



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
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PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
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REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
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TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 20, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement for the House.

It is an accepted fact and a source of pride that one of Manitoba's greatest assets is the multicultural diversity of our citizens. We are a community of many heritages and many origins, working together to build a better future for our children. This has been the story of our province's history, and it is the foundation on which our hopes for tomorrow rest.

To continue realizing the benefits of Manitoba's ethnic diversity, we have recognized the necessity of creating a process to strengthen the working relationship between Government and Manitoba's ethnocultural communities. The Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council Act, which was passed through the Legislature earlier this year, provided the basis for the establishment of a 21-seat volunteer multicultural council to provide advice and advocacy to government on issues of importance to the ethnocultural community.

I am pleased to announce that with the assistance of more than 200 ethnocultural organizations we have completed the elections and selections of Manitobans to serve on the new council. The council members represent an impressive cross-section of Manitoba's cultural diversity and bring a wealth of professional experiences and volunteer insights as they accept this important challenge.

Our council members are: Shirley Mar, Alfina Grande, Glen McIvor, Chris Reddy, John

Jack, Zofia de Witt, Beatrice Watson, Dr. Madhukar Gupta, Christina Semaniuk, Valerie Hoshizaki-Nordin, Rose Tilbrook, Michael Barry Lazar, Randolph Gorvie, Graham Buckingham, Jackie Dolynchuk, Dr. K.C. Asagwara, Dr. Romulo F. Magsino, Youssef Bezzahou, Harjeet Kahlon, Kana Mahadavan and John Cardoso. These Manitobans will represent our ethnocultural community, providing information, advice and recommendations to me on all ethnocultural matters, including anti-racism, education, human rights, immigration, settlement, heritage and cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council reflects the belief of Manitobans and this Government in the value of preserving, promoting and strengthening our multicultural diversity. Together the council, Manitobans, and this Government will ensure the ethnocultural richness of our province continues to be a source of pride and strength on our journey through the 21st century. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forth this minister's statement today in regard to the Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council that I think has been asked for for quite a long time by the various multicultural communities here in Manitoba.

* (13:35)

It is true, as the member said, that we do enjoy one of the greatest assets of our province and that is the diversity of our multicultural communities. The resources, the abilities, the strengths, the sense of community of contribution to Manitoba's mosaic is something, I think, that we should all be very, very proud of. An advocacy group that is mentioned here, formation by the minister is something that can have a very positive influence on this Government's direction in regard to legislation, the rules, the regulations that they are passing. The

advocacy group, with their input and their consultation through the minister, is something I think that all Manitobans will benefit from.

So we will be watching very closely as this advocacy group goes through government as to what they are promoting, what they are looking for out of government. I do congratulate the Government on finally organizing and getting the group going. As mentioned, I believe, in the act, they will be meeting at least four times a year. I will look forward to the minister advising me when the council meets and also sharing the results with this Chamber.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask for leave to speak on the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate those who were chosen to be on the multicultural council. I think this is a body which can play an important role. I think it is also worthy of note that not all those who are deserving were chosen or elected in one way or another to be on this council, and that it is very important that this council be sensitive to, listen to and consult with other communities who are not necessarily represented here. I think it is also very important that, as the council does its work, it have a clearer mandate than was initially given it and with real input into what happens in this province. I hope that we will see that evolution over time.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable Minister of Family Services, I would just like to remind all members when tabling you should have a copy for leaders of the parties and the Speaker. When making the ministerial statements, when you bring forward the copies, there should be a copy for the leaders of the parties, the Speaker and Manitoba practice has been to provide a copy for the House leaders, the Whips and the critic. So I would just like to

remind all honourable members to bring enough copies.

National Child Day

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the House in regard to the numbers. My error, I am sorry.

I rise in celebration of National Child Day. We celebrate children not only for the joy and learning they bring us but also the hope they bring us for the future. Instinctively, I think all of us know that a child's early experiences play a role throughout his or her life. Research has established this beyond any question.

* (13:40)

The 1999 early years report, McCain and Mustard, that was in Ontario, stated that conception to school age is the most critical time for brain development. A report indicates that this is the critical time for development of emotional control, habitual ways of responding, peer social skills, language and cognitive skills.

As early as 1995, Dr. Brian Postl recognized this fact and recommended, among other things, the co-ordination of services for prenatal support programs for women, with a focus on nutrition support. I am pleased to say that the federal government and governments across Canada have begun to act on this research and on what we knew already. We acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of the federal government to support Manitoba's early childhood initiatives. We have begun to work together across departments and across governments to support early child development throughout our country.

In Manitoba, the departments of Health, Education, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Justice, Status of Women, Culture and Family Services and Housing have joined together to create Healthy Child Manitoba. In partnership with communities and families, we have established parent-child coalitions across the province. Parent-child centred activities are being established, which promote positive parenting, literacy, good nutrition and provide parents with an opportunity to meet one another.

We have initiated the Healthy Baby program, the first of its kind in Canada. This

program funds nutrition programs for pregnant women across our province, along with an income supplement to ensure that babies get the best possible start to their life.

We have returned the National Child Benefit Supplement to children age six and under who live in families that receive Employment and Income Assistance.

We have enhanced the Child Day Care Program with a 27% increase over two years. This increased support enhanced wages for our workforce, funded more licensed spaces and integrated more children with disabilities into our child care settings.

In addition, we have expanded programs brought in by the previous government, including Baby First, EarlyStart and STOP FAS. These programs continue to be effective in providing support and intervention to at-risk families.

Through all of these programs, we have embraced the principle of inclusion for children with special needs. A draft report today announced by the Canadian Council on Social Development demonstrates that we must ensure that we are inclusive in all that we do for our children.

Clearly we have more work to do, but I know that we do have the support of all members in working with families and communities to give our children the best possible start in their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I want to thank the Minister of Family Services for rising today in this House and making a ministerial statement on National Child Day. I do not think there is anyone in this House who would disagree that our children are our future. Any opportunity to ensure that our children get off to a good start in life as infants will only enhance their ability to grow, thrive, develop, learn, graduate, work and pay taxes. It is a circle that we certainly want to encourage. We all know that we do need a good tax base in order to deliver the programs that government needs to deliver.

I know that when we were in government, and as the Minister of Family Services, we did initiate and undertake several new programs that looked at the whole concept of early child development. I am pleased to see that the Government is continuing to build on some of those programs. I know that they have put more money into child care, and I laud that approach.

One group within our community that this Government has not addressed is those mothers that choose to stay at home and parent their children. We do need day care and adequate day care facilities. During the last election campaign, we made a commitment to provide support through the way of tax relief for families that chose to have one parent stay at home and not enter the workforce so that they could care for and nurture their children. Many families would choose that option if they had the opportunity to do so. So we will continue to support that kind of policy on this side of the House.

* (13:45)

I would encourage the Government to take a serious look at implementing some initiatives that would allow for the natural mother or father in a family situation to be able to stay at home if they chose to do so. We all know families that have parents who are there and attentive are likely to grow and thrive in a very positive way. I thank the Minister of Family Services for the statement, and I look forward to some action on some of the areas they have not addressed today. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to speak on the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, children are very, very important to all of us and making sure we have a strong future for the children in Manitoba is absolutely essential. I think that we can look at the work which the minister has referred to, the studies done and described by Dr. Fraser Mustard, a well-known researcher, and agree with the fundamental concept of trying to provide better

supports for the children in this province, so that children, when they grow up in their adolescent years and as adults have a better chance and a better opportunity to contribute to Manitoba and to the world.

Even knowing this, one of the fundamental concepts that Doctor Mustard has championed is doing the research, measuring the results, looking at the outcomes to making sure that things actually work. There is probably no better example of a good idea gone awry than the situation in adult education in this province.

I speak to the minister to say make sure you have in place the clear goals, make sure you are measuring the outcomes that you can deliver the results, because that is what we will be looking for.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I am pleased to rise today to table the following reports, copies of which have previously been distributed: the Office of the Fire Commissioner 2000-2001 Annual Report; and the Annual Report 2000-2001 for Labour and Immigration.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the following annual reports, copies of which have been previously distributed: the 2000-2001 Annual Report of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; 2000-2001 Annual Report of the Vital Statistics Agency; 2000-2001 Annual Report of The Property Registry Agency; 2000-2001 Annual Report of the Companies Office; 2000-2001 Annual Report of the Manitoba Securities Commission; 2000 Annual Report of the Residential Tenancies Branch; and 2000 Annual Report of the Residential Tenancies Commission.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Agassiz School Division Adult Learning Centres—Funding

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, delegated authority is a process contained in the General Manual of

Administration for things like small hospitality grants, tendered contracts, emergency purposes, and there are strict limits on the dollar amount that can be flowed under the authority of the General Manual of Administration.

Can the minister confirm that he or his deputy has delegated authority of the magnitude to flow half a million dollars to Agassiz School Division?

*(13:50)

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): As I have said so often in the House in the last number of days, I do accept the criticisms and recommendations of the Provincial Auditor's report. I am quite certain that the Provincial Auditor, in his thorough report on this particular matter would have flagged that issue. I again defer to the audited report and accept responsibility for decisions that were made as well as responsibility for undertaking the recommendations that the Provincial Auditor makes to improve the system further, a system that the Provincial Auditor notes this Government is making progress on.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Delegated Authority

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a copy of a page indicating the delegated authority that ministers have. The minister now has before him the schedule indicating the delegated authority granted to ministers and deputy ministers. Can he tell me by this table where he has the delegated authority to fund half a million dollars to a school division under that provision of delegated authority?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I again defer to the Provincial Auditor's report. Global funding for the system, of course, is approved by Treasury Board and Cabinet. Funding for individual school divisions is delegated authority in The Public Schools Act. This particular decision was made in support of the education of children, something that was acknowledged in the Provincial Auditor's report. The Provincial Auditor has criticized the method of payment. I

accept that criticism. We accept the Provincial Auditor's review, as well as his assessment that this Government is making significant progress and improvements to the system of adult learning centres in this province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would ask the minister to focus on that page of delegated authority that is before him. Has he been given approval for delegated authority that exceeds what is in the manual of administration?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, a number of months ago this Government undertook to engage the services of the Provincial Auditor to get to the bottom of a situation which quite apparently, as was made apparent by the Provincial Auditor, was out of control. I defer to the Provincial Auditor's judgment on these matters. I accept the Provincial Auditor's criticisms on these matters and I expect—respect—and we will be acting as a government on the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor.

Agassiz School Division Adult Learning Centres—Funding

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Obviously the Minister of Education refuses to answer the questions. We have seen time and time again, though, that when he does answer questions, he is all over the map. Today, on CJOB, the minister indicated that his deputy approved half a million dollars in funding to Agassiz School Division in an inappropriate fashion. Mr. Speaker, did the deputy approve that money without the minister's knowledge?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I have confidence and respect for my deputy minister. As a government, we have engaged actively in supporting the public education system, both from a fiscal point of view and from a leadership point of view.

The decisions regarding adult learning centres in this province have been very, very difficult. This has been a very challenging situation. I note in the same interview to which the member refers—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. It was a very straightforward question. We would like a straightforward answer from this minister.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education and Training, on the same point of order.

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe I said that I have full confidence in the deputy.

* (13:55)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all ministers that *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and to not provoke debate.

So the honourable minister has concluded his comment.

* * *

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Delegated Authority

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): My direct question to the Minister of Education is: Is it normal practice within his department for the deputy minister to have delegated authority to approve half a million dollars in support to a school division without the minister's knowledge?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Speaker, there is not much about this whole issue that is normal practice. We have a situation where millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money are invested in an adult learning centre program with no provisions for accountability, no legislative framework to support it, something, incidentally—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate.

Mr. Speaker, all too long this minister keeps dragging on when he has been asked straightforward questions.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the Opposition is apparently trying to shut down the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), in being forthcoming and explaining entirely all the situation. I think, in the interest of public knowledge, it is important to allow a full answer.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 417: Answers to questions should deal with the matter raised.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Has the honourable minister concluded his comment?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Since the minister did not answer the question, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Education: Is it normal practice within his department for the deputy minister to make decision expenditures of half a million dollars through delegated authority without the minister's knowledge?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, as I was about to respond to the last question, there is very little about this particular matter that is normal practice. It is not normal practice to have \$17 million expended in an adult learning centre without provisions for fiscal or program accountability.

In the Throne Speech this year, we committed to providing adult learning centre legislation in this province, something that

should have been done before this sad affair came to light, period. Since the Deloitte Touche audit identified—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Laurendeau: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. How many times do you have to inform this minister of that citation?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, it is part of a pattern. The minister is answering the question. He is putting the question into a context. I understand why the other side would feel provoked on this matter.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does have a point of order, *Beauchesne's* Citation 417: Answers to questions should deal with the matter that is raised.

Has the honourable minister concluded?

* * *

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Delegated Authority

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, we have just witnessed in this House an admission by a minister who has said—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I had recognized the honourable Member for Russell. The honourable Member for River East, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, there is obviously some extreme

sensitivity on the opposite side of the House. Normally speaking, when a member gets up to ask their first question, they are allowed a preamble. Obviously, members on the Government side of the House are feeling a little uncomfortable with our line of questioning and would like to shut the questioners down.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I am glad the Opposition acknowledges the rule that there is a preamble. It is a one-sentence preamble, Mr. Speaker, and we will certainly hold them to that.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for River East, I would just remind all honourable members of *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2): A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, we have just witnessed in this House a very sorry tale, where a Minister of Education has acknowledged that he has broken the law and he has flowed money against the authority that has been granted to him.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has contradicted himself time and time again. I ask this minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: Aside from the nonsense in the preamble, which of course cannot form the basis of a point of order, just a point, but we certainly have just said that we will hold the Opposition to their recognition that a question should have one carefully worded sentence as a preamble. Mr. Speaker, we are holding them to that right now. Would you please ensure there is

one carefully crafted sentence? *Beauchesne's* Citation 409 says a question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2): A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. I would ask the honourable Member for Russell to please put his question.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Education today in this House admit to Manitobans that he flowed money to the Agassiz School Division without authority, in an underhanded way, which is not reflective of what a minister of the Crown should do?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there seems to be quite a bit of confusion about the policies the former government themselves followed while they were in government. First of all, the Minister of Education and Youth has the authority to provide grants to public schools under part 9 of The Public Schools Act. That is a legal authority. As well, under part 9 of the Grants and Levies Education Support Program, they have authority to administer operational support programs.

Further, they get authority from Treasury Board as to the overall amounts of money that they have to expend in a particular year, including in the year in question \$12 million for adult education programs, and the minister and his deputy minister have the right to deal with those grants according to the formulas established in the authority they receive through Treasury Board.

The minister followed all the legal requirements and Treasury Board requirements and lived up to his responsibilities in this regard.

Accountability

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Education admit to

Manitobans in this House today that he knew the enrolment numbers were wrong and that he knew he was flowing the money, which in essence broke the law of this Government or of any government in this province?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance just answered that question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Education again: Will he admit in this House that indeed he took this matter to Treasury Board and was given the approval to go ahead and flow money in a way which contravened the rules and the laws of this province?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Once again, for the clarification of the members opposite, the minister acted under the legal authority granted to him under part 9 of The Public Schools Act. He acted in accordance with part 9 of the Grants and Levies Education Support Program. He acted within the total authority granted to him for budgets of \$868 million for operating and capital grants, as well as \$12 million for adult education. Those are the authorities he acted within.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Accountability

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance then: Is it acceptable to his standard as the chief financial officer of this province to accept a payment that the Provincial Auditor has clearly recognized as being made to Agassiz School Division for adult education, knowing that was not the case? Does that meet his standard?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): In answer to the member's question, no, it does not meet our standard. The minister has admitted that. The Premier (Mr. Doer) has said it was the wrong thing to do. In addition, we have changed the funding authority and the program so it will not happen again, and as a further degree of assurance we will now bring in legislation to address this question in a final way.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, finally an admission of truth from the Government. There is one honest minister there.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Does it meet his standard of public accountability when a minister of this House comes in here and is asked on seven occasions if he made such a payment and he denies it? Does that meet his standard of accountability?

Mr. Selinger: I have to take this opportunity to commend the minister for getting on top of this issue the minute he became the minister, for moving expeditiously to bring this adult learning centre issue under control, for having the courage to go to the Provincial Auditor and have it investigated without fear or favour as to what the findings would be, and then to accept the recommendations of the Auditor and act on them.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Finance who is the chief financial officer of this province: Is it acceptable to him to sit in a Cabinet with a minister who has not told the truth to this Legislature?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) has properly identified the financial procedures in place, in fact procedures that we plan on changing in legislation.

Members opposite were quoting from radio broadcasts this morning. I heard a radio broadcast this morning that indicated that the members opposite knew that red flags were flying in 1998 and chose to do nothing. I also heard on a radio broadcast this morning that they were aware during the 1999 election there were cost overruns in the adult education branch.

* (14:10)

I would like to refer members opposite to the First Quarter statement put out by the former Minister of Finance, now the Education critic, where he identifies cost overruns in September of '99, a month after the election was called, cost overruns in Justice and Health, no acknowledgment in the transition of an \$11-million cost overrun under their administration.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Resignation Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. On Friday, the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) was asked a direct question by the *Winnipeg Free Press*: Did he have Treasury Board approval? His reply was, and I quote: Of course, we do this as a government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the reporter's comments and the minister's comments from the scrum, because I think it is important that we get the full flavour of what was said. Reporter: Who approved this funding for Agassiz? Mr. Caldwell: The Province—excuse me, the Minister of Education. Reporter: No. Did you, did Treasury Board? Minister of Education: Of course, we do this as a government.

Well, yesterday in this House the minister stated no less than three times that he flowed half a million dollars under his department's own delegated authority. He repeated this assertion on CJOB this morning. This most inappropriate conduct of a minister cannot be allowed to continue.

