handouts, but we do not want our

agricultural communities and our rural communities to go down because the Americans are paying over 40 cents on the dollar, the Europeans are paying over 58 cents on a dollar. The Canadian government has got either to get rid of those subsidies through trade negotiations or to bridge those subsidies so that the family farm will not go under, and we are certainly proud to work on the all-party resolution that was passed in here.

I want to say in this debate that I salute, and we salute, the farm families of Manitoba. Under the crisis and pressure they are going through, they are doing remarkably well, and we salute them, Sir, in our speech to you today and in our speech to Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, we supported the \$70-million payment that was made by the previous government on August 17. We supported it in Melita; we supported it in the election campaign; we have supported it after the election campaign. We are trying to negotiate with the federal government reasonable compensation to offset that money, but I think that by August, with the failure of the federal government to respond in a federal-provincial package that was comparable to the treatment given to the Red River producers during the crisis of '97, the fact that there was a cheque in May in 1997 and that there has not been any support in 1999, we supported that payment. We are doing everything possible to get that payment back from the federal government and to take that expenditure off the books from the previous budget.

We do believe in longer-term programs, and we are working very hard to have long-term programs in place so that short-term payments will not be necessary. Short-term, unbudgeted amounts of \$70 million, however meritorious, can do a real disservice to the budgeting process and the budget numbers. So we are going to work very hard on a long-term agreement and a long-term process in this regard, and I am still working with the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) in that regard. I know that members opposite have spoken of these issues in Melita. We have remembered that advice from our elders on this matter, and we will continue to move forward on a longer term solution.

We believe governments must be accountable. They must be accountable for the decisions they make and the responsibility for delivering that. That is why we did hire an independent financial review. Deloitte and Touche was hired, and it provides us with a nonpolitical review of where the expenditures were at and where the revenues were at. Unlike 1988, the Provincial Auditor was involved in a bid selection process and sits on the review committee. The head of the Treasury Board, Mr. Potter, that was appointed by members opposite, is on that board. The Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Gannon, is on that board. Mr. Eldridge is on that board, the former Deputy Minister of Federal-Provincial Relations. So we have the people that are providing the independent analysis, people that are nonpartisan public employees who are providing independent nonpartisan numbers.

This is not a wish list that was contained within that document. I was surprised the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), if he had read the document, said that. I know that is good politics, but the word "wish" is not in the document. They were critical of my using the term audit. It is an independent review but the words "I wish"—it looks like Christmas came in August, and we have got the Chargex bills and the Visa bills to pay for after the members opposite ran away with the credit card.

Mr. Speaker, we did not. The word "expenditure" is not a wish, it is an expenditure. The word "commitment" is a contract. It is a deal that we cannot get out of, and those are real numbers and real commitments and real expenditures, and when members opposite say that this is a wish list, they are deceiving Manitobans, and they should not try to do it.

We have reduced the size of cabinet. We have reduced the number of deputy ministers. We have reduced the number of communicators. We have reduced the number of special assistants. We have reduced the number of executive assistants. We have reduced the number of bureaucrats hired by members opposite in the two Winnipeg health authorities. Thirteen vice-presidents, all making more than the Deputy Minister of Health, hired by members opposite to all have a credit card, and we have to pay the bills. We are going to take

the credit cards out of the hands of people that have no responsibility, and we have to reconnect patient services and accounting and finances back to this Legislature where it belongs. We are not going to delegate it out to 13 vice-presidents who delegate it out to a number of other people in hospital boards. The buck stops here. Obviously it did not stop over there. It is going to stop over here when we get our hands on the next budget in the year 2000.

There are three issues that have been identified by the Auditor, and there is not a revenue problem. There is an expenditure problem. [interjection] Well we are not going to close all the hospital beds like the members opposite. We do not believe in going on a starvation diet for three and a half years and then going into binge spending with a credit card like members opposite did, and that is why we are going to be different.

Mr. Speaker, we have three problems in terms of expenditures: health care, which I have identified; agriculture, which I have identified; and the unfunded liability of pension plans. The unfunded liability of pension plans under the Manness review was \$1 billion. It is right in his document. It is now identified by the Deloitte and Touche report at \$2.5 billion. We did something, and the members opposite carried it on in government to deal with the Crown corporations, but we must look at this long-term problem.

It really means that if you look on the debt—members opposite like to criticize the previous government—on the books, that has been increased and debt off the books, the former government has actually raised the debt, the unfunded liability and the total debt more than the previous government. The only difference is—and in all fairness to the members opposite—they inherited a \$1-billion unfunded liability, and that in itself creates a financial inertia that is very, very difficult to deal with. So we need long-term solutions. These decisions were made in the mid-'60s to have an unfunded liability, and we need decisions now that 30 or 50 years ahead will deal with that problem. Mr. Speaker, I promise within a year we are going to come forward with a long-term plan to deal with this. It is not going to be short term, but I commit to

this Legislature a long-term deal to deal with this.

\*(1140)

We made five commitments in the election campaign. We are going to deal with the dignity and privacy of people in health care, and we are going to rescue health care not only for today's generations but for future generations. We have started the process, and I would say the temerity for members opposite to be criticizing a Minister of Health that has been sworn in for 60 days after they ran the system into the ground for 11 years, they have more gall than anybody I have ever met in politics. Mr. Speaker, we finally have a health care minister that listens to nurses, listens to doctors and listens to patients, and that is why I know his long-term plans to deal with health care, our long-term plans to deal with health care, will succeed. We will succeed, and we will do it together as a caucus and as a cabinet here in Manitoba. I am very proud of that.

We also know that the firing of a thousand nurses by members opposite has created tremendous stress. Nurses are working double and triple and quadruple time. The average age of a nurse in Manitoba is close to 50 years of age, and we will have a strategy. [interjection] Well, "Mr. Instant Fix" over there, he does not know that it takes two years to train an R.N., two years, 24 months. We need no lectures. We will have a plan to have LPNs in our health care system. We will have a plan, after a year of training of an LPN, they are qualified for a two-year R.N. program which we are going to reinstate. Then after a two-year R.N. program and a couple of years working in a hospital, why can a person not go in to the B.N. program and have those credits be accounted towards the B.N. program? Not only are we going to put more nurses back in the programs on the front lines of health care, but we are going to put the drawbridges back over the moats for nurses so they can get credits, they can get skills, they can get experience, and they can stay in Manitoba where they belong, Mr. Speaker.

We are not going to use Connie Curran. We are not going to use the 13 vice-presidents members opposite hired. We are not going to

keep their frozen food program; we have renegotiated that. We are going to try to get oats produced in Manitoba instead of frozen water in Ontario, not a bad idea. We are not going to go to a starvation diet and then binge spending. We are going to plan health care with the people and patients of Manitoba, and that is commitment No. 1.

Our second commitment is education and training, and I already spoke about that. We are going to tie the future economy to education and training. The former economy, the agricultural economy where almost 95 percent of our people work, is changing. The manufacturing economy, although it is doing very well and still continues to do well, and we will hope that it will continue, society is going to change. It is a knowledge-based society. It is a global economy.

I cannot understand members opposite who used the words of a global economy but did not connect the economic and education strategy of the global economy. I remember seeing, year after year, good documents in terms of the niches for Manitoba's economic growth, but there was no connection to the community colleges, to the universities, to the vocational training programs, to the high schools, to Access programs, to New Career programs for people who need opportunities. There was no connection.

**An Honourable Member:** Davos, Switzerland.

**Mr. Doer:** You know, Davos, Switzerland, has an agenda of tying education and training to the future economy. So you cannot have a paper over here on the niches. You know, some of the economic papers that were produced by the government of the early '90s were good documents, very good documents; but, when we juxtapose that against the budgets of universities, community colleges, high schools, vocational training and apprenticeship programs, there was no connection. [interjection] Well, we are going to connect them.

I know that is a difficult concept for the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler). I know it is difficult for the member for Springfield. Education and training, economy, global economy, tie it together. You tie it together.