Will the Premier do the right thing and remove that Minister of Education from his portfolio?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): This was a system established by the former government that delegated authority from the Cabinet to the department, and the department in turn delegated this authority to the school divisions, who then would bill the government for adult education enrolees. It became a system where the—*[interjection]* If I could continue. It became a system in '97-98 and '98-99 where amounts of monies that were budgeted into the '99-2000 budget, the amount of money budgeted was \$6 million. The amount of money being spent when we came into office under the delegated authority, without any admission from members opposite, was \$17 million, \$11 million over budget. For them now to feign indignation in this House and wash their hands of a system they established that was obviously at fault from the very core, I find very, very irresponsible.

The Auditor—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor stated that there was absolutely no system of accountability, program expectations, monitoring, financial accountability, standards to deal with profit versus non-profit adult education centres administered by a public school division and paid for by the Department of Education without any controls from the provincial Cabinet.

The Auditor went on to say on page 99 in 2000 that the government of the day, this Government, has made significant improvements or has made improvements over the system that was put in place and inherited by the Government. The Auditor went on to say that other improvements have to be made. We accept the fact that we have made improvements. We accept the fact that more improvements will be made. We accept the fact that we will be changing the legislation, and we will be doing so to make sure that this kind of unaccountable money never flows three steps removed from government again in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the Premier assured all Manitobans in 1999, and I quote from the 1999 March 15 *Steinbach Herald*: The NDP do not need an ethics commission. I will be the ethics commission of the NDP in government.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier prepared to do what he said he would do and act as the ethics commissioner and do the right thing and get rid of the Minister of Education?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, if the Auditor had stated that no improvements had been made since we took office in 1999 then questions of the minister's incompetence would be legitimate, but the Auditor stated time and time again that improvements have been made to the system.

One improvement, by the way, is the fact that the budget was \$17 million, \$11 million overexpended when we came into office. It is now on target for \$14 million, a \$3-million

reduction from the time members opposite were in government.

Secondly, the fact of the matter is that when members opposite had the ethical challenge to take this matter to the Provincial Auditor, they chose not to do so. When this minister had the ethical option to go to the Auditor in 2001, he did so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members, when the Speaker rises, the Speaker should be heard in silence. Also, I would ask the co-operation of all the members of the House for a little decorum. There is the viewing public out there. Also, the clock is running, and we would like to get to as many questions and answers as we can.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Knowing that the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) forced a school division to falsify their enrolment records, knowing that the Minister of Education forced a school division to hide money, acting irresponsibly, on CJOB, I would like to remind the Premier of his words, on March 3, 1999, when he was asked with regard to irresponsible actions to people under his employ, and I quote, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said: I would take responsibility, under responsible government, and resign.

Will the Premier now do the right thing? Will he either remove the Minister of Education or will he do what he said he was going to do and resign?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor's report, which by the way was released four weeks ago and has on page 99 a comment about the Agassiz School Division, stated the department dealt with this issue in terms of the deficit, and I acknowledged on Friday that accounting for public monies should accurately reflect the intent and the actual decisions. We said that on Friday, we said it yesterday, we say it today. We accept the Auditor's report.

* (14:20)

The real issue here is in 1998 there was a recommendation to go and have an audit of the adult education. In 1999, the former Finance Minister acknowledged in the election campaign there was trouble-cost overruns going on in adult education. I want to tell the members of the public that not only did he not let us know in the financial statement that this matter was \$11 million over budget when we came into office, I have checked with the transition committees, and they also did not tell us that this was an area that we should go after. If we would have gone after this issue with an Auditor's report, like we have now, in 1998, we would have saved tens of millions of dollars, not have this grief with Manitoba school divisions that is going on now.

Adult Education—Funding Accountability

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for River Heights has the floor.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, over the last week, we have heard repeated attempts by the present government to discredit the Conservatives, who put in place what is acknowledged to be an absurd system of funding adult education operating in September '99 when they were elected, yet a major basis for the Provincial Auditor's report were anomalies the Provincial Auditor identified in the African Immigrant Program, which became Classroom 56.

I ask the Minister of Education to admit that the program and Classroom 56 were set up on his watch, and not just a little bit on his watch, about a year after he started as minister, and therefore the anomalies are fully his responsibility.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Of course, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe that adult learning is a very important function of the province of Manitoba and of the opportunities available to all Manitobans. We also believe it is

very important that there be fiscal responsibility in adult learning centres and program excellence in adult learning centres.

As we were moving through this file, upon coming into office and realizing that there was an \$11-million overexpenditure that members opposite presided over, we began to review in a meaningful way the operations of adult learning centres in the province. During the course of that review, other things came to light for which the Provincial Auditor was brought into this process, fulfilling a responsibility to the public interest we were not going to jeopardize as the Provincial Auditor acknowledges.

Mr. Gerrard: I ask the Minister of Education in my supplementary to acknowledge that if he had acted at any time within the first year of his ministry to change this absurd system that was present and put in place a responsible procedure for fiscal and program accountability, then he could have prevented the anomalies and the problems related to Classroom 56, which are detailed in the Provincial Auditor's report.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I can only assume that the Member for River Heights has not been paying attention in this regard. We have been acting methodically on a regular basis to bring some regulation, some excellence, some responsibility and accountability to an adult learning centre program in the province that operated in the absence of any responsibility or accountability.

In doing that, we have been conscious, as the Provincial Auditor acknowledges, to mitigate the impacts upon learners. We accept the recommendations of the Auditor. We accept the criticisms of the Auditor, and we will be moving forward with legislation this session to ensure that such a thing does not occur again.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Resignation Request

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the Premier, I ask the Premier, with the mismanagement of his Minister of Education, with the admission by his Minister of Education that he did not use normal practice, with the admission by his Minister of

Finance (Mr. Selinger) that he did not follow normal standards, will the Premier now ask for the removal of his Minister of Education from his current position?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I have listened to the Minister of Finance's answers to questions and the Minister of Education, and it is regrettable that members opposite were not listening to the answers to the questions that were forthcoming in the House. The answers dealt with the delegated authority under The Public Schools Act. We accept the issues that were raised. I admit I stated that on Friday in Question Period.

There are a couple of real important statements. On page 100, Singleton said that the 2001-2002 year represents important improvements. The member opposite talks as if the status quo from '99, '98 and '97 was in place. Important improvements were made. The Auditor goes on to say that further improvements must be made. We accept that. We not only accept it, members opposite, when they have no facts, can throw around rhetoric.

The bottom line is we came into office, the program had \$6 million in the budget. When you are spending \$17 million for a \$6-million budget item and you do not put it in your financial report, what do you call that? I know what I call it.

Agassiz School Division Adult Learning Centres—Funding

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): My question is for the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance, when he was asked about the authorities to the Minister of Education, listed the legislative authorities that a Minister of Education had. What he did not tell this House is that there is a General Manual of Administration that covers how that minister acts under his legislative authorities. In that manual it requires the expenditure of public funds to be made meeting Treasury Board requirements that provide a schedule of how much a minister can spend without going back to Treasury Board.

I want to ask this minister: Is he telling Manitobans that there is not one document filed

with his Treasury Board that references in any way the \$500,000 allocation to Agassiz that was made for students that were not in the classroom? Is there not one document, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):

Well, I think I should start by saying there was no documentation at Treasury Board on the \$17 million, including the overexpenditure of it.

As I indicated before, the minister and his officials in the Department of Education operated under authority that was formula-based and were able to manoeuvre within that to accomplish the objectives of properly funding the public schools. Where an error has been made, the minister has publicly acknowledged it, as well as taking several measures to improve accountability including changing the basis for funding adult learning centres and then following through with an Auditor's report and now making a commitment to bring forward legislation in this session to tighten it up even further.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Delegation Manual

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): This is very important to understand. The General Manual of Administration that governs how ministers deal with their legal authority requires a minister to go to Treasury Board unless they are within the limitations that this manual has set. There is no limitation that allows a minister to spend more than half a million dollars. If there is, this minister should show it to us today.

I want to ask this minister, given that his manual of administration also requires that the delegation documents be kept with the deputy minister, there must be a delegation document. Will he table it now before the House to show that this minister did in fact have the authority to do what he said he did?

* (14:30)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Once again, the minister and his department have the authority to manage the envelope they are granted through the Budget process. In this case it was \$868 million for the Department of

Education, including \$12 million for adult learning centres. They are granted the authority to manage that resource within the formula as prescribed.

Delegation of Authority

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): In the minister's own manual of administration, the approval levels that a minister has, the highest one that a minister has is \$300,000 for tendered purchases, low bid. Where there are insufficient funds, remember in Agassiz's case, they were over their reported budget. This was an insufficient-fund case. There is no authority at all for a minister to do it on his own.

I ask this member again: Will he tender to this House, will he table to this House today, a copy of the delegation of authority that his own manual requires each minister and deputy to have? Will he table it here to back up his statement that this minister had the authority?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): There are two forms of delegated authority. One is management specific to grants for specific organizations, and the other one is formula-based. The minister was operating under a formula-based delegated authority.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth Delegation of Authority

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, again, in his own manual of administration there is a requirement that all delegations be kept in the office of the deputy minister to ensure that the legal authority is there. If this minister is telling this House that the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) had the legal authority, then I want him today to provide that documentation.

So I ask him: Will he provide it? A simple question.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Well, once again, as I indicated, the department

and the minister had the ability to allocate resources according to the formula prescribed, and if the Auditor would have had a problem with that he would have mentioned it. What he did not indicate on page 99 was that money that was intended for an adult learning centre was used to address a deficit situation, and the minister has publicly acknowledged that was an error and has said that that will not occur again.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, again, this was not a case of just a simple error. This was a case—and all one has to do is reference the document from the secretary-treasurer, a CGA who is bound to be honest, who indicates that it was the intention of that Government, of that minister, to funnel money through another adult education centre when they knew it would not be used for students.

Mr. Speaker, if this minister is saying there is authority for that kind of corruption, let him stand here today and defend it.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I think the member would benefit by listening to the answer. The minister has clearly indicated that it was an error to allow money allocated for one purpose to be used for another purpose, and he has indicated that that formula that was used to do that has been changed to a program basis for funding. He has further indicated that he will now bring forward legislation to strengthen the accountability mechanism there. These are all initiatives that he took to get the Auditor to look at this matter and then to follow and abide by the recommendations of the Auditor.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Morris-Macdonald School Division

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, an editorial from the *Headingley Headliner* entitled "Education minister abandons Morris-Macdonald taxpayers" is a damning indictment of this minister's recent actions.

To quote from the editorial: The minister's solution was an unprecedented knee-jerk reaction based on the fear that documented mismanagement of adult education might spread to the regular classrooms. There was no evidence of this. By taking away the ratepayers' elected representatives, the minister has exposed the current school division system of taxation with representation as a sham. In reality, the Province runs the show and gets what it wants, regardless of local concerns. It is obvious that politics are at play when the minister slams Morris-Macdonald trustees without showing equal anger at his own departmental officials. The end result is that Morris-Macdonald taxpayers, not provincial taxpayers, will now be footing the bill for Department of Education mismanagement. It is highly suspicious that the same department that established the adult education funding formula and lacks regulations will now be the one that decides how much Morris-Macdonald taxpayers will pay back and when, without local accountability. That smells of cover-up and therein lies the real scandal.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Manitoba find themselves with a Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) who believes the department is his own fiefdom to run as he sees fit regardless of the rules, a minister who sees rules as an obstacle to go around, not something to work within. Thank you.

École Varennes

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that École Varennes, Varennes School in my constituency has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. Just after World War II, expanding residential populations in St. Vital meant the need for new schools. Varennes School was one of those schools built to meet the needs of the first wave of baby boomers.

Officially opened on February 1, 1952, as a six-room school, the initial enrolment was 235 students. From 1951 to 1984, Varennes was an English school eventually offering classes from kindergarten to Grade 9. Enrolment peaked in 1961 with 711 students. In 1978, the École Lavallee annex was created, bringing the first French immersion classes to St. Vital. The program rapidly expanded to the kindergarten to

Grade 4 St. Vital immersion or Varennes immersion program.

The increasing demand for French immersion programs led to the transfer of the English junior high students to other local schools in 1982. By 1984, the explosion of French immersion students required the facilities of the entire school. That year, the remaining English education students left, and Varennes became a solely French immersion facility named École Varennes.

By 1989, approximately 20 percent of the total student population in St. Vital was enrolled in the French immersion program. In 1995, École Varennes returned to housing Kindergarten to Grade 8 classes in French immersion. Over its long history, Varennes school has received special recognition and its students have won many awards.

Special recognition for teachers has also happened. Perhaps most notable is Mr. Al Thiessen, a social studies and science teacher at Varennes who instigated the popular Varennes school museum. This vital teaching tool was opened by the mayor in 1979. In 1981, Mr. Thiessen received the Emerson Arnott Memorial Award, and in 1982 he was awarded the Hilroy Fellowship from the Canadian Teachers' society.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to École Varennes in recognition of the school's 50th anniversary. On this happy occasion, it is important to stop and think that past and present staff, parents and students have served the school so well and have made the school the success it is today.

Minister of Education, Training and Youth

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, for the past few days Manitobans have been treated to quite a shameful display from the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell). It harkens to the days of a certain former British Columbia premier and a little affair called bingogate. Allow me to elaborate.

Under the "B" we have bafflegab, the continuous stream of gibberish coming from the minister's mouth as he tries to talk his way out of

this sorry affair. Under the "I" we have indignation, indignation on the part of Manitobans and the school divisions that have been sorely disappointed by this minister's actions. Under the "N" we have nonsense, utter nonsense, in fact, when it comes to the minister's attempts to pass the buck on the scandal to his departmental staff, to his deputy minister, to Treasury Board, to anyone but himself. Under the "G" we have go, as in go away, step aside and let someone with more credibility run the province's education system. Under the "O" we have over, as we soon expect this minister's days as the man charged with managing the affairs of education in this province to soon be.

Yes, it is bingo, Mr. Speaker, except Manitobans have lost out in this particular game. It is time for the Premier (Mr. Doer), as the head bingo caller, to start up a new game with a new minister who can make sure the chips fall into place properly the next time.

* (14:40)

Scout Leaders

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): I rise today to bring to the attention of all members the recently honoured Scout leaders of Flin Flon. As an honorary Scout for a number of years myself, it is my pleasure to announce that this past October four distinguished Scout leaders were honoured for their hard work and dedication to their community and district.

Ron Potkonjak received a medal of merit. Shirley Siemens received her 25-year pin and certificate. Barb Peake received a 10-year pin and service medal, and Sharon Grocholski received the 15-year service pin from the Girl Guide Association.

All honorees have contributed countless hours of their time to ensure the success of the Scouts program in the Flin Flon region.

Scouts offers children the opportunity to engage in meaningful and productive activities while contributing to their community through a variety of public services such as the highway clean-up project which serves to keep our highways attractive and litter-free, and tree planting.

Scouts learn the importance of teamwork and friendship through the many activities and projects that are held throughout the year, and these activities are only possible as a result of the dedication by the volunteers who support Scouts Canada. Furthermore, each year the Scouts of Flin Flon hold a variety of activities for youth, from the Kub Car Rally to the annual winter camp. Scouts enjoy exciting camping trips, ice fishing, outdoor games and sports, swimming outings and other activities. Throughout the course of these activities, Scout members experience the positive benefits of friendship, loyalty and community spirit coupled with a healthy appreciation of our environment.

On behalf of the entire Legislative Assembly, I congratulate each honoree's commitment and long-time service to this most worthwhile and important program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mennonite Heritage Museum Windmill

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): On October 22, 2000, a senseless act of arson was responsible for the destruction of one of Manitoba's most recognizable landmarks. In the early hours of that day, the windmill at the Mennonite Heritage Museum was almost completely destroyed by fire, stunning local residents as well as many former visitors to the museum from around the world.

While museum officials vowed almost immediately to rebuild the structure, many wondered if it could be done, given the uniqueness of the building and lack of specific original blueprints. Yet, less than one year after the fire, on Saturday, September 1 of this year, the new windmill was dedicated and opened on the site of the original structure.

Mr. Speaker, the effort to rebuild the windmill was truly an international one. Shortly after the fire, museum officials were able to make contact with Lukas Verbij, a Dutch millwright from Holland, to lead the reconstruction program. Under the direction of Mr. Verbij, many local contractors participated in the rebuilding of the windmill.

The dedication ceremonies reflected this international effort with the attendance of the Dutch consul and entertainment by the Winnipeg Dutch community. In recognition of the united effort to rebuild the windmill, the Dutch flag flew alongside the Canadian flag on September 1.

Mr. Speaker, through the determination of staff, volunteers and local and international craftsmen, the most recognizable feature of the museum is once again on display. It is another example of the determination of area residents and their ability to overcome challenges. Everyone involved with the reconstruction of the windmill is to be commended on making what seemed impossible a reality.

Mr. Speaker: That is the fifth members' statement. We have already had five. We are allowed five a day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I am rising under Rule 2.(7), which permits the Government House Leader to interrupt the debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne for up to three days to call government business. I am interrupting the Throne Speech Debate today in order to deal with second reading of Bill 2, The Security Management (Various Acts Amended) Act. I would therefore ask that, under Orders of the Day, Bill 2 be called for second reading.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Security Management (Various Acts Amended) Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 2, The Security Management (Various Acts Amended) Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, all the available intelligence certainly indicates that Manitoba is a low risk in terms of terrorist activity. Nonetheless, we must be constantly vigilant. We must bring to bear a new lens on what we can do as a provincial jurisdiction to both prevent terrorist activity and respond in as efficient a way as possible.

We recognize that the primary role in respect of terrorism does, by way of the Constitution, rest with the federal government. Examples are aeronautics, even, for example, security check-in at the airports; national defence; the Criminal Code; immigration; of course, customs; international trade. Those are some examples. It is indeed, I think, very good to have national standards when it comes to threats to national security and, as well, ensure that, by way of the law enforcement agencies that come under the jurisdiction of the federal government, notably the RCMP and CSIS, we have that national networking.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to acknowledge that there are many provincial laws in place that can be very useful in both preventing terrorist activity and responding. There are, beyond that, even many more protocols in place.

This Province has had some unfortunate issues to deal with in terms of emergency events. In particular, of course, our long-standing challenge of dealing with floods in this province has ensured that we do have effective mechanisms in place to respond to emergency situations of whatever kind. As well, in preparation for the Y2K matter, there were new initiatives undertaken and new linkages in networks put in place.