That is what we are going to do. It is a novel idea, I know. It is a novel idea, and I want to thank the member for Springfield for pointing out again the deficiencies of the former government.

We can ask for no greater critic of the former government than the member for Springfield. I want to thank him for his intervention, and I hope he carries on. He is our best poster boy for change. So keep up the heckles. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Speaker, our third commitment is on Hydro and public ownership. We believe this is a great economic opportunity for Manitobans. We have already kept this promise. We are keeping Hydro. When you look at the fact that there is a billion dollars that apparently was going to be available to the incoming government, and when you look at the fact that Telephones was sold in '95 and the Legislature passed the legislation in '96, and when we look at the billion dollars, you know I would not want to be a cynic. Does anybody on this side want to be a cynic?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Doer:** But do we believe they were going to sell Hydro?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Doer:** The logic is inescapable. So thank goodness we made our third commitment to use Hydro for the benefit of all Manitobans. There may be fewer Jaguars sold in January 2000 than in January '97, and I apologize to all the Jaguar dealerships in Manitoba, but we want to keep Hydro owned for the benefit of all of our citizens. We are proud to again come forward with not only maintaining Hydro but investing in its future. Limestone was paid for by the Americans for the Northern States agreement, and we should be proud of the fact that we have the lowest rates in the world, thanks to our good people there.

We want to bring business and labour and government together. We have to deal with our capital outflow. You know, in Workers Compensation, the members opposite know how

much money stays in Manitoba in the Workers Compensation budget and how much money leaves? I wonder if it ever came forward to cabinet or for discussions. Does anybody over there know how much money stays in Manitoba out of \$800 million? No, they do not.

So, Mr. Speaker, \$20 million—

**An Honourable Member:** You are on the wrong side, Gary. You cannot ask us questions.

**Mr. Doer:** Oh, I can. If you can heckle, you can, hopefully, have a little bit of knowledge to answer back. If you are going to heckle, have some knowledge.

The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) will tell you, heckling without knowledge is just noise. Heckling with knowledge is debate. [interjection] There we go, there goes the noise again, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Now I move on, \$20 million out of \$800 million in workers' compensation stays in Manitoba. So the fact that this is something we have got to deal with, 85 percent of the pension money leaves Manitoba. Those are jobs that are lost, opportunities are lost, value-added risk and realistic risk that leaves this province. Why do we not have the kind of vision of Tommy Douglas in this province where labour pension fund is invested in agriculture and value-added agriculture in our communities to get our products produced in Manitoba for the benefit of the world, using the kind of working people and working farmers together for opportunities for our province? That is the vision we have and the challenge we see.

\* (1150)

We have also committed ourselves to safer communities, and we will be working on both the opportunities for our kids and our youth as well as the justice system itself, and we are committed as our fourth commitment to dealing with the causes of crime as well as dealing with the justice system that people find themselves within.

Lastly, we are committed to living within our means, and we are going to commit

ourselves to the income tax cut of 1.5 percent that was in the last year's budget. We are committed to the 9-percent-to-5-percent reduction in small business tax which we put in our alternative budget in '98, you put in your budget in '99, we will implement in the year 2000, or portions thereof, and we are committed to starting to lower property taxes through decent funding of public education and by having a reinstatement of the property tax credits to make an achievable reduction in property taxes. Year after year, people are paying too much in property taxes, and that is a priority for our government to make achievable property taxes in this province.

We have been in office some 60 days. We promised to reopen the contract on frozen food. We have done that. The next thing we are going to do is cancel those frozen oats from Markham, Ontario, paying for that ice from Markham, Ontario, coming into Manitoba.

We promised to protect water here in Manitoba, and like the former Premier, we are working hard on the Senate proposals on the Garrison Diversion II. We are working hard on the Devils Lake outlet and the governor's position to do it unilaterally without any federal environmental assessment. We are working with the federal government. We see ourselves as one team to protect our water with the federal government, and we are working to pass a law on banning the sale of bulk water as an environmental measure that we know will be very, very important for the future of this province. I hope all members will join us next week in supporting a measure to protect the sovereignty of our water and the sovereignty of that resource here in Manitoba.