* (14:50)

So, Mr. Speaker, we are well positioned in this province to move ahead employing, as I described it, this new lens. We have asked ourselves a difficult question, recognizing that it is indeed very difficult to think like a terrorist. We have asked of ourselves: What can we do differently? I commend the Opposition party leaders for their involvement in the all-party task force, and we asked them. It is a difficult question to answer.

Many of the changes that are set out in this bill are therefore not surprisingly from those who work on the front lines of emergency measures and in areas of administration that deal with the emergencies that we have experienced in Manitoba. We will continue to be vigilant with regard to what changes in law should be brought into this Legislature. We will be increasingly vigilant by way of the new tools of a new co-operative movement across not just all the lines of authority within this province, but across the country. For example, Mr. Speaker, next week I will be attending a meeting of the ministers responsible for justice in Canada, and the primary, if not the sole-agenda item, is responding to terrorism. We will be very proud as one jurisdiction to talk about the changes that we have introduced into this Legislature, and which we seek approval for, but we will hear from other jurisdictions what they have discovered using the new lens.

This is a new reality, Mr. Speaker. We are asking questions of ourselves that we never thought would be relevant before September 11. I suspect, therefore, that the legislation that has been introduced by way of Bill 2 will be just a beginning. I believe this will be an ongoing process with the idea of sharing what is happening out there. I anticipate we will have further changes if not to legislation certainly to protocol.

The legislation, by and large, clarifies roles and responsibilities. It does impose some new requirements on the citizens of Manitoba to ensure that we have a system that is based on integrity in terms of reducing the risks of terrorist activity, recognizing that this is no time for uncertainty in the law. So we certainly look forward to the insights of members of this House and others from the public to ensure that we have the strongest bill possible.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 2 contains amendments to nine acts involving responsibilities under seven ministers, and so it is my role as House Leader to usher this legislation through, this omnibus legislation through, recognizing, of course, that the respective ministers will be accountable for the amendments and will be available to answer questions as it respects the acts under their departments.

A part of the new omnibus security bill includes provisions for amendment of The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, we wanted to identify installations and activities that were vulnerable and that might be used as a means to harming our citizens. As part of our modern lifestyle, there are a number of commodities which are transported, stored and used throughout the province which could if misused cause substantial harm. Gasoline is an obvious example, but chemicals that are used in industrial processes and agricultural chemicals are also found in many areas of Manitoba. There are also a number of industrial by-products, as well as consumer products even, that become hazardous waste, and these too could cause harm.

The dangerous goods and hazardous wastes are presently regulated under this act. The act permits the Province to require emergency response plans, and a number of facilities and activities are covered by such plans. These plans are by their very nature reactive, how to deal with spills, fires and so forth. Their preventative aspect generally deals with technical safeguards to prevent leaks, spills and fires rather than preventing someone from tampering with the operation.

Unfortunately, this latter possibility is a dimension of security that is now part of our everyday lives.

We are proposing to add three new sections to the order-making powers under the act: first, the power to order any person who handles dangerous goods or contaminants to develop a security plan; second, the power to order any person who handles dangerous goods or contaminants to implement all or part of the plan; third, the power to order any person who handles dangerous goods or contaminants to take any steps the director deems necessary to ensure the security of these materials or the facility in which they are contained.

Where any of these required actions might violate the terms of an existing environmental licence, a new section is being added that will override those terms in the interest of public

safety. These amendments do not make security plans mandatory for all dangerous handling activities. Which facilities and operations would be required to have security plans would be determined by assessing the degree of risk and the type of dangerous goods involved. Factors such as the toxicity, flammability or explosiveness of the material being handled, quantities and nature of the handling and locations would all be factors in determining which operations would be high priority for plan development.

The types of facilities that would be considered might include bulk fuel storage and handling depots, hazardous waste storage and handling facilities, chemical storage, various large-scale dangerous goods transportation operations, and so forth. The main security measures would go beyond what is presently covered by legislation that relate to mainly safe containment of materials and would deal mainly with access and surveillance issues.

Although we believe that dangerous goods and hazardous wastes are properly and safely handled today in Manitoba and the risk of a malevolent act involving these materials is small, we also believe it is prudent to plan prevention of the unthinkable.

Manitoba Conservation is already evaluating the various risk factors for operations involving dangerous goods and contaminants. The process of determining which facilities will require security plans will be well underway when this legislation is hopefully proclaimed. We will be working with industry to ensure that what is done is practical and in line with what is happening all over this continent in the wake of September 11.

As part of the omnibus bill, we are making changes to The Emergency Measures Act. This bill expands EMO's authority to augment existing preparedness, response and recovery capabilities in areas of risk identified by recent government reviews of security concerns.

This bill increases the profile and responsibilities of the Emergency Measures Organization, an arm of course of Transportation and Government Services, which had previously

been known as Manitoba Emergency Management Organization.

Under this bill, the province, through MEMO, has the authority to develop emergency plans for municipal governments that do not make emergency plans on their own. The Province would do this work on a cost-recovery basis and charge the municipal government for our work as a province in developing their plans.

Also, this bill gives the Province increased authority in the management of essential goods and services. Previously, the Province was authorized, by law, to distribute essential goods and services. This bill expands the role of the Province by allowing it to purchase and distribute essential goods and services with the intention of avoiding price gouging on the black market or panic buying. Local governments retain the responsibility for the first response to any emergency situations, including terrorist attacks. This bill does not change that.

In the event of a large-scale event where the local government would require the assistance of the provincial government, the department with principal responsibility for the issue will manage the event. For example, the Department of Conservation would be principally responsible for situations around a flood.

MEMO, under the minister, would manage a co-ordinated response of provincial departments and, if necessary, request the assistance of the federal government. Both local and provincial governments retain the authority to enact a state of emergency of special powers if special powers are needed to manage an event.

The bill will amend The Manitoba Evidence Act to create a process for the protection of certain sensitive information in the course of proceedings before courts or administrative tribunals where the provincial act applies. This legislation will allow a Manitoba or a federal cabinet minister or official to object to the disclosure of certain types of information before a court, administrative tribunal, or similar body. Only information relating to the defence or security of Canada or Manitoba or its people or the health of Manitobans or other Canadians can be objected to.

Objections made in the course of proceedings in the Provincial Court will be determined by that court. Other objections will be determined by the Court of Queen's Bench. When considering an objection to the disclosure of this sort of information, the court will weigh the public interest in disclosure of the information and the right to a fair trial or a fair proceeding under a provincial statute against the importance of the public interest in non-disclosure. The court will be empowered to authorize disclosure or to prohibit disclosure of some or all of the information.

A decision of the court will be appealable. All hearings and appeals will be heard in private in order to protect the information until the court has made its decision.

The amendments mirror changes that the federal government is making to the Canada Evidence Act in Bill C-36; however, our amendment here is certainly more narrow than the amendments proposed by the federal government.

* (15:00)

First, the federal legislation allows an objection to the disclosure on the basis of any specified public interest. The Manitoba bill sets out a definition of specified public interest. The intention is to limit the application in Manitoba to matters clearly relating to security issues.

Second, the federal legislation will allow the federal Minister of Justice to issue a certificate overriding court determinations respecting the disclosure of certain information. This bill does not contain such a provision. The courts will have the final say.

The Fires Prevention Act is being amended in several areas. The Office of the Fire Commissioner will be given responsibility to provide incident management at all provincial, regional and municipal emergencies of a significant nature where the local emergency response capabilities, and those of the surrounding mutual aid district cannot handle the situation. Incident management means providing the central co-ordination function of the incident

to ensure proper communication, safety and a co-ordinated action plan.

It does not mean that the OFC assumes any of the roles of the current responding government agencies. For instance, the Department of Environment would still provide its role but would do so within the incident management command system established by the OFC for that incident. The OFC will provide this role up to the point where MEMO declares a state of emergency, because at that point The Emergency Measures Act provisions would take precedence, and decisions about whether the OFC will remain as an incident commander will be the decision of the minister.

The bill will also expand the scope of the incidents that the OFC responds to. The current legislation limits the Fire Commissioner to responding to fire-related incidents only. The bill recognizes that the fire service responds to more in actual fact than just fires. They respond to all varieties of emergencies. The legislation provides that the Fire Commissioner has the authority to respond to all forms of emergency.

It also gives the OFC the mandate to provide training and co-ordination activities in the area of what is called critical incident stress management. In any protracted critical incident, the primary resource is the first responder network. Critical incident stress management is the method in which the first responders who are affected by responding to incidents which stretch the physical and emotional endurance of people can receive counselling and debriefing. The aim is to mitigate burnout of those responders so that they can continue to provide the very important function that they do provide.

The OFC administers and co-ordinates a provincial network of qualified and trained CISM counsellors made up of peers and members of the mental health profession. They have done this on their own accord because it was the right thing to do. This legislation now gives them the appropriate legislative framework upon which to base these operations.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also deals with reports from municipalities regarding the level of service they are providing. This legislation

allows the OFC to request an annual report from municipalities detailing exactly what emergency response services and capabilities a municipality intends to provide. This could be instrumental in identifying any gaps between risks identified in those communities and the level of preparedness and response that the municipality is planning to provide. This will also help to form a basis for any contingency planning that is required in order to assess these risks.

Mr. Speaker, attacks on the World Trade Center and indeed an earlier attack on the United States government building in Oklahoma and recent bioterrorism scares have recently raised security concerns surrounding the potential misuse of certain fertilizers and the equipment used in the application of pesticides, specifically crop dusters.

Amendments to the fertilizer and pesticides act are designed to address these concerns in two ways: No. 1, by decreasing the likelihood of potentially harmful materials falling into the hands of criminals or individuals who might use these materials for purposes for which they were not intended, and, No. 2, by enabling government to monitor the flow of certain materials by providing the opportunity for further proactive steps to stem potential threats.

In order to decrease the likelihood of potentially harmful materials falling into the wrong hands, a control products schedule will be developed that will include the existing restricted pesticides list established by Health Canada's Pest Management Review Agency and fertilizers like ammonium nitrate. Further changes will place a positive obligation on the vendor of controlled products or proscribed aerial- or ground-spraying equipment to ensure the integrity of the buyer.

This means it will be an offence for anyone to provide proscribed aerial or ground-based spraying equipment or a controlled product to a listed entity as defined by the Criminal Code of Canada—those are two offences—and three, provide proscribed aerial or ground-based spraying equipment or a controlled product to an individual they have reason to believe will use the product for a purpose for which it was not intended. In partnership with the industry, we

will introduce requirements for the secure storage of proscribed aerial and ground-spraying equipment and the disabling of them when not in use.

We will require, Mr. Speaker, that missing inventory of a controlled product be reported. Security will further be enhanced through monitoring of the sale and purchase of certain aerial and ground-spraying equipment. Anyone selling or leasing proscribed aerial or ground-spraying equipment will be required to notify the minister at least 10 days prior to transferring possession of the equipment. This will give the Government an opportunity to double-check the listed entities list to identify potential problems and to forward any concerns to law enforcement officials.

Provisions will be made for the minister to enter into agreements with other governments respecting the recognition of fertilizer and pesticide licences and the sharing of information to ensure the safety or security of the public.

We are confident, Mr. Speaker, these new measures will contribute to the continued safety and well-being of all Manitobans.

Consultations with the stakeholders in the security guard industry have been ongoing with regard to a standard of training for security guards. Agreement has apparently been reached that the training would be based on the Canadian General Standards Board 40-hour basic security guard's training. This standard includes items such as legal authority, traffic control, bomb threats, access control, including personnel and material, report writing, note taking, response to emergency situations, patrol procedures and other matters.

A security industry standards advisory committee, I am pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, is being established to discuss issues surrounding the implementation of mandatory training, including, in particular, who pays for the training, the grandparenting of requirements, training facilities, and an independent examination and implementation timetable. A further responsibility of the advisory committee, once that task is done, is to look to see whether

there should be other levels of training mandated in the province, perhaps on a site-specific basis.

These recommendations will be considered by the Government in putting together the regulations under the legislation.

Amendment to the governing act, Mr. Speaker, would increase the fines if one is found guilty of an offence under the act. The regulation-making powers of the act would be amended to address the qualifications to be met in the training for currently licensed security guards and new applicants. This is important as a clarification to ensure that there is power in the laws of Manitoba so that we can make the regulations that are deemed appropriate to move ahead.

The act is also amended by this bill to specify that a criminal record check be included as a requirement for licensing of new applicants and currently licensed individuals. This formalizes what is currently being done in practice, but it guards this practice against any potential challenge.

Mr. Speaker, The Proceeds of Crime Registration Act is amended by this bill to allow registration in the Personal Property Registry of restraint orders made under the Criminal Code related to property belonging to or controlled by suspected terrorists. It broadens the definition of restraint order to include orders relating to the seizure and forfeiture of property relating to terrorists, and it changes the name of the act.

Mr. Speaker, The Public Health Act is also amended. In view of the fact that it is necessary for provincial legislation to keep pace with the changing needs and requirements of the province, its government and its citizens, the revisions are being put forth for the consideration of Manitobans. Current situations in New York and indeed throughout the world have, as we have said earlier, brought forward in the minds of the public and this Government the need for re-evaluation of our public health procedures.

I wish to point out that Manitoba has significant safeguards already in place to protect the health of the public. However, it is important

that we restate this Government's commitment to public health and well-being in a manner that we believe will help to ease public concerns and provide clarification. The amendments we are proposing build on emergency plans in place that have been tried and tested many times successfully to ensure that we have the capability to protect the health of Manitobans. The amendments also build on our ability to respond to real threats to public health and the ability to rule out any factors that do not pose a threat and extend our ability to react in an immediate and reasonable fashion where immediate action is required.

First and foremost, I will emphatically state that the threat of bioterrorism in Manitoba continues to be very low. However, we are taking the time to prepare and to plan. Part of that is ensuring that we have the legislative framework we need to protect Manitobans.

* (15:10)

Manitoba's security management legislation provides additional tools for public health professionals to take quick and responsible actions where there is a serious threat to Manitobans from dangerous diseases or serious health hazards.

Now more directly, I would like to speak to the proposed amendments to The Public Health Act, which focusses on two key areas. The first is specific dangerous diseases identified from a list of possible biological terrorism agents. The second is serious health hazards that present a serious and immediate threat to the health of Manitobans. I point out that the dangerous disease provisions generally deal with people who pose a risk to others, while serious health hazards deal with any substances, gases, plants and other materials as well as a condition or process that poses a threat to people. Planned and reasonable first steps and immediate actions and reactions conserve to reduce public anxiety by being able to quickly confirm when there is no threat.

Rapid investigation and information gathering can provide the public with factual information while long waits or delays can fuel rumours and speculation. The ability to require individuals to be taken to hospital, isolated or

quarantined to prevent the spread of disease already exists under the act and its regulations. To ensure the health of other Manitobans is protected, an emergency apprehension may be ordered by a medical officer of health if an individual who is believed to have a highly communicable and virulent disease has failed to comply with the public health order respecting the disease such as an order to be examined, quarantined or isolated. Steps to have a justice review, the apprehension order must be undertaken within 72 hours. Tools for gathering information, conducting inspections and investigating potentially dangerous substances will be available to handle serious health hazards. This includes doing tests, looking at records and seizing and destroying items.

Enhanced order-making powers with respect to serious health hazards will provide public health officials with additional tools to quickly take reasonable actions that address any actual or potential serious health hazards. Some of the order-making powers under the act and regulations respecting serious health hazards and dangerous diseases will also be available to public health nurses and public health inspectors who need to take an immediate action before they can contact a medical officer of health. These emergency orders will be effective for 72 hours, unless extended by a medical officer of health, and may be rescinded or changed by a medical officer of health.

The chief medical officer of health will be empowered to change or rescind any order made by a public health official with respect to a serious health hazard or a dangerous disease. Also, where a threat to public health arises in any area of the province where no medical officer of health is available, the medical officer of health can appoint a doctor as a medical officer of health on a term basis. I bring to your attention that public health officials normally work through education, consultation and co-operative efforts. However, in an emergency, it is critical that the necessary steps to protect Manitobans from immediate and serious harm can be taken quickly and directly as proposed in these amendments.

The legislation is a reasonable and balanced approach to providing the powers needed to

address serious threats and allowing for oversight and review by the courts. It is important to note that these amendments make the existing legislation more compliant with the Charter. I recommend this legislation to the Legislature, to Manitobans. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is a responsible, prudent course of action to ensure that we can protect Manitobans.

The last act addressed in the bill is The Vital Statistics Act. Several new offences are created, including providing false information on a registration or to obtain a certificate, using or possessing false, fictitious or altered certificates or other documents issued under the act and using or possessing certificates or other documents issued under the act for any unlawful or improper purpose.

Mr. Speaker, we are also proposing significant increases to the maximum fines for offences under the act. Current maximum fines range from \$100 to \$200. These will be increased to \$10,000 and \$50,000. We have also added imprisonment for up to a year as an option for offences such as making false application for registration, using or possessing false documents issued under the act, and using documents issued under the act for unlawful or improper purposes.

Finally, we are proposing an amendment to allow regulations to be passed to permit information from fraudulent applications or registrations to be shared with law enforcement agencies and other government investigative bodies.

The bill contains a mandatory review clause which will require that before February 2003, if this is enacted before December 6, each minister responsible for an act amended by the omnibus act must report on the effectiveness of the amendments and the cost to Government. We currently prefer this to a blanket sunset clause as the requirement for a review forces an all-party public examination within a year of the whole bill coming into force.

Mr. Speaker, it does not appear, certainly at first blush, to be reasonable, for example, to sunset the provision for the mandatory training of security guards. I trust that there will be further consideration of this aspect of the bill.

At the review period, the standing committee can report back to the Government and to the Legislature on which pieces should be left in place and which may need to be scaled back or eliminated or otherwise changed, both with regard to whether the legislation goes far enough or goes too far. If there is a need for all of the provisions to remain after the one-year period has elapsed, I would suspect that the committee may well report back to the House that the act should again be examined. That is certainly something, Mr. Speaker, that would have the full support of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the participation of the members and the public in this bill, and I recommend this bill to the House. I look forward to the further debate and committee hearings.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): I move, seconded by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the amendment proposed by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), standing in the name of the honourable Member for River Heights, who has 16 minutes remaining.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to focus the remaining 16 minutes of my talk on the issues of quality and performance in the health care system. The Throne Speech lacked what was needed in an emphasis on quality and performance in health care. The result of the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the Premier's (Mr. Doer) lack of attention to these areas is creating an unhealthy and in some areas a poisonous environment in the health care system.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Why is this so important? Let me mention a national study which looked at why nurses leave

their home province or leave Canada. One of the most important reasons for moving away was the environment within the health care system. If the health care system is a good place to work and health care professionals feel they can make a contribution and deliver high quality health care, then health care professionals are much more likely to stay and work under these conditions. If health care professionals feel they are unable to deliver high quality health care, they become dissatisfied and are much more likely to leave.

It is natural for people to want to do a good job and to feel they are in an environment where they can do a good job. This is tremendously important.

Let me give you an example. One of the first issues that I spoke out on after I became Leader of the Liberal Party was a situation with plastic and orthopedic surgery at the Misericordia Hospital. In orthopedic surgery, there had been an excellent team built up. They had built up the ability to perform high quality orthopedic care of a very high standard. But the government of the day decided that they were going to disband this team and spread them around. They were going to break up and destroy what had become a very high quality team.

In plastic surgery, a critical mass of plastic surgeons was developing at Misericordia Hospital, and it was on the way to becoming a national centre for training as well as for excellence in plastic surgery. For a whole variety of reasons this was a very positive development, yet the government of the day decided to break this up, to spread the surgeons around and disband the group of plastic surgeons at Misericordia Hospital. They were sending exactly the wrong signal. They were saying we do not care about quality, about excellent care.

Now, unfortunately, we have a minister once again who apparently appears to be duplicating the failings of the previous government and undermining the development of excellence and high quality in our health care system. The minister has a choice. He can run a health care system where decisions are made on the basis of quality and performance and the bottom line is achieving high quality and high performance, or, alternatively, the Minister of Health (Mr.

Chomiak) can use personal preferences, personality conflicts and such as the basis for his decision making.

* (15:20)

If we are going to have a health care system in Manitoba which operates well, we must choose high quality and high performance as our standards. The minister must support those health care workers who deliver a high level of excellence in performance, and high standards in the outcomes they achieve for patients, for our citizens of Manitoba. To do otherwise is to be mired in the morass of mediocrity, low-quality anecdotal experience, and personality preferences and conflicts.

As one who has worked in the health care system for many years, I remember working under a department chairman who understood the breadth and depth of personalities which are often found in the health care system. He understood that some of the health care workers who deliver the very best in terms of quality of care are on occasion individuals who have difficult personalities, sometimes very demanding personalities, because they seek to achieve very high standards, recognizing the unique strength of individuals. Supporting those strengths is vital to the delivery of good care. Being able to deal with personality preferences and conflicts in ways that supports the overall goal of high quality and high performance is vital.

I now want the minister to consider how he is presently running the health care system in Manitoba, and the extent to which there is a poisonous atmosphere because he and his government have failed to set the goals clearly, either in the Throne Speech or elsewhere.

I will, by way of example, mention the instance of a cardiac surgeon who is an above-average performer. This is a cardiac surgeon who, in more than 350 operations for an isolated coronary artery bypass, had only three patients who died, a mortality rate for this procedure of 0.85 percent. This is significantly better than the average of the other cardiac surgeons in Manitoba, whose mortality rate for the same period was 2.71 percent. I should add that the

rate of 2.71 percent mortality is a good one. It is indeed slightly better than the society of thoracic surgeons' huge database, which shows a North American average of about 3 percent.

Some might ask whether the results achieved by this surgeon are as good as they are because the patients were at lower risk. Indeed this is clearly not the case, for a risk-adjusted analysis shows that for the patients who were operated on by this surgeon, the expected mortality, based on the society of thoracic surgeons' database, would be about 2.35 percent. The observed results for this surgeon at 0.85 percent are significantly better than the North American average.

This surgeon has been saving Manitobans' lives. Not only has he been improving the lives of large numbers of Manitobans with coronary artery disease, but his technical excellence has led to the saving of five more lives in the average of cardiac surgeons in all of North America. Based on the number of operations, 352, one would have expected that eight people would have died, but only three did. This surgeon, through his skill as a surgeon, has saved the lives of five more Manitobans than almost any other surgeon in North America.

I want to add another dimension to these numbers. Excellent results may be achieved by a surgeon for a variety of reasons. High technical ability may be expressed in an ability to work well and quickly. This is indeed the case with this surgeon. The average length of time of his coronary artery bypass patients who were on coronary pulmonary bypass was 56 minutes, compared to an average of 103 minutes for all other surgeons in Manitoba. High quality can be, and in this instance is, associated with doing things more quickly. This, Mr. Minister of Health, is important when one considers not only performance, but cost. Think what a saving in health care dollars and improvement in efficiency can be achieved by delivering care more effectively and in a shorter period of time.

I would add that some who have watched this surgeon work remark that he does not seem to work quickly. He is like Wayne Gretzky; it seems deceptively easy. His high quality is

reached because of many years of practice and a very high level of skill.

Unfortunately, because of what appears to be isolated instance, personality conflicts and perhaps even personal vendettas. This surgeon is no longer allowed to operate in Manitoba.

The health care system operated by our present Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) is chasing away the very best of the surgeons in Manitoba. I say to the minister that so long as personality conflicts, intensive anecdotal reviews of individual patients are the dominant basis of his decision making, so long the minister will continue to have a poorly performing health care system where health care professionals are unhappy.

As any health care professional will acknowledge, for reasons which one cannot fully control problems may arise in the care of an individual patient. While the circumstances of care for individual patients are always important, it is vital to be able to step back and look at the overall record of a health care professional. Those who are outstanding performers like this cardiac surgeon need to be supported through occasional problematic times. To undermine the overall performance of health care in Manitoba by moving away from measuring and considering the overall record and performance of health care professionals is a big mistake.

I would refer the minister to a book called *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health Care System*. I would refer the minister to his own report or the report delivered to his Government on cardiac surgery, pediatric cardiac surgery in this case. I would quote from the book *To Err is Human* the following: Building safety into processes of care is a more effective way to reduce errors than blaming individuals. Some would argue it is the only way to improve quality and, I would add, performance.

The focus must shift from blaming individuals for past errors to a focus on preventing future errors by designing safety into a system and, I would add, by emphasizing performance and designing measures into the system which will improve performance.

The minister can continue on his present path of decision making based on personal preferences and personality conflicts or he can take the higher road in evaluating performance. It is imperative that the minister start to change his ways, that the minister take the higher road, or otherwise he will undermine those who are working so hard to deliver the very best care possible for Manitoba citizens. The emphasis on quality of care and quality of performance must be the gold standard. This is an important message.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this message needs to be applied in education as well as in health care. I have in the last week called for the resignation of the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) because he failed to put in place as quickly as he should have done a solid basis for decision making in the area of adult education.

The minister arrived in office with what he acknowledges is an absurd system. The minister, in spite of the fact that he had an absurd system with no fiscal or program accountability, persisted in using that system for almost two years after he was first made a minister. The results during this period were decisions made on the basis of personal preferences, personalities and other factors rather than on excellence of education.

None of us deny that there are tough questions and issues to deal with here, but setting the framework and establishing clear goals and objectives are fundamental ministerial roles. The Minister of Education clearly failed, and he needs now to be replaced.

Today I speak out in my comments on the Speech from the Throne because I see a government and another minister having very serious difficulties in his portfolio. That is the running of the health care system. Once again it is because there is a failure to set clear policies and standards.

For a government which was elected only two years ago with so much promise to achieve good things for Manitobans it is a great disappointment to have to speak today of such disillusionment with the actions of the NDP government in Manitoba.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is only appropriate that you are in the Chair, because having had the opportunity to speak on a number of Throne Speeches in the past. Your having had the same opportunity, I must admit that I have been somewhat surprised that I have been granted the privilege that very few Manitobans have of being able to speak now in throne speeches. In fact it was this past Saturday that both you and I had the 20th anniversary of our election. It is also appropriate that the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is here because I do not know if I would want to go quite as far as the Member for Lakeside has in terms of longevity, but he certainly is a mentor to anyone who seeks public office and sees public service as something that one makes, certainly in his case, a life commitment to. I may still get paroled before I reach the life stage.

* (15:30)

I want to say, in all seriousness, when I was first elected it was a dream come true. I think pretty well every day since that time, and now that I have been fortunate enough to play even a new role in terms of my responsibilities as part of this Government, that dream continues. I have no regrets, and I look forward, as we enter another session of the Legislature, to really what this is all about. It is about public service, it is about debate, and it is about making sure that we all work for a better society.

I remember my original commitment, why I ran. I actually commented this weekend at an event. Ed Schreyer was one of the speakers. I actually credited two premiers for my seeking elected office. One was Ed Schreyer. I got involved in the NDP because of him. The other one was Sterling Lyon. I ran in 1981 because I wanted to make sure that we ended that government's tenure rather quickly because of what was happening in my own community. I say that because I try to remind everybody that one of the key elements that we are doing, I believe—and I know the Member for Lakeside still has a picture of Sterling Lyon up on his wall and worships at Sterling's side every day.

In all seriousness, one of the things I really wanted to speak on as I make my comments in

this Throne Speech is the importance of public debate and discussion, because if there is one concern I have about what is happening, not just here in Manitoba but internationally as well, it is the degree to which we depoliticize politics. We see declining turnouts in elections, the exception being in the Manitoba provincial election where there was actually an increase.

I have seen, even in the United Kingdom, the originator of the parliamentary system, only a 59% turnout in the last election. Regardless of who won supports in politics, I think the clear message to people, particularly to young people, because I know that is where one often finds some frustration or concern about the relevance of politics—the important thing to do is to remind people of what the political process is all about, not to take it for granted, and that there are many people throughout this world who do not have the opportunities we have, not only to vote in elections but also to speak out freely in between those elections to state their views without fear of retribution.

I want to start by saying that, because as we deal with the very difficult circumstances post September 11, I think it is very important that we reinforce that. As we speak today, for example, the federal government, I believe, is announcing some changes to its security legislation. Certainly we have accepted the challenge post September 11. We have brought in our own security legislation. I have said, and I will say it again, I said this a few days ago, that one of the key elements I think we have to recognize post September 11 is to make responsible decisions, to identify ways in which we can improve security for the public, but to be very careful of moving down a path where we will lose the very freedoms that our society stands for.

I can tell you that I am very concerned about some of the provisions in C-36 which I understand may be changed even today, but particularly those that might be used to target people because of their race, their language, their religion, their political affiliation. We have had a history of that. I remarked about this on the weekend when I spoke on my 20th anniversary. We have to remember that in Canada in the First World War Ukrainian Canadians were interned.

In the Second World War, Japanese Canadians and Italian Canadians were interned because of the concern that there was somehow a threat.

An Honourable Member: And German Canadians.

Mr. Ashton: And German Canadians indeed, the member from Lakeside points out, and, you know, we have to be I think aware that in war there is the old maxim that the first casualty of war is truth, and indeed that may be the case, but the second historically has been trust and tolerance. I want to say on the record, repeat what I said a number of days ago in debate in this House on a resolution brought forward related to September 11, the one I know in my own constituency of the case of a family that was visited by the RCMP because their brother had moved to Toronto, her brother. We are talking about one of my daughter's best friend's mother. Why, why would they ask about his whereabouts?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the family, they are Canadian but they are of Pakistani background, and there is no doubt in their mind why they were asked that question. The school, in fact, which initiated this matter I believe has apologized. I have raised this and will continue to raise this with the RCMP, but it shows you even now in the context of September 11 the kind of thing we are seeing.

I also mentioned recently that we have had people in Winnipeg reporting that their taxi driver is Osama bin Laden, the absurdity of taxi drivers wearing turbans, who are Sikhs, by the way, nothing to do with Osama bin Laden, but it shows you the degree to which people out of fear sometimes can react in that sort of way. There is an irony, I have mentioned this, that the Sikhs I think were probably the last nationality to actually conquer Afghanistan historically.

But, you know, it is not a question of Sikhs or Muslims. It is a question here of not targeting anyone on the basis of their race, their language, their religion, their ethnocultural background or indeed their political beliefs, because in the Second World War I believe in addition to cultural groups that were jailed, communists were as well. Regardless of one's view of

communism, obviously, again, in a democratic society it raises real questions about the degree to which if you take that kind of action, you are violating the basic principles.

An Honourable Member: Ukrainians in the First World War.

Mr. Ashton: As the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) references Ukrainians, I did indeed reference that, because we have to stand out, I believe, in this country and take responsible measures on security. But when it comes to C-36, I hope the federal government will listen, particularly to the concerns that have been expressed by Canadians, especially by new Canadians, the concern that they will be targeted under some of the provisions, particularly the 72-hour provisions that allow for detention without any warrant, without suspicion.

I say if we allow that to happen, if we want to make sure that terrorism succeeds, what we will do is not only act in fear on a daily basis in terms of security issues, but we will erode our system of democratic values and respect and tolerance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We must never allow that to happen as Canadians, because that is where Canada stands out in the world. I believe we are unique in that way, and it is up to us to send that very clear message.

I wanted to start on that point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is important when we get into debate in this Legislature that we not hesitate to speak out on broader issues. It is important to speak out on constituency-related matters, but without the ability to function in a democratic society, really nothing else matters. That is why I really wanted to make an appeal on the record for some calm and some sanity and for that Canadian tradition of tolerance.

But, you know, at the same time, I also would remark that one of the key things you have to do I think when you are elected in this Legislature is not to forget your roots. I never want to forget my roots. My roots are in Thompson. I am still a resident of Thompson after these years, you know, rooted in a community that I believe is a model community for Canada, where there is a great deal of diversity. I believe we probably have the highest

Aboriginal population of any urban centre, certainly one of the highest Aboriginal populations, and that is something that I have seen develop over the years. It has been I think a great benefit in the community of Thompson, and the surrounding communities I represent, both the First Nations communities and the Northern Affairs communities, which once again add to the very unique nature of the Thompson area.

I want to note the presence of people from throughout Canada and throughout the world in our community. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was really pleased to see my kids able to grow up in a community—my son is still living in Thompson in Grade 12—where you can experience everything from Christmas, Ukrainian Christmas to Diwali and Ramadan, all in a rather small city by some standards internationally. I have often commented, the old saying is that it takes a village to raise a child. Well, actually, a small city is not bad either. So I have been very pleased with that. I have been very honoured to represent not only my home community, the community that I have lived in since 1967, the community I went to high school in, but also seven other communities. I wanted to put on the record as I begin the Throne Speech Debate how much I appreciate the six opportunities I have had to sit in this Legislature representing the Thompson constituency.

* (15:40)

You know, one of the advantages I think you have as you spend some time in politics is you get to see some history. I have seen some history in here. I have seen enough of it to recognize, and I remind people of this, that, you know, history is not something that is made by other people, it is something that we are all part of. We can choose to take a more active role. I think members of this Legislature do. People are involved in politics. People are involved in their community. Or we can seek to tune out of it. I mentioned that earlier, my concern that too many people are tuning out of an important part of our process here, the political process.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one also I think needs to have historical perspective, because it is very easy in politics to—I think Harold Wilson said that a week is a long time in

politics. Well, you know, I am seeing evidence of how the Tories would like us, a few short two years after they were defeated, after they were soundly defeated by the people of Manitoba, you know, somehow they would like us to forget what they actually did or did not do in 11 years and then have people believe that somehow they would have answers to some of the challenges we face as a province right now.

Now, I must admit, I sat here the last several days in Question Period and heard the criticisms of the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell). I just want to put this in context because, you know what, it was interesting to watch the former Minister of Finance sitting in his seat rather sheepishly avoiding our responses to the root cause of the problem here. Now, what is the root cause of this whole issue they have been trying to create in Question Period? We had a government, the previous government, now, these are the "fiscally responsible" Tories. I have always been a fan of oxymorons. People do not know what an oxymoron is. Right? It is sort of like Progressive Conservative, military intelligence. I remember Marty Dolin used to have a whole list of those he put on.

An Honourable Member: Industrial park.

Mr. Ashton: As with CSIS. Yes, actually I am reminded, it is like Gary Filmon in charge of detection, you know, being a detective. But do you know what? We could apply the same thing to Tory fiscal management. It is an oxymoron. Now, people may say, well, wait a sec, the Tories, no, they were fiscally responsible.

Well, let us take their last year. I mean, let us just start working back here. We do not have to go back to ancient history here. We can go back to 1999, the fiscally responsible Tories. Now, what happened with the adult education line of the Budget? What was it budgeted at? Six million dollars. Now, that is interesting. Six million dollars. A rather modest figure, but governments have been known, this does happen, you know, budget lines sometimes are overexpended in disasters, for example. You know, if there is a disaster that occurs, obviously there can be an additional line item. So six million dollars. Now, that was a budget that was brought in in 1999. We had an election in 1999.

So if you run through to the changeover in September and October, barely even halfway through the fiscal year, what was the expenditure in that line item? Was it seven million? Was it eight, nine, ten? I mean, it was seventeen million, from six to seventeen. The fiscally responsible Conservatives oversaw a budget line item that was nearly 300 percent higher than was projected.

Now, I just want to repeat this, because, you know, there are actually a few new members of the Conservatives, even the leader, who, well, he was running the tours. I think he is sort of a backroom member of the previous group. But it is interesting that they can get up and criticize the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) for what?

Let us deal with what the Minister of Education has dealt with. The Minister of Education basically came in, in the first budget, changed the formula, has referred this entire matter to the Auditor, tried to deal with the mess that was created by the Conservatives. That line item now has been reduced. Yet we are still providing the valuable service of adult education. You know, the Minister of Education referred it to the audit, and when the Auditor identified the situation in Agassiz, responded to that, indicated that mistaken procedures had been followed, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did what a responsible Minister of Education should do, take the problem, deal with the problem and, when there was an error made, took responsibility for that error. Have I heard a single member of the Opposition get up today or the last few days and say, well, yes, there were problems?

The former Minister of Finance led off Question Period today waving his finger and full of sound and fury about what had happened in terms of adult education. Then the Premier (Mr. Doer) stood up and revealed the fact that in September the financial statements came out, and that Minister of Finance did not identify even in September that there was a major cost overrun. Two potential reasons why—there are only two reasons why. One is he did not know, and there is indication he said on the record he did know. The second then is they covered it up. How embarrassing would it have been in an

election to indicate that you had a line item that was nearly 300 percent over budget?

Well, that is not all. What is interesting about the Conservatives when it came to their last year in office—and like I said I am not going back to ancient history here. I am talking about two years ago. I am talking about largely the same party. They may have a new Leader. He is part of that same old tradition. I think Don Orchard actually has been running their renewal exercise, those of us who sat in the House when Don Orchard was here. I have a lot of respect for Don Orchard, but if that is their idea of renewal, well, good luck to them. But what happened in their final six months of office was an unprecedented spending spree. You know what I find interesting about it is now they try and get up and point fingers at us in terms of decisions we made fiscally over the last number of years.

But they were not just over in the adult education budget; they were over in pretty well everything. Justice they were over. They were over in health care dramatically. The Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski) talks about casino expenditures. They were way over budget on the expenditures that took place in that. They were not only overspent by the \$11 million we identified in adult education; they were \$350 million over budget. Now, \$350 million, this is in a six-month period. These were the expenditures under their financial watch.

Do you know what is interesting? They talk about financial accountability. Actually what is interesting is virtually all of the members who asked questions today are people that were former ministers in the previous government. Do we really want to start looking at highways projects that were announced by the former Minister of Highways? They do not meet any known criteria of the highways department but just happened to be announced going into the election. Highways expenditures seemed to be accelerated in certain areas of the province going into an election.

All of a sudden the freeze on VLTs in communities, First Nations communities in particular, all of a sudden in June and July and August, bang, all these VLTs that appear out of nowhere. If you start running through

accountability, these are just areas I know of within my own area. How many other factors like that were behind this unprecedented panic spending by the Conservatives going into the last election?

An Honourable Member: Hospital construction.

Mr. Ashton: Hospital, everything. This is what is always interesting because I can go back to history. It is not the first time this has happened because, if you go back to the last time, and I mention Sterling Lyon by the way, the same thing happened then. They had acute, protracted restraint. That is what they talked about. In the final year going into the election, money was not an object. That is the problem with the Conservatives.

The Conservatives, what they do is they go through these periods of a famine, and then they go on this gorge feeding. Anybody who can talk about dieting will tell you, any expert on dieting will tell people that does not work. That is the problem people have. I say to members opposite that is why they lack so much credibility with the people of Manitoba. For them to get up and say anything about our financial management when their record was that horrendous as recently as 1999 is an absolute joke.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may have noticed I did not go back to other factors behind it. Whatever happened to MTS? Five years ago this November it was sold off. Okay. What happened to the revenue from MTS? Guess what?

An Honourable Member: And you promised to buy it back.

Mr. Ashton: I am glad the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is vocal about the Manitoba Telephone System because they sold it at a ridiculously low price. We will see how many people cash in on their share options. We will see about how many instant Tory millionaires will be made out of that despicable sale. I say to members opposite: What are they doing with the money? Did they invest it in the future of Manitoba? They spent it. They spent every last cent of it before they left office in 1999.

* (15:50)

So what happened is the fiscally responsible Tories overspent in 1999 over their budget. They sold off MTS, and they spent it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the—*[interjection]* Well, now we are into CFI. I will leave that to the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). It is too bad that Sid Green was not around for this debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has been the consistent hallmark of Conservatives fiscally over the last number of years. We have taken on the difficult challenges in health care, and we know there are challenges. We inherited a system. I want to run through by the way what kind of mistakes the Tories made that led them to some of the fiscal decisions they made.

I found it interesting last year when the then Highways critic suggested that we had not spent our entire Highways capital budget. It was underspent by a million or \$2 million, something in that range. Do you know why it was interesting? When he was part of the government in 1997, they put a Cabinet directive out, and they underspent the Highways budget by just the lowest expenditure in the last 15 years, I think. You would have to go back 15 years. Under their government, in 1997, they basically froze the year-end capital, but they did not just do it there.

Do you know what they did? Here is what they did. They brought in the balanced budget legislation. They then basically set up this shell game, what they did with MTS, where they could dump the money in. They were dumping money in like crazy from the expansion of VLTs, but it was not enough. So what they did is they froze the health care capital. They did not put in place the number of personal care home beds that they needed. So what happened is people got backed up into the hallway, and they ended up with this mess, this political mess of hallway medicine.

Now what we have done is we have identified the capital. Do you remember Oakbank? How many times did they announce it? You know, it was interesting by the way, they were good. They were masters. Thompson has been trying to get a personal care home for close

to a decade. Now, the former Minister of Health, I mean, I talked to the mayor, and he could have sworn that the Minister of Health was saying, you know, yes, I mean, we are almost there, we are almost there.

I checked into it. Tories had a great way of announcing things and never doing anything with it, but what they had done is a feasibility study and tried to sell it as somehow it was going to be constructed. Thompson has no personal care home. There is not a single personal care home bed in the entire region.

When we got into office, our health care minister took the health care capital process and made it so there is a three-step process, and if you are on the list, it really means something. I was never more proud to be part of this Government, never more proud to be a New Democrat, when we were able to announce that Thompson will get a personal care home.

I say to the members opposite, shame, that for more than a decade they took a list. They played politics with the list, and they ended up with communities like Thompson not getting the kind of personal care home beds that they require. That is another problem with that side, though. I mentioned the personal care home because what they did is they continuously play politics with these kind of expenditures.

I say that was shameful because, when it comes to health care, when it comes to personal care home beds in Thompson or the emergency ward which we just opened, by the way once again an initiative funded by the NDP government, the first, the most significant improvement to the Thompson General Hospital in more than two decades.

You know what, it is a consistent pattern because Brandon general hospital, they consistently announced they were going to do something, and then they reannounced it. Then they reannounced it again. Who is fixing it up? Who is doing the work? It is the New Democrats, represented quite uniquely for the first time actually in more than 20 years on both sides of Brandon by New Democrats. It shows you again that New Democrats in office are much better at delivering on their promises.

You know, they still do not get it. I hope they do not get it for a while because, quite frankly, as I see the last period of time, I do not think they have learned from any of the lessons, you know, a complete lack of humility. Humility is not the easiest thing to have in politics, I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]* Well, the member says about whether I had humility. I can tell you, after 1988, I had humility. Boy, did I have humility. I look around the room here, well, the Member for Elmwood, we were pretty humble at the time.

Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We went from Government not only to Opposition but to third party. Do you know what we did from that experience? We sat down, and we said: Where did we go wrong? We listened. It took us a number of years to come back, but 11 years later one of the reasons why we were elected to government, I think, is because the people of Manitoba said that they learned from the experience and basically have applied that to what they stand for.

It is interesting, by the way, because it is not that we got a message that we were not doing things that have had huge benefits for Manitobans. I still remember at the time—and, well, I am glad the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is here. Okay, this is a bit of ancient history but it is valid to today, right? Because what is the best success story in Manitoba right now in terms of public finance? It is Manitoba Hydro. You know how they sold off MTS; they would have got Hydro next. What profit has Manitoba Hydro made this year? \$270 million. I look at the Minister of Hydro (Mr. Selinger). We are talking about a significant benefit.

Where does it come from? From the hydro development strategy of the Schreyer government and the Pauley government. You know, here is an interesting debate. This shows how it is good to have a little bit of perspective here, because there were two positions on Limestone. Well, there were three. The NDP said build it. The Opposition called it "lemonstone." You know what the Tory position was for awhile? Here is a good one, by the way. They wanted to buy power from the United States. Actually, the Member for Lakeside will remember this quite well. They wanted to buy power from the U.S.

Can you imagine today if we were buying power from the United States instead of developing Limestone?

So what did we do, by the way? We built it. We did not listen to the Opposition. We listened to the people of Manitoba. We built it for a billion dollars under budget, and we are now making significant returns for this Province, and we have frozen hydro rates. What more can you ask for? A publicly owned asset that gives you the lowest rates in North America, some of the lowest in the world, and produces that kind of profit for the people of Manitoba.

But, you know, what was interesting, by the way is, I mean, I use this as a bit of a trick question sometimes. I sort of ask people on the hydro side, name me the hydro dams that the Conservatives have built in the last 32 years. It is a trick question. The Member for Lakeside will know this. The answer is none. None. Zero.

I will tell you what they did. In '77 they shut down Limestone. We built it. In the '80s we were ready to start up with Conawapa. They shut it down. What we are dealing with now is not Conawapa; what we are dealing with is Wuskwatim. We are dealing with Notigi. We are dealing with Birthday-Gull. We are working with First Nations communities in the areas in an innovative way.

So once again history is repeating itself. The Tories when in power did not have the vision to develop our hydro-electric capability. The NDP in power, first with Schreyer, next with Pauley and now with the current Premier and the Doer Government is developing Manitoba Hydro again. Why? Because we believe in public ownership and because we have a vision for the future.

So let us throw out some of these kinds of myths that the Tories keep trying to produce. I am trying to add it up here. They want to position themselves as fiscally responsible. Yeah, right. After 1999, I do not even have to get back any further than that, they have no credibility on fiscal issues. On public ownership, I mentioned before the MTS fiasco and the fact that Manitoba Hydro is working so well.

I mentioned about some of what has happened in terms of health care. I mentioned in terms of what has happened on the education side as well, by the way, because you know what they do. They attack the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), and, you know, what was interesting, by the way, I want to see if they are going to explain to the people of the Agassiz School Division, because whether the proper procedure was followed the intent of the Department of Education was to make sure that students in that school division did not suffer because of the financial problems in that school division.

I look at our record on education and I look at the investment in the short two years we have been in government in secondary and post-secondary education in this province, and we have corrected in two short years eleven years of decline under the Conservatives. I say to the members opposite that I am proud to be part of a government with a minister like the Minister of Education who through actions, has served the people of the province very well and has done a lot in the space of two years to put in place our vision of better public education and post-secondary education in this province during the period when he was responsible for both.

I say to members opposite it just does not stop there. I really think that members opposite just do not quite get it, and I know the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) is behind me all the way here, and I appreciate that. I am behind him too. Actually, I am usually right behind him as well all the way.

But I want to say to members opposite the next thing they try and do is they want to act like there is somehow a voice for rural Manitoba. This is a really good one. I just want to ask, I can ask this question, I have asked this in rural Manitoba before: What did the Tories do in the 11 years they were in government for rural Manitoba? What has the NDP done in the first two years in office? You ask them and the usual answer is kind of like the Hydro thing. First they kind of, they think about it. You know what? They cannot tell you. They really cannot tell you. Oh yes, there was a lot of lip service, but you know I really want to look at it.

*(16:00)

What I find interesting is Hydro equalization. This is one that is dear to my heart, believe you me. I raised this on the Manitoba Hydro board, I raised this in the House. I was critic. I remember asking Don Orchard, the then-minister, if he would bring that in. You know, in 1993 he said: Yes, we will equalize Hydro rates. Now that is the first thing you get from Tories, you get the promise. Okay, 1994, 1995 what happened, '96, '97, '98, '99? They did not equalize Hydro rates. We get into government, it was part of our platform throughout the '90s. We said we were going to do it. We brought in the Legislation.

You know what, they get up and it is like: Well, you should have referred this to the Public Utilities Board. They could not just get up and say: We should have done it, good thing you are doing it. They had to find a wedge around it. It is sort of: You should have referred it to the Public Utilities Board. To do what? There are only two choices if we had done that. First of all, we would not have been living up to the promise we had made, but the second thing is what would have happened? The Public Utilities Board would have said either yes or no. So what was the intent of referring it to the Public Utilities Board? To get them to say no to this? I assume that it was because they could not set up themselves and say no so they had to come up with a ruse to get the Public Utilities Board to do it.

Now, you know what? This is a big issue in northern Manitoba. It always has been. You live in Gillam, you work at Hydro and you go to the Hydro dam and you come home and you get your Hydro bill. Up until this month, you paid the highest rates in the province. Did you know that? You paid the highest rates. Thompson, somewhat lower. You know, the further you got away from the Hydro development, the less you pay.

Now, I understand. You know, they probably sat down and thought: Well, maybe we can drive a wedge here between the city of Winnipeg and other areas of the province. That is probably what they did. They probably figured there are more people in the city of Winnipeg

than outside in the rural and northern areas. And besides, if you were a fly on the wall in the Tory caucus, they are probably saying: We have got so much credibility; they believe us on rural issues; it does not matter whether we do anything, we just say rural Manitoba, rural Manitoba, and they believe us. I am just trying to give a dramatization here of the Tory discussion.

But you know what? It was the NDP government that promised it in the election, that brought it in, that has put it into legislation. As of this month, for the first time in Manitoba history, it does not matter where you stay in the province, where you live in this province, you pay the same for electricity. I am proud of that, and I am proud of that NDP legacy for rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba.

I love other issues as well. I could talk in my own area with some great pleasure about areas like—I know the Member for La Verendrye, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Lemieux) talked about this. Highway 59, I could run through some of the road issues we have dealt with in the Interlake, the opening of the main street in Riverton, the main street in Winkler, throughout rural Manitoba, by the way, which has been very well received, very good project and something I went out personally to announce. But 59 is probably the best example of how the Member for La Verendrye pointed out that the previous government had promised it three times. Three times.

Who has moved ahead on the 59 project? I like being involved with this sort of thing, but when I make an announcement as Minister of Transportation, it is an announcement on behalf of the entire government. I want to know that the most significant highway project in the province is in southern Manitoba in La Verendrye, showing once again that this Government is committed to rural Manitoba.

I credit, by the way, the Member for La Verendrye, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism for doing in two short years what previous Tory MLAs could not do in I cannot even remember how many years they represented that area.

An Honourable Member: Now we are going to toll roads.

Mr. Ashton: Toll roads. Oh, we could get into their views. This is the same with farm, in terms of agriculturally, we have put more money into assistance in terms of farmers, negotiating with the federal government, than the Tories did in their period in office.

It is funny, by the way, because I have had discussions with some people on the farm side about this because what the Tories do, by the way, is that they do not want you to see what their budget actually said. They do not want to be judged on what they did. They want to be judged by the rather inflated rhetoric of the Agriculture critic because, if they are judged based on the rhetoric, they can always go higher and higher in terms of this. But the reality is, in government, match what they did and match what we have done in two short years. Our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has delivered more for rural farmers than they did in 11 years. Those are the facts. Read the budgets. They speak the truth.

I could continue, and this is because the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) is behind me, and I am behind him, by the way, because the other thing they did for 11 years is they ignored drainage. They did not just ignore it, they cut it. I have been all throughout rural Manitoba in my capacity as minister responsible for EMO, disaster assistance, and it is pathetic to see the lack of maintenance of the provincial drains. I will put that on the record. It is pathetic to see that and to see as well that it makes a difficult situation worse when you are dealing with some of the kind of situations we dealt with, the excess moisture. I think it was actually the Agriculture critic who even admitted this once that they did cut back on that budget. By the way, the minister who represents not just northern communities in the truest sense but also in our agricultural areas knows from his constituents, a very vocal group of constituents in the farming sector, Carrot River Valley—and I say it took a member from our caucus, the Minister of Conservation, for the first time not only to stop the decline but to turn it around and reinvest in maintenance of our drains. I want to congratulate on the record our Minister of

Conservation for not giving lip service to rural Manitoba but to giving real and consistent response to their concerns.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may have noticed in our Throne Speech that there was reference to a northern development strategy and our rural development strategy and reference to the many significant initiatives we have taken in the city of Winnipeg. That, I believe, is what marks us as different from the Conservatives. They will look for that divide and conquer. I think their strategy of politics is sort of driven by the British Empire in India, divide and conquer. They will talk about rural Manitoba, but then they will mess around on the hydro rates, but we believe that the way to tap the potential in this province is to include all regions, not just rural, not just urban and not just northern. That is why we have a strategy for all areas of the province.

We also believe, by the way, in an inclusive government that represents all ethnocultural groups in this province. I congratulate our Minister responsible for Multiculturalism (Ms. Barrett) for reinstating the error to the MIC which was introduced in the 1980s by the NDP that is going to represent that. We believe in equality for men and women, and I say to members opposite we believe in equality generally because, when we have all million-plus Manitobans working together, we are a much more powerful force in the world.

I want to finish on this because I said very much the same thing 20 years ago. I am proud to be part of a party and a government that represents all areas of this province, all ethnocultural groups, that represents women, that speaks out in between elections, that acts on behalf of all areas of the province. And I say to members opposite: Get a little bit of humility here, maybe examine what you have been doing the last number of years. Stop relying on lip service. Stop relying on the idea that somehow people are going to believe you even if you never did it for 11 years because people are smarter nowadays. They do not believe that kind of thing. But take your time because I am quite happy if you continue on with this less than humble approach.

I want to say I am proud to be part of this Government, and I want to finish on this. If I was somewhat idealistic 20 years ago when I was first elected, I am even more idealistic today because I have seen the difference you can make. This Government is making a difference. That is why I am proud to vote once again for the Throne Speech brought in by the NDP government, the future of this province.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): It is always refreshing to hear from the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who manages to put on the record a lot of statements that ring like they speak the facts but in fact skirt them very adeptly. He did raise something that I want to address early on in my few comments. I hope perhaps he will be here to listen to them in his comments with respect to some of the issues that we face with respect to the kind of legislation that this Government is introducing, the issue that faces all of us with respect to concern for our security and remind him, take him on a little history course about what a Premier and his party did to fellow Manitobans with that regard.

* (16:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, simply put, all of the rhetoric that we just heard from the honourable minister of highways, the fact of the matter is I am very proud, as he is proud, and that is part of the system, of being part of a group and having been privileged to be part of a government that left Manitoba in the enviable position after our stewardship of having the lowest unemployment in the land, having some of the highest growth rates in the land, for the first time in 30-35 years bringing in balanced budgets, having made the first payments on our long-term debt.

I applaud the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), the present government, for continuing on that course. How long they will be able to do so will remain to be seen, but that is the simple record, no matter how eloquently the honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wishes to skate around those fundamental and basic issues. That cannot be taken away from me, cannot be taken away from the party that I represent. The people of Manitoba are indeed, in this relatively short-term life of this Government, beginning to recognize that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech begins with and dedicates the first two or three pages, not just the paragraph that the First Minister (Mr. Doer) alluded to the other day, to the serious issues facing us in this world as regards and as a result of September 11. Although I made a quiet commitment to myself, in fact, I may have even expressed in this Chamber, I would desist from the old cold warrior type speeches that I used to make in this Chamber and enjoyed making them in this Chamber, but events have brought it forward that I am going to break my own imposition about that. So you will have to put up with a little bit of history that involves this Chamber, involves the New Democratic Party of Manitoba, involves Premier Ed Schreyer, and shows how events of that cold war, for which we no longer have to suffer under, did impact on all of us in a peculiar way.

Let me just simply say something. I want to get this on the record very early. Regrettably, we should be dancing in the streets, not just in Winnipeg, but throughout the world, at what has been accomplished last week by President Bush and by President Putin.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the biggest assembly of Manitobans, Winnipeggers, marching in demonstration that I have ever witnessed, and I have witnessed a lot of them, was not when the socialists expropriated private insurers in the great Autopac debate of 1969. It was not when farmers were outraged at poor prices some years earlier.

No, by far the biggest demonstration that this city has ever witnessed—I am looking around, but I do not see enough gray hair here to see that—were the all-too-common peace marches, the ban-the-bomb movement, the anti-nuclear movement of the early '70s. Some of you will have participated in them. I remember one notable one.

There was, of course, a legitimate reason for fearing it. We, all of us, have lived for the better part of four decades under that horrific public policy that the superpowers had of mutual destruction. They had thousands of warheads aimed at us and we had thousands of warheads aimed at them. The idea was that if something

went wrong, somebody shot one, well, we would blow up the planet. We all have read articles about how we would maybe a few survive a nuclear winter of many decades.

That fear, that massive terrorist fear which we learned to accommodate ourselves to to some extent has been lifted. President Bush unilaterally, drastically dropping down from 8000 to 1700 nuclear weapons followed by President Putin's reaction—*[interjection]* That does not matter. But he did it. But is that not a cause for general rejoicing that the nuclear threat on this planet world is being dramatically decreased, or were the peace marchers simply spouting off anti-American slogans and not really concerned about the nuclear march? So I say, in the pleasant surroundings of a chuck-wagon dinner in Texas, these two leaders of the world have brought about a fundamental change.

This world is no longer threatened in that way. No longer. We will be threatened by individual acts of terrorism as we have experienced. We will be threatened by individual acts or a rogue nation perhaps getting their hands on a nuclear weapon, but that is a whole lot different than having a thousand of them aimed at you and we aiming a thousand back and destroying the world.

There may be a horrific catastrophe involving a community, a city but not the world as we lived under it for 40 years. There should be some acknowledgement somewhere in legislative chambers of that simple fact. I can recall being in this Chamber when Ronald Reagan was elected. I remember we had the ban the bombers. The peace marchers had what they called "a nuclear clock." They said on the eve of 1980, when Ronald Reagan was elected, the nuclear clock moved to four minutes to midnight. Four minutes to Armageddon. That was the rhetoric of the left. That was the rhetoric of the New Democrats. That was the rhetoric of the times.

The truth of the matter is that Hollywood cowboy won the cold war. He won the cold war, and we now have the president of that great nation, the Soviet Union, Russia, practising three or four days how to ride a horse so he can ride a horse with President Bush on his Texas ranch. Is

that not a wonderful change of attitude? Is that not a wonderful change? Instead of pointing nuclear weapons at each other, they are learning how to ride horseback and to enjoy a chuck-wagon dinner and talk with each other.

Now, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) spoke eloquently about the concern that he has in the current mindset as we are passing security legislation about individual and human rights. I want to remind you how the cold war impacted on one occasion in this Chamber. It was in 1972, and there was an internationally acclaimed art exhibit due to come to the Winnipeg art museum. There was only one hitch. The Russians would only bring the art exhibit to a jurisdiction if, for the duration of the exhibit, we would suspend the civil rights of our people. Can you imagine that?

This Legislature led by a New Democratic Party, and I want the Member for Thompson to listen to this for half a moment, under the leadership of Ed Schreyer, suspended the most important judicial rights that every Manitoban had for 26 days. Why? Because that was the precondition before this art exhibit from the Hermitage, from Leningrad would come. It came to Toronto, Winnipeg and New York. We were very honoured. Our arts community was very excited about being so signally honoured, with being picked as the best nation for this once-in-a-lifetime exhibit of these world masters. The trouble was, a lot of that art had arrived at the Hermitage museum in some instances under questionable grounds.

Had it been confiscated during the revolution? During the war? I was not there, but if I recognized my granddaddy's painting that he used to hang over his fireplace was in that exhibit, and as a Manitoban, as a Canadian had the right to go to a court and ask for an injunction and put a lien against that painting, they did not want to see that happen. So the government of the day brought in a bill that said for the duration of the art exhibit, some 26 days, the normal civil rights of Manitobans were to be suspended. Do you believe that?

I led the charge against that. I fought against that. My leader did not support me at that time. I did manage to get about 13 members of the

Legislature in agreeing that not for a minute, not for an hour, certainly not for 26 days should the rights of Manitobans be suspended for what I believed then and I still believe were a band of criminals in charge of the Soviet Union. *[interjection]* Pardon?

An Honourable Member: Which rights are you talking about? I do not understand.

Mr. Enns: I do not hear the honourable members.

An Honourable Member: Which rights?

* (16:20)

Mr. Enns: What rights? The right to use the courts, the right to put a lien against something, the right to put an injunction in the event that a piece of the art is identified by a family member as having belonged to them, and now all of a sudden seeing it surface after 50 or 60 years and they have credible proof to go to a court and put an injunction against it. There would have to be a lengthy court procedure, no doubt, to prove identity and all that, but the Russians were not prepared to take that chance with their art collection. Easier to ask compliant legislators to trample on the rights of their people for that period of time to accommodate the art exhibition.

Well, needless to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was a pariah in the arts community in Manitoba, in Winnipeg for a while, but the bill was passed. The art exhibit came and all was well. I was among the first to visit the art exhibit because it was a truly masterful exhibition of internationally acclaimed art, but it just shows you the small point that I am making is that, while it is fine for the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Ashton) to put on that air of brave New Democrats, we are the ones who will make sure that individual rights will forever be safeguarded. Their record in this manner leaves much to be desired. I make that little comment about the history particularly because of some of the comments put on the record by the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, speaking directly to what the Throne Speech did have to say about

our very difficult situation, I can only express my disappointment and the disappointment that I hear from so many, and hearing from so many more of my constituents at the unbelievable action of this group and of this Government. At a time of crisis and a time of concern, at a time when we have 2000 Canadian men and women in harm's way, this Government will not support our national government. This Government will not support our national government in its effort to stamp out terrorism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, more and more Manitobans are going to get to know about that. I suspect more and more Manitobans will find it very interesting when their national party holds their convention later on here in our capital city of Winnipeg, I believe at the end of November. We know where the national New Democrats stand on this issue. They are, of course, the only group in the country who formally and officially oppose the efforts of the Canadian government in stamping out international terrorism. Yes, Alexa McDonough has led that charge, and I take it that that is part and parcel of the reason. They do not want to embarrass their national leader. They do not want to embarrass their national colleagues by having supported Prime Minister Chrétien and our 2000 men and women who are doing their level best to stamp out terrorism. What other possible reason is there why they would not on this occasion, in a non-partisan way, support our national government?

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not a particular fan of Prime Minister Chrétien. I am not a particular fan of the Liberal government. I am a Conservative and I am proud to express that, but as my colleague from Minnedosa pointed out in the discussion and the debate, even in that hot bed of partisan politics in the good, old U.S.A., it is remarkable to all of us, particularly in lieu of the presidential elections that just passed, that left the Americans with a president with a large question mark over his head as to his legitimacy, the Florida vote count and all that, how wonderful it was to see how American politicians put aside their partisanship and rallied to the cause of their country, and we cannot do that in Canada.

This provincial government, this Premier (Mr. Doer), this Cabinet, and, by the way, many

of your backbenchers were not really fully aware that the fix was on, that you were not going to support this resolution. Led by this Premier, you cannot support our 2000 men and women, principally naval forces, you cannot support the Prime Minister of this country in an hour of need, in an hour where support is important, something which every other Legislature in the land has done unanimously, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, where they are sitting. It is, I believe, about six provincial legislatures have passed.

In fact, my leader took pains to craft the resolution, not to be offensive to any political group. It was a neutrally worded statement of support for our Prime Minister, our national government, and more specifically for our 2000 men and women who are in the area trying to ensure, trying to support the cause for stamping out international terrorism. To their everlasting shame, this Government could not stand up and support it. Of course, they have a history that goes way back in that kind of action. There is only one parliamentarian that objected to us withstanding to Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust that he brought on the world, and that was a New Democrat. That was Mr. Woodsworth. I have respect for anybody's pacifist positions, and they may well have them. There are other and alternative ways of showing demonstration and support for one's national government in time of need.

I put that on the record because I think this will come to haunt this Government, because as President Bush has so often reminded us and keeps on reminding us, this is not something that is going to be with us for a short period of time. This is something that is going to be with us for certainly the rest of the life of this Government. I perceive this to be an effort that we will be engaged in for the next decade, if not generation. It is not easy to achieve victory in the kind of warfare which is so new and so different from all other hostile acts.

So this issue of support and of resolve and of national will, it is not now, but it will become a bigger and bigger issue over the coming period of time, and the position that you took in this Legislature will be remembered. It will certainly be my job to remind Manitobans on every

occasion I have. As I said, my first phone call I got this morning at twenty to eight in the morning was from a constituent who was concerned about the actions of their Government, or better said, the lack of action by their present Government.

I have dedicated a considerable amount of my allotted time in my comments to the Throne Speech on these issues because there really is so little else to speak about in this Throne Speech. There is really so little to speak about in the Throne Speech that I am bereft of anything worthwhile to say, to comment on. All I can tell you—*[interjection]* There is a deliberate attempt being made by members opposite to derail me from making my comments. What needs to be done and what is not happening, of course, is the restoration of confidence in this province and in this country. That will only come with the restoration of a Conservative government. Of that I am sure.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased to address the Speech from the Throne this year and the Conservative amendment to the Speech from the Throne. Following the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is always a very difficult task, but I like listening to both of them.

* (16:30)

The Member for Lakeside took us on this long history of the cold war. I know he loves to talk about the cold war. I remember the Member for Lakeside as far back as 1971. He probably forgets, but he ran for leadership of the Conservative Party at one time. He was on John Harvard's very popular six o'clock news show debating Sidney Spivak. I had the occasion as part of the studio audience at that time to ask both candidates what had happened to that \$93 million that went missing during the CFI fiasco.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been 30 years and I keep asking him because I sit so close to the member, I keep asking him to account for that \$93 million, and, you know, in 30 years he has never done it. He has no explanation what happened to that money.

Point of Order

Mr. Enns: If the member permits I would be more than happy to tell him right now.

Mr. Maloway: I think both of us will be around in this Legislature for some time to come. He will have plenty of opportunities to give me a full explanation. I am sure it will take longer than the allotted time that I have got right now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I do not think there is any point of order being raised.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: I wanted to make some comments regarding the fallout over the September 11 terrorist attacks. I wanted to say that the attacks on New York and Washington have caused massive changes in our economy and how we view security. Certainly the economy was starting to slide on a more or less worldwide basis for the last year. We sometimes forget right now, but a year ago the American economy was in a slide. It was in a fairly major slide from around September 1 certainly at the latest of last year, but this seems to have put the icing on the cake, so to speak, and really driven home and driven the economy down very dramatically certainly in the last couple of months.

While these terrorist attacks and hijackings have occurred before even in North American, and I draw your attention to the Quebec National Assembly, where there were shootings there a few years ago, Prince Edward Island. Certainly the FLQ were bombing places in the 1960s. These were regarded as sort of one-off events and not really part of any global efforts.

Security always improved in the aftermath of these events but then slipped back into mediocrity. I draw your attention to and I remember back a few years ago I was on an EgyptAir flight. They had air marshals and so on on the flight at that time. That was well known that as soon as there was a hijacking and a problem, the airport security was beefed up and people were very aggressive and active. Then after a couple of weeks, after a couple of months

people tend to forget about what had happened and we got back to our lax ways again.

Terrorism has generally not been seen as happening here, meaning North America, but, as I pointed out, it certainly has happened before. In 1970 El Al airlines, the Israeli national airline, had hijacking problems. As a matter of fact, for a while they were having problems attracting passengers, because they had their planes hijacked, but El Al revamped their security on their airlines and they have never had a problem since. So it makes sense that the world's airlines and the countries should be looking at what they successfully implemented to avoid the problem. I had the pleasure of flying El Al on one occasion. It was a three-hour process to get on the plane, but I think that once we went through the security and so on. You have the feeling you are in a fairly safe environment as a result of it. I guess part of the new security measures that are being brought about are an attempt to get the industry back in shape, to allay people's fears and get them travelling again.

So what we have seen is they have introduced locked cabin doors, locking the pilots away from the rest of the plane. They have brought on air marshals. In fact, one U.S. airline has armed pilots. I do not know how safe you feel flying with armed pilots, but I think that some of these developments have caused people more alarm. As a matter of fact, the recent air crash, and there was another crash over Russia recently, all of these events I think cause people to have some questions about the advisability of flying.

So, if past practice is followed, systems then should deteriorate over time, and I think that these events will drive an earlier implementation of electronic passports. I think that the electronic passports were going to happen sooner or later anyway. I know the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) and I were in Washington a few months back, and we had some meetings with some of the United States senators, the new senators, and some of the officials in Washington. I do know that they did tell us there were tests in place for electronic passports.

I do recall getting a call from an official of the Canadian Passport Office around July 1 who

basically told me the same thing, that there were a couple of tests going on in Canada for electronic passports and that he thought within three years we would be seeing such a system at least being set up in this country. In order to do that, you have to have card readers at your locations, so what was happening in B.C. where they had a test was they would have a fast track and a slow track. So people that were involved in the electronic passport would obviously go through the fast track and those of us who do not have that system would go through the other way.

At the end of the day, what is likely to happen is that the public will be given a choice initially, and you have a choice of waiting seven or eight hours to get across the border versus going right through with an electronic passport. I think that you as a frequent traveller would be willing to pay to do that. So I do not think we are going to see people being forced to do this. I think we are going to be given the option, and I think because of the backlogs, people are going to jump at the chance to involve themselves in this.

Now, when we are dealing with electronic passports, we are probably going to be looking at biometrics. Biometrics simply involve fingerprints, thumb prints or iris scans. You can put these thumb prints, these iris scans on smart cards if you wish, or you can simply put them on the Web, but the point is that you have to have a scanning device at the airport or at the Customs, or wherever it is you are trying to cross. So, as a way of matching up, because if you were to come up with a card, currently if you have a driver's licence with your picture on it, if you are not the person whose picture it is, but it is a picture of you, you could make your way through. But if you are already registered through a biometric, through a thumb print or through an iris scan and that is yours, then any impersonator coming through will be caught automatically.

I guess the beauty of this system is that this system does not sleep. I mean, people will falter over time. Their attention span is not unlimited, and so people who are working in the Customs, no matter—the Americans think that they can put them on the federal payroll and pay them twice

the money and they are going to be twice as alert. Well, that may well happen for a while, but over time there will be a degradation of the system and somebody will get through who should not. So the advantage of a system like this, the electronic passports, is that the passports do not sleep. They are on guard all the time, and so if your iris scan does not match up with what is in the computer already, then you will be stopped.

So this is a system that is going to allow people to avoid the long lineups at the border, and, in fact, it is going to in a way be a victory over the terrorists, because at the current time the terrorists win. If they can shut down our commerce, if they can backlog our trucks at the border, if they can make it so uncomfortable and inconvenient that you have to wait hours at the border to get across, all because of a couple of thousand people, you are going to inconvenience millions of people and cost the economy untold millions more. How you defeat these thousand people is, in fact, you use the technology to make it even more efficient than it was before.

* (16:40)

I heard the other day that there is some plan the federal government has in place to tag inventories right at the factory. So rather than doing it at the border, they are going to develop a system now where if you have a plant and you are producing a product in Canada, they will put whatever codes they are going to put on it right in the factory. So the product will come out of the factory, presumably the truck driver will have an electronic passport, and we will see faster crossings than we ever saw before this all happened. That would be a victory over the terrorists because, after all, they would not have slowed the economy down; they would have actually sped it up.

I am sure there will be lots of problems getting these systems to work, and I am sure there are problems, will be problems with them with the systems breaking down. I am sure there will be the possibility of making a mistake, but, certainly, they are far superior systems to what we have been dealing with up to this point, and, quite honestly, at this point the technology really has not been available.

I draw your attention to Ontario where they have a smart card system in Ontario Health, and they took me through all the stages last year and showed me how they were going to bring it in. They told me that it was the NDP, the previous Bob Rae government that, in fact, developed this smart card system, and they were really keen to do it. As a matter of fact, I think they tested it I believe in Fort Frances. I may be wrong. Dave may know, but the fact of the matter is the technology was not there at that time, just three or four years earlier.

Last year, they assured me that it had, and they were working with Canada's banking system. Canada's banking system has basically a six-year plan to bring in new types of technology, and Ontario was working with it. One of the reasons that they were bringing in the system is they said that they had 10 million people in Ontario, but they had 11 million health cards out there. They were going to test this year in some border communities, Windsor perhaps—they gave me two or three names anyway—where they were going to do tests, because they thought they were going to prove that there were Americans coming up and having free operations. They were sure that that was a big issue, that there had been lots of cases where Canadians had been giving their health cards or selling their health cards to people across the line.

In any event, this smart card system or card system that they had was designed to have I think up to six pieces of information. They were going to start out with the drug interaction information, the drug information which we have here in Manitoba. It is a great thing to have. They were going to have medical information, and then they were going to build on at a later date, driver's licences, when available, and hunting and fishing licences, and voter information and things like that. So that is where that was last year, but that is a very expensive proposition. I believe it was \$10 a person or \$10 a card to bring this system in. The reality is you do not really even need the card system in today's environment. You can simply do what New South Wales and Australia are doing. They announced in Davos, Switzerland, this spring, that, in fact, they were going to put their health records on line.

So whether you are carrying it around in a card or whether it is on line—which probably costs next to nothing—as long as you have some sort of a PIN number that you can access it, then that is probably the safest place to be. I mean, if you are thinking about people trying to remember—well, I guess you are going to have to remember a number anyway, but just so you know that there are things going on in the technology side in health care in other jurisdictions, in all sorts of different areas, and this September 11 development is in many, many ways just a perfect launching pad for us to get some results and to drive this process forward. I know that there have been references made to a similar type of system being tested now at the London airport, at Heathrow Airport, and a couple of other places.

I lost my notes that I made here, so I am really not clear where I am, but I am not going to worry about that because I know that I have lots. I can start almost anywhere here, and I have lots of material. I do want to talk about the Throne Speech and the Conservative amendment to the Throne Speech. In the Throne Speech, I noticed the Government made reference to page 5. The Government made mention of the range of government services that were to be delivered over the Internet and will be expanded as part of the province's e-government initiative.

Now, it is a straightforward statement, but it is also fairly vague considering that most of you, and I do not say that we have all the technophobes in Manitoba in this one Legislature, Chamber, but I would say that we have a good number of them. As the representatives of the people, I think it is only right that you know what currently is available on-line so that you can access it yourself, but certainly tell your voters when they phone you, tell your constituents when they phone in and ask you for help that you can give them some advice as to what the Government has on-line at the current moment and what the Government may be putting on-line in the near future.

I can tell you that one of the most popular services, and I know when I go door to door I mention this to people, and most of them are fairly happy and did not know it exists, is called the Personal Property Registry. Currently, while

it has been live since last September, it is really being used by car dealers at this point because it gives you the ability to check for liens on used cars. If you have cars, boats, tractors or any kind of equipment, typically, if you are buying a car on a Saturday or in the evening, and that is when most people do, I believe, they cannot go down to the Woodsworth Building to check on liens, and that is something you are supposed to do, so you can pull out your credit card and go in on your computer on-line and you can check out the liens and buy your car at that moment and feel secure that whatever liens there are you now know about.

That is a system that was so popular that within three months they had met their three-year projections for usage. So that is one of the good, the positives. I was just going to, while I am on that particular topic, tell you that they had made about, I think it was, 361 000 hits, I guess, on that particular application.

The other really good news story that the Government has to tell in the services on-line would be the student aid system. They went on-line only January of this year. It is rather shocking that 51 percent of all the student aid applications are being completed on-line at this point, 51 percent, with none of the advertising that I thought they should do. You know, I thought they should, to borrow a bit from Maoist thought here, send out all the MLAs to their schools around graduation time in June and have the MLAs tell them about the program and try to get the kids to fill out their applications on-line.

There are a lot of advantages for them to do it. Number one, they do not have to wait three weeks anymore. The waiting period is down to three days; No. 2, they do not have to drive in from Lakeside. They do not have to drive in from all parts of the country, Lorette and other towns. They can fill out the applications not only from Manitoba but anywhere in the world, and it is done right away.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

So this was a really good application. The projection, I believe, is for something like 14 000 applications, and so we would be looking

around 7000 just in the first year. This is a system that the Government developed. It gets us into a different issue now, but Saskatchewan is doing its own. When you think about this, it is a national program. The minister was here, is here, but I do not know that there are that many differences in the different provinces in this program. I will cite you an example of health where quite possibly the Health ministers should be getting together, and they should centrally in Ottawa pay for and develop a health software program for a hospital, develop it once and simply use it right across the country.

We are spending untold billions of dollars developing software. It is great for the software developers, but they have got a piecemeal approach. One hospital has got this, another hospital has got the other thing. If you are going to have a consistent hospital program across the country, then have the federal government develop it once and use it right across the country.

* (16:50)

That is the same principle I would suggest here with the student aid too. I mean, why do we have 10 governments developing a student aid on-line program when supposedly it is the same program. Now, you know, I may be wrong here. There may be significant differences in how the provinces apply it so that they will have to make changes, but the principle is there, that whatever province is developing a program, they should automatically be required to check all the other provinces the first thing they do.

In some cases it may be easier to change the legislation to be in conformity with other provinces. You know, the government workers say, well, no, no, our legislation, because it has one or two little differences between Saskatchewan, I mean, we cannot do it. We have to develop our own program. So what you do is you perpetuate this silo thinking, the thinking that somehow my little department is so important that it has got to develop its own system.

This is paid for by the taxpayers at the end of the day. As the Conservatives are always saying, there is only one taxpayer.

There is another service that is available through the Government, Canada map sales where you can buy maps right across Canada. You can buy a series of maps, hunting maps and fishing maps and so on. That is a service that has been working very well. It has been around now for about a year.

Now, I hear you asking me why we are doing this. I distinctly heard a number of people ask me why we are developing these services. The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) knows, because he was paying attention, that part of it is to advantage people in the rural areas and the North. The people in the North and the rural areas have been getting the runaround for years and years and years because they have to come into Winnipeg, drive into Winnipeg and spend half a day getting here, spend the rest of the day standing in line at a government office and not necessarily get satisfaction from one office, because they may have to go to two or three offices to get the same thing, when in fact they can be through a single-window concept sitting at home on a Sunday night filling out this application and get all the services they want at home at one time. The way new systems are being developed through a single window is that when you apply for student aid, immediately it links to other things involving student aid. So, for example, if you are applying for social assistance, as soon as you finish that process, the next thing to come up would be day care, and then from day care would be something else.

By the way, this system is all borrowed from Singapore. Singapore is a world leader. They have developed a system known as the stages of life. So you break down government departments. The public do not care whether Health has one program. They do not even know which department. As a matter of fact, as MLAs oftentimes we are not really sure where we are supposed to send somebody.

Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair

I have sent somebody to the Minister of Family Services' department only to find out a couple weeks later that it belonged in the Minister of Education's department. Under a single-window concept the ministers are immaterial. It does not matter. You simply go in,

and if you are dealing with the Singapore system, the stages of life, which, by the way, is being adopted slowly but surely throughout Canada, you would basically look at, say, a birth of a child. You would do your registry and then from there you would click to all of the other things that you need as basically a life event sort of approach.

So that is something that is sort of becoming a best practice. The advantage to the Government, of course—well, the advantage to everybody is happier constituents, to begin with—and the taxpayer is a lower cost of doing business.

I remember Brian Pallister, and I remember other Tories talking about efficiency in government. How many times the Member for Lakeside heard it or made it in his speeches, statements about downsizing the government, cutting the red tape, right? Did they ever downsize anything? No. They end up with more red tape. No downsizing is done. This revolution, the on-line revolution, has the ability and power to do exactly what these people have been talking about, is streamline the government, downsize the government a bit, offer the public better services.

I had other examples of why this was a very good initiative. For example, in business uses or business permits, I guess it is called, we have the ability for tradesmen, trades people, who are installing, say, water tanks, as an example, to be able to do their permits on-line so that Monday morning, when they head off to the job to install the water tank, they do not first have to go to the government and stand in line to get the permit. They have the permit already. It is paid on-line, done by credit card, and Monday morning they are on their way to their first job.

The public does not necessarily just look at the provincial government as a place to find services. They look at all the governments. They look at the city of Winnipeg. They look at the federal government. Oftentimes they are not aware that the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) is not responsible for registering the dog. What we are finding is people want to go to sites like Airdrie, Alberta, where they can go on-line and register the dog on-line, where they can do student swimming lessons.

How many times have you taken your child down for swimming lessons and spent God knows how much time standing in line waiting for a swimming lesson appointment and not getting the slot you want. You can now, in Airdrie, Alberta, and you should be able to in Winnipeg, hopefully fairly soon, be able to register yourself, your child in a swimming lesson simply doing it at home on the computer, paying by credit card, and getting the job done.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I think it is entirely possible the next few years in the health care field that you will be able to register. I know that in Alberta there is Alberta Wellnet that are supposed to be regarded as at the forefront of health IT development in this country. I understand that Saskatchewan and Manitoba are adopting some of their approaches. I do know that there are, evidently, clinics in Alberta that are paperless clinics or nearly paperless clinics. They are connecting the clinics with the labs, they are connecting them with the hospitals, so that when you do tests, the tests are available right across the system, if you should need them. So you are not redoing tests. Currently, the system is such that you do a test one day in St. Boniface Hospital and the next day you are down at the general hospital doing the same tests. They do not have the ability to communicate with one another.

So what the Alberta Wellnet is all about is connecting those hospitals, connecting with the clinics, connecting with the labs, connecting with the doctors' offices. That, while it will cost money, should at the end of the day pay big dividends. For example, in some provinces, the amount of money that the health department is spending on IT is only in the neighbourhood of two percent, whereas in industries, in insurance and so on, you have an average of, say, 10% spending on IT and the banks and insurance industries.

So clearly, if we are ever going to deal with the huge financial pressures that we have in health care, I personally think that a major commitment to IT programs and consistency in those IT programs, following best methods, best practices, is probably the way to go to somehow keep the system afloat. At the rate we are going,

I can just see the health care budget just gradually over time assuming more and more of the total budget of the Province. It cannot continue at the rate it is doing.

In addition, Government on-line can provide not only the service to the public, but can provide revenue to the Government. I am sure that there are MLAs here who, if they thought about it, could come up with services that they would agree should be put on-line if they were interested in doing so. I had a list with me that I thought we could deal with, and I will get to that in a couple of minutes.

* (17:00)

For example, it is quite possible that the HydroBond sales that we have here in Manitoba could be offered on-line, applications for HydroBonds. That certainly would be an interesting one. I know that it is done in one of the states in the United States. I think it is Maryland, I believe, that offers state bonds, the ability to buy the state bonds on-line. The camping sites are more or less available on-line now. I say more or less because they are not fully transactional.

There are a lot of examples in the world where a jurisdiction, for example, such as Australia, the Prime Minister, and I say this both in the good sense and a bad sense, but the Prime Minister makes a statement in 1997 saying that by the end of 2001, all of our government services will be on-line. In an effort to reach the goal, they drove the programs ahead, and they are going to get all 700-plus services on-line by the end of this year. They were at 500 earlier this year. They said they were right on target, but when you start asking them questions about what is really on-line, you find that a lot of it is just simply brochure ware. It is simply applications, and every time they put an application on-line, they say, well, that is another government service on-line.

To my way of thinking, just putting an application on-line to me is not really a full government service. To me, putting campgrounds on-line is the ability to get out and use your credit card and book your campsite and pay with your credit card, and that is the end of the transaction. The complete transaction would be

done at one time. Well, that is not quite here yet. It was supposed to be here, but we are still a few months away from finally finishing that. So, technically, they can say, well, we are on-line with campsites. We are on-line with campsites if you mean going into the site, sending them an e-mail and then they e-mail you back or they phone you back and they settle it, and they call that an on-line service. I do not call that an on-line service yet until it is fully transactional and you pay with a credit card, and that is the end of it; the full front end and the back end of the service.

A lot of provinces like New Brunswick or other provinces have a lot of front end services available to the public. At the end of the day, the back end office stuff is all being done manually, being done by hand, and that should be automated, as well, to make it a fully integrated, a fully complete transactional service. That is really our goal.

Another principle that you should think about is whether or not you automate or you engineer. Now, I know the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) is dying to know. I could hear him asking me to distinguish the difference between automating and re-engineering. Automating is simply taking an existing function, not determining whether it is even a useful function—it may be a totally useless function—but you take the function and you automate it. But re-engineering the whole process, the whole part of a department or a whole department involves deciding whether the process is even valuable in the first place.

What they found when they brought in the Personal Property Registry, which was done in Consumer and Corporate Affairs, they basically took all the old processes and turned them upside down. They basically threw them out. They built it from the ground up and built a brand-new system. So a system like that is going to cost you more money up front, and it is going to take a lot more time to develop. At the end of the day, it is going to pay dividends because it is going to be fully transactional, and that is ultimately, at the end of the day, where we want to go over a period of time.

I wanted to go through my little MLA list, and I do not know where it is, but it is around

here. I will try to do it from memory. I am sure the MLAs can think of some services that should be on-line right here in our Chamber. What about Hansard on-line? We print off Hansards every day and hand them out, kill thousands of trees. Here we have in the past opposition members of various governments bringing dead birds in here and bringing trees. We had the former Housing minister from Niakwa who was threatening to bring in a tree in here last year. We kept asking him, where is the tree? So I am trying to give the Opposition some fodder here, some ammunition, some information, some questions that they could be asking. They should be up here asking, why do you not put Hansard on-line and let the MLAs get it when they need it? We do not need Hansard all of the time. We should get it only when we need it.

Now let us look at the annual reports. How many annual reports do I see coming in here every day? I mean, poor ministers' backs are breaking. The assistants have to carry these things down from their offices. I do not know how many strained backs and accident claims we are going to get as a result of this. My point is, seriously, Mr. Speaker, if you take Manitoba Hydro and you take Manitoba—well, we cannot say Manitoba Telephone System anymore but MPIC—I ask you, what is the purpose for developing a glossy annual report for Manitoba Hydro? I could understand it if you are a private company, if you are Continental Airlines, or if you are Air Canada and you are going down the drain real fast, or Nortel.

Nortel has to respond to its shareholders, and there are shareholders in this Chamber. The Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) owns up to owning a few shares of Nortel. I will tell you he wants an annual report. That is fair ball, he is a shareholder of that company. But why are we producing very expensive annual reports when, in fact, we could be putting them on-line, and those who need the reports simply can access them whenever they want. They can print them in their entirety if and when they want them, and, in fact, yes, the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) said, and they will pay for their paper as well.

Mr. Speaker, I have pages and pages of notes here and my light is flashing. So maybe I

may have to continue another day. But I want to talk about a program that is really a very excellent program. It is called Community Connections, and it is to deal with for those of you in the Chamber who say: well, all these programs are very well and good but I do not have a computer. I want to tell you that now you do have a computer. In fact, there are 586 sites being developed jointly by the federal government and the Province. In Manitoba 200 sites are in the city alone. These computers are currently being set up so that people who do not have access to a computer can simply go down to sites in your constituencies and do these services that I was telling you about, do them on-line. In my constituency I have five sites at the moment. One at the Kelvin Community Centre—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to put a few words on the record in regard to the Throne Speech that has been put forward by the governing body of the province of Manitoba today, and also to deal with the amendment that our Leader so graciously put forward the other day in regard to the lack of vision and lack of plan that this Government has in the province of Manitoba. But first I would like to take an opportunity to just re-welcome the new pages to the Legislative Assembly, to thank our interns for the work that they have done since they came in—*[interjection]* Some sensitive members across the way, I guess, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to welcome the interns that are working with each of the parties in the House today, as well as the clerks and members of the floor that do the daily work of keeping us in line and keeping the rules and operations of the House running smoothly as we begin this fall sitting.

* (17:10)

The Government today—the reason we put forward such an amendment for lack of support for this Throne Speech—some of them have referred to it, perhaps, as a budget in a way that they may have perhaps called the first program for economic analysis an audit in the province of Manitoba. So I want to clarify that this third

Throne Speech that was delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor the other day on behalf of the Government of Manitoba will be disheartening to many Manitobans because, of course, it has a very nebulous approach to direction in Manitoba. It has nothing very clear in regard to the processes that this Government needed to deal with, particularly in these uncertain times that we are faced with, not just as a result of the September 11 incidents—tremendous tragedy I should say and call it more than an incident. That is very mistaken of me. This is a major tragedy in our world events of any of our lifetimes, going back into even the Second World War.

This attempt that the NDP has made to deal with security in Manitoba, as well as the financial recession that we are already in, in the province of Manitoba, leaves Manitobans somewhat disheartened in regard to a clear direction that may be needed at this time in the province.

The number of issues I have had people speak to me since the Throne Speech, they were hoping, and begging practically, for some more clear direction in regard to the mechanism and way that the Government would handle some of these issues. They hoped that they would be more forthcoming and forthright in regard to the financial affairs of the province and, perhaps, to the fact that we were facing a recession prior to September 11, a little bit of a downturn in the overall North American economy, particularly Canada.

We hope that Manitoba continues to move along well. Of course, the NDP has inherited low unemployment rates in the province of Manitoba, and we hope that those continue—that is for sure—and that all Manitobans who want to work continue to work in this province and have that opportunity to do so.

A Throne Speech, my view, should have laid out some of the plan and vision for where a government would wish to go. I am going to, this afternoon in the House, provide a few examples of where I think they have missed the boat, if you will, in regard to some of the items that they needed to look at in certain portfolios

and particular departments around the province of Manitoba. I will, certainly, move into those.

First of all, while I am on the issue of the tragedy of September 11, I want to give this House some clear direction in regard to some of the events that took place in my own life on that particular day. We in Manitoba may feel that we were somewhat removed from that particular incident when we first saw it being out here in the middle of a continental region of North American and Manitoba as we are, but we have all come to very quickly acknowledge that it affected every one of our lives in many more ways than we can count.

Of course, first of all, when we heard the reports of a plane hitting the World Trade buildings, perhaps I visualized a small Cessna aircraft hitting a wall and may relate it to more like a disturbance, an accident, from a stray plane, as many have horrifyingly seen the developments. It certainly was way more than that. The first ramifications of it were in my local community. I went to a major business in the constituency. There was a lot of marketing of their product, Mr. Speaker, at that particular time. Just as I walked into the offices, all of their computers had gone down because, of course, a second crash had taken place; trading had been halted. They do a lot of marketing and hedging of their product on the currency markets and farm input side of their business on a daily business, and they watch those markets religiously in regard to the competitive nature of the industry that they were in. It certainly brought home very clearly how this was going to impact all of us in much more of a way than we might have thought.

I drove on back to my home in the constituency, and was speaking with some of the persons who I work with—who work with us on our operation. They indicated to me that this had happened, as well. I had not seen any television reports of it yet, but there was a major indication immediately of what happened. The phone rang, and we had an opportunity to have a brother who was flying home from China, and was one of the first planes to land in Vancouver after that horrifying event on September 11. It makes you believe or understand very clearly how this impacts our individual lives.

I knew he had been over there on a bit of a trade mission with their company, but was unaware of the fact that they would be returning at that particular date. Whereupon my daughter phoned, working with a company in Calgary in the Internet industry, and she stated that she was looking after was Pennsylvania. So these phone calls followed about 10 minutes apart, clearly drove home the seriousness of the situation.

I began to, of course, then wonder where my son was, because he is, of course, a pilot in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and upon making a phone call found that he was safe. His family was fine. But I think this was the reaction of all North Americans on that particular timeframe of four or five hours that took place on that morning on September 11.

So that is why, Mr. Speaker, our party put forth an amendment here, or a resolution rather, to deal with security issues and support for our American neighbours in regard to the efforts that they are doing, along with those of the British and other countries around the world. It is very clear that at this time we must come together, to work together, in regard to bringing an end to the terrorism that plagues our earth at this present time; plagues the world.

Our efforts in that area should have been recognized, and we had hoped would be recognized. We know that everyone supports the efforts that are going on in Manitoba today, of what is going on in regard to reducing terrorism around the world. It would have been a very great opportunity for this Legislature to have individually stood up and supported a resolution that we could have all agreed on that was brought before this House in an effort to show that Manitoba cares in regard to our American neighbours.

I know we have had some trade irritants with them from time to time, and of course we are in the middle of a softwood lumber one now, but they are, of course, one of our major trading partners taking over a billion dollars a day on trade between our country and theirs. So, as in most relationships, there are some difficult times. But, on this particular occasion, it is a great opportunity for us to have shown support for our neighbours to the south, as was done in

this very city a week ago in regard to the farmers coming together in the agricultural industry at the Fort Garry Hotel to deal with an opportunity that was bringing industry players together in agriculture on the Northern Plains Producers forum, that I know the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) was at; as well as had the opportunity of speaking with the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan, as well, Mr. Serby, the Agriculture minister there. Those kinds of opportunities are where we develop closer bonds and more trade with our neighbours. We have missed that opportunity of sending a clear signal, and I think it is unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to tour my rural constituency at the invitation of the Lieutenant-Governor, to be at some of the communities that he was touring in southwest Manitoba last week. At one of those occasions in speaking to some students, the Lieutenant-Governor, His Honour Peter Liba, indicated that his role is not to be the Government or to govern in Manitoba, but it is very clearly to make sure that there is actually a governing body in this province. He outlined how very clear the type of democracy that we have in this country operates.

I would like to offer my comments in regard to the fact that while there are many other ruling bodies in the world and so many other opportunities to have people governed in other means around the world. I would certainly put my name on the line for saying that the kind of democracy that we have, the British form of government here that we deal with in the House here and in Canada, is certainly one of the best anywhere in the world and needs to be brought forward perhaps with a little more vigour from ourselves at times and defended by ourselves quite often in a much more vigorous manner than what we do. Perhaps we should be a little more proud visually and vocally than we have been at times over the way we deal with the concerns and issues of citizens within our country.

* (17:20)

While I am dealing with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to also indicate that you know the Government has brought forth a security bill that has received second reading in the House today

and, while we know that the security and the concerns are there, I would like to also just reiterate that there will be some discussion and debate on this obviously in the House.

One of the areas of concern in that whole process was The Pesticides and Fertilizers Control Act and some of the sections in there of concern, some of the equipment dealers in the rural part of Manitoba and certainly I have received a few calls from farmers as well on this.

There are some concerns in regard to what will happen with aerial and ground-based spraying equipment. I would urge the minister to make sure, as we look at the kinds of security situations that are needed in the province of Manitoba, that we do not wherever possible put extra costs on the primary producer in the country in regard to a situation that is already somewhat a concern economically in some of the areas that we are faced with today. This area of aerial and ground-based spraying equipment, there is a time restriction in regard to being able to transfer possession of that equipment. Normally those transactions would just be a deal between two parties and they are over. We would hope that that part of the situation of the bill that is coming forward is dealt with and is not an extra cost, does not delay the opportunity for that equipment to get out in the field, Mr. Speaker, as well.

I think also it is a concern in regard to what the Government means by secure storage of these types of equipment and the ability to disable them when not in use. It is pretty tough to say that a ground sprayer at least is going to be creating any kind of problem because it is not going anywhere. Does this mean we have to lock them in sheds or put them up on blocks, that sort of thing or is it just simply locking the door and being able to make sure that they are not being used in a daily manner?

This is just one of the small concerns that can arise, and I am sure we will have an opportunity to discuss those further as we get into the discussion on that bill as it comes before the House.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that separates our opposition party from the Government of

Manitoba today, of course, is the way they deal with issues of rural development and agricultural rural issues in the province of Manitoba. Of course, I heard the member from Thompson waxing eloquently about all of the fine things that the NDP, that he thought they had done for the province of Manitoba's farmers. It certainly must be on a different page than the ones that talked to me or the issues that I have seen, but I would like to say that until there was a third Throne Speech come forward from this Government, we had never heard anything about rural development other than some concerns about water issues brought on by Walkerton and a number of other issues.

While I have had the opportunity to be a member of this House for just over two years now, I believe that it is because our leader made a clear choice and a clear decision for the direction of Manitoba when he indicated to Manitobans that our Government coming back in to form the next government in this province will have a minister responsible for rural development.

I am quite proud that he has given me the opportunity to be rural development critic in the province of Manitoba. This is not to take away from critic responsibilities in other areas as we have also got an urban relations critic in the member from River East as well, and I am certainly going to enjoy working with her as we move through the rest of the session here in Manitoba as well, before we get to the next election and after, but it is an opportunity for the Government to have done much more than what they have in regard to commitments in areas of watershed management and drainage and the number of areas of environmental issues and natural resources, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say, as has been said in the House in Question Period and other times, that you know in the Throne Speech, perhaps mosquitoes got a greater play on the heightened awareness from the Government than what agriculture did. I have a grave concern as a farm member and a rural development person in the province of Manitoba. I think we need to have another serious look at this Government's priorities in regard to these areas.

I will give you a couple of examples, Mr. Speaker, of where there is no vision and no plan in this province.

One of them, of course, is in the area of what they have done with the Grow Bonds program. They have taken a very sound program in Manitoba that had dollars put forward to it for development of small rural businesses. Some of them did not work. There were concerns with a few of them, but, by golly, there was an opportunity for individuals to come together to put teams of people with some financial resources in their local communities and be supported by government. Without the government going out and saying we are going to put whole bunch of money into this and you can do it this way, top down sort of attitude. It was an opportunity for rural developers and people with some vision to come together in their local communities, and decide on what they needed for development to keep a few people working in their local community. Many times that has worked very well.

I do not begrudge the provincial government from taking that program and expand it into the city of Winnipeg because they have now made the rural Grow Bonds program available throughout the province of Manitoba, particularly in the city of Winnipeg. The Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, with all of the responsibilities, has been placed in a very difficult position, I am sure, because I would not want to take away from the core issues of downtown Winnipeg or any other region of the province. But a program that was working relatively well in rural areas has now been diluted into other areas. It would be fine if there was a doubling of the kinds of dollars that were available for that kind of program, but to date, we have not seen that kind of financial commitment to them. Of course, it is very doubtful that this Government will be able to do that given the financial restraints that are on them at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, another example might be in the area of the Rural Economic Development Initiative, the REDI program, where this program will now be delivered through the Communities Economic Development Fund, in another manner, through the Department of

Northern and Aboriginal Affairs. I have no problem with how it is delivered, but it is another program that was taken and spread out into another region of Manitoba. Once again, I have no bone to pick, if you will, with the North, that is for sure, because there are development problems there as well as there are in rural areas of Manitoba as well as the core areas of Winnipeg. But this is a situation that, once again, there are no new dollars put into this program for further development in that particular region of Manitoba, being the North. We would like to see more development, and everyone working in those areas, but these are the kinds of knee-jerk program reactions that we think need some more time for more greater development, so that there is a commitment, when you make these changes—be a commitment to the kinds of development opportunities that might exist in those particular regions of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am just going to move off of that for a second to talk about my constituency for a moment, just to say a few words about many of the events that took place out in Arthur-Virden this summer. Many communities hosted fairs and many regional events. There were many opportunities. You know Waskada has the Threshermen's Demonstration Days.

Boissevain, of course, held their 30th and final Boissevain Turtle Derby to great success. So many people indicated they had never had the opportunity to be to one before that they even reconsidered perhaps for a second or two whether they should do another one, but they will be on with another fine project in that community as well. Of course, there were many tours. People toured the new Irvin Goodon Museum for natural resources and natural habitat in the area of Manitoba and all over the world that Mr. Goodon has built and displayed. It will be an attraction to that community for years to come. The Virden rodeo, of course, was one of the best, hell, voted the best actually in 2000 in Manitoba. The Pierson craft sale the first Saturday of October every year brings people from all over the province and is very much acknowledged as one of the most greatly attended from all over Manitoba and Saskatchewan and some of North Dakota, being so close to the American border. It is a huge success every year in its community, and I have always

looked forward to attending it as well. The Hartney Hopper Days I guess were held in the August long weekend again. Each community just has so many different events that it is a real opportunity and a real pleasure for me to have the opportunity, as it is all of our MLAs, to get to the events that take place in their constituencies. I just want to congratulate all of the people that worked so hard in each of those communities for the time and energy that they are putting into it.

* (17:30)

Mr. Speaker, these people believe in their communities. They do development programs on a daily basis in them, and they very clearly want to develop each and every one of their communities. Of course, one of the fine things that is happening in southwest Manitoba, I am a bit concerned about the location earlier in the year, but the new feed mill that is going in the Souris region, just east of Souris in my neighbouring Member for Minnedosa's (Mr. Gilleshammer) constituency, will use some 10 million bushels of grain in our southwest region of Manitoba. In the coming year it will be on-stream for next fall's crop in 2002. That is indicative of the change that is taking place in rural Manitoba. This is part of the vision and part of the plan in rural development that we need in this province.

Now rural development is not just how do you take wheat and turn it into flour. It is a combination of all of those processing opportunities that we have in our daily businesses. It is an opportunity to combine some of the conservation and environmental concerns that we have and make sure we do it right the first time in the developmental process. It is also the educational opportunities for our youth and the health care that is needed throughout the constituency and all of Manitoba. These opportunities, combined, are what I hope to deal with and work with in rural development in the province of Manitoba and provide some vision as we move toward the next election for the opportunities that will take place in many of the small communities of Manitoba and the opportunities from change that are taking place.

We know that change has a requirement for capital that I have mentioned in this House

before, and that many of the farmers in western Manitoba who were, if I can use the, it is not even a very good pun, Mr. Speaker, but they were left out to dry by this Government from the '99 flooding situation of a loss of 1.1 million acres of unseeded area of land. I heard the minister of highways and government services try to do his very best to cover up the fact that they have done nothing for that region of the world in regard to the Budget that they have had over the last two years in this House, and I do not expect to see anything from him in the third Budget that this Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) brings down next spring, because I do not think he or the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) have given him clear direction on what he needs to do in that region. Certainly, the citizens tell me that, and they are very concerned about the lack of support that has been there by this Government.

Those small little processing opportunities that perhaps seem nebulous and not large enough to deal with are the very lifeblood of small communities. Creating two, three, five, six jobs at a time in a rural community of 100, 300, 400, 500, 1500 people is exactly what is needed in this province to continue the rural development. That is why some of the programs that the previous government brought in were so important to the decentralization, if you will, in the province of Manitoba to spread the opportunities for others to see how great some of the areas of Manitoba are, and, at the same time, as we continue to develop the city of Winnipeg and many of the other areas of Manitoba.

The opportunities to find growth in these communities could be extended by government through many programs that the former government had under Rural Development and, of course, which this Government is trying to do under Intergovernmental Affairs. But I have great concern when I see opportunities being lost in the area of development in the livestock industry in Manitoba at the present time. I have concern when I see a government come forward with very little, if you will, support for pressing the federal government to make sure that it gets on with common-sense solutions to environmental planning in regard to the livestock operations that are being built in Manitoba at the present time. I would encourage the Minister of

Agriculture, as well as the Minister of Conservation, and Intergovernmental Affairs, to press the federal government in its efforts, particularly on the Fisheries side. I know they have been hired by the federal government to do well and to try to carry out their jobs in Manitoba, but I want to provide you with an example.

This department basically held up the licensing of a hog barn of some 3000 sows in Manitoba, in the western part of the province, for some four to six weeks, just waiting for an environmental approval for fish that might have come out of the Souris River towards the barn that was some two miles away and 50 feet above the level of the water. It is just incredulous as to why this Government would have not gone to the federal government to seek why those Fisheries people were as concerned about fish and why this Government has not gone to them to say: What are the concrete steps that we have to go through to make sure that we can develop that process?

I will just outline a little bit. The opportunity was there to create—and we are not speaking here of a small investment. It is in the neighbourhood of some \$11-million investment in the local region. This party was told that it was totally up to them to determine what kinds of fish were going to be coming out of that particular body of water, being the Souris River, and as well what mechanism they should use for a stop gate to stop those fish from coming upstream. Well, the stream that was being talked about was a low part of a field, a depression, which, nine years out of ten, was cultivated and seeded. It was what we call runways in most of the terminology in Manitoba farms.

This Government needs to become more heavily involved with the federal government in clearly defining what is required for this particular kind of development. When challenged, the Fisheries people indicated that they could not tell what was needed because of course it was up to the farmers to determine what kinds of fish were coming up to start with, so it did not mean whether they were three or four pounders or whether they were minnows. That was a problem, yet you were supposed to design a mechanism, a float control kind of a

gate, that would stop those fish from coming upstream. Very hard to do when there are no rules or definition. I think this is just an example of what the provincial government does not understand in regard to the importance of allowing these kinds of developments to go ahead.

But of course I have heard the Minister of Agriculture at many forums as well speak about how they are supportive of the intensive livestock operations that are going on in the province today. I congratulate her for that. I am not so sure that she personally believes that, that they will be of benefit to the province. Of course, she is also the one in their election campaign that said we should limit the size of farms that we have in Manitoba. So that is a concern to all of us. I think that that is government at its worst, if you will, taking a look at determining what is best for farmers, telling them how to spend their own dollars and inhibiting them from being able to be as developmental in their own opportunities as they can.

There are a number of other areas that I would like to touch on before I close. Of course, one of those is the area of education. We have seen in this House in the last few days a very great concern about the kinds of dollars that a particular minister flowed through, the Minister of Education in this case, to another school division in Manitoba. Very clearly, this is a concern for many school divisions whom they just told that they had to amalgamate as well. I think that, as many of these school divisions in Manitoba, with more discussions and some concern, sitting down with them, looking at developing perhaps a formula for putting some common effort toward finding mechanisms of assessment, amalgamation would have been a great priority for the Government to have taken and to put in place, instead of using the heavy hand of government to say thou shalt, you must amalgamate.

In some cases, it is felt that perhaps they only went partway. Why did they only touch some areas of the province and not others? Certainly a concern to many rural citizens, as it is I am sure here in the city of Winnipeg when you have an opportunity to make some major

changes. They really did not do the job they had set out to do, but from what we have seen of the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) in this House in the last week, it is not much wonder that he feels that he has a pretty strong hand in dealing with these issues and that he knows best what should happen in rural areas, in fact, all over Manitoba. In this House it is of very grave concern to the citizens of Manitoba, and it is coming forward each day how this Minister has perhaps been negligent in some of his own processes within his own department and at his very clear direction, Mr. Speaker.

* (17:40)

That is what concerns the citizens of Manitoba. It is the kind of attitude and heavy-handed tactics that have been displayed on some of these other issues when, of course, we were one week feigning honesty, integrity and consultation, and the next week, showing that he was actually the cause for the same dishonesty, lack of consultation and lack of integrity that took place in another region of the province.

I think that people look at this and they say: Who can we trust here? How can we trust this minister any longer in the province of Manitoba? That is why, clearly, our side of the House has been calling for his resignation, and we have even seen a few more of his ministers stand up and defend him. We have the chief financial officer of the Province of Manitoba and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) today coming forward and saying that, well, the things that he did were fine. I mean, I would indicate that I always had a feeling from being newly elected with this Finance Minister at the same time, that when I talked to him that he was very straightforward, very clear, very honest. Yet, in defending this kind of activity that is so blatantly obvious and so well laid out in the times that the minister from Brandon East has declared conflict of statements in this House in the last, even few days, it is very clear that the citizens of Manitoba would be calling for this minister's resignation if they could in this House. That is why our party has to do it, Mr. Speaker. We are credible Opposition in this House, and we will continue to bring forth those kinds of concerns on behalf of the citizens of Manitoba, as I have

done on some of the areas here of rural development concerns in the province today as well.

Mr. Speaker, on health care as well, this Government is—I guess I would have to say another area that perhaps they are so proud of the kinds of promises they made during the election. But I think it is a signal to the citizens of Manitoba of how overzealous this Government got in saying anything that would attract the people's attention to get them elected. Very clearly, six months and \$15 million, which not only during the election campaign, but was repeated by their own minister in this House after the election, was their promise to Manitobans. We will end hallway medicine. We will fix all your health woes. They have certainly found out that it is a much more serious situation than that, and they have also found out that it is a national concern.

I think that is why Manitobans are now starting