We announced strategies on the cancer waiting lists, and we have announced financial support for the cancer waiting lists. We recognize that a family waiting for treatment is in a horrific situation, the horrible situation when you know every day that goes by is another day where the disease can spread, and every day that goes by we have to find a way to lower that waiting time for treatment. Obviously we are using unusual measures with the support for transfer of patients, but over the next period of time, with more technologists hired and more



people that are hired to work with the doctors, we hope to lower the trauma by lowering the waiting lists.

We have announced the prostate cancer centre. We have announced \$1-million support for capital. We made a separate election promise on the brachy therapy programs, and we have also introduced ideas for educating men on cancer and prostate cancer and the need for early detection and early testing, as again a preventative measure.

We think that educating people on prostate cancer or advertising the comprehensive Breast Screening Program that has been transferred to the St. Boniface Hospital, we think that advertising for those programs and education programs of First Nations communities to prevent disease or early detection of disease, we are going to put our advertising budget in health care to those measures as opposed to image advertising that tells everybody what a great plan we have. We do not want to tell people what a great plan we have; we want people to access the health care system at the earliest possible moment to get the earliest possible treatment. That will be our efforts in keeping our promise.

Mr. Speaker, we have initiated measures on hallway medicine, and I have already talked about beds and nurses. We have initiated and reduced the number of health authorities from two to one and reduced the number of vice-presidents from 13 on down.

We have implemented Grade 3 tests at the beginning of the year to be used, a novel idea, as a learning opportunity between teachers and parents. As a parent of a Grade 3 child last year, I would like to have a test of my daughter's education at the beginning of the year, so the teacher and I as a parent can sit down with my child and have a plan throughout the whole year. The purpose of testing is assessment and the purpose of assessment is to learn, and that is what we have implemented.

Mr. Speaker, we have cancelled YNN in the school curriculum, and we are proud of that. Let me tell you the reason why. How can we afford another hour a week of school curriculum to go into commercial television? [interjection] I have

seen the commercials. Let me explain this to members opposite. One hour used a week for commercial television is one hour less for basics, one hour less for arts, one hour less for phys ed, one hour less for Canadian history. We are going to spend that hour on basics, on Canadian history, on arts and on phys ed and on kids. Let the Tories spend their time on corporate television.

We are proud of the fact that we are working in an all-party way on agriculture. We have implemented some negotiations with the Bostrom committee on gaming, and I am proud of the fact that we have announced Mr. Chartrand and Ms. Whitecloud to be the two commissioners on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. Eleven years of gathering dust, Mr. Speaker. We fulfilled the promise within 60 days.

We are still working on measures to improve democracy in Manitoba with legislation that we will introduce. We are working on new relationships with all Manitobans, particularly our Metis and First Nations people. Mr. Speaker, we believe that Manitobans are optimistic. They want to work together for the benefit of all of our citizens. They do not want to have a community that is divisive. They do not want a government that is in conflict. They want people to work together.

Mr. Speaker, they also want a strong Canada. I made it clear today to the Prime Minister of Canada and to Canada itself that this government and this Legislature, I would believe, supports the Prime Minister in implementing the Supreme Court decision to have a clear question in any future referendum in this country. I support the Prime Minister in this regard. I have read Rene Levesque's book, where they developed the question out of focus groups to develop ambiguity. Democracy is not ambiguity. Democracy is clear questions and clear choices, and we support the leadership of the Prime Minister in this regard.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that the next century is Manitoba's century. We have the people. We have the natural beauty of our lakes and our rivers and our fields and our forests. We have the energy. We have the ideas. We have the co-operative spirit. We have had a hundred

years of results by working together, and the next hundred years is our century. We have an energetic group of MLAs in this Legislature, and we promise to be energetic, to get up every morning on behalf of all Manitobans.

We believe that we should approach government with a can-do approach for people, and we will be a can-do approach of government

for the people of this province. I urge members to join us in a stronger Manitoba and join us in supporting the Speech from the Throne today. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 12 noon, I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**December 9, 1999**

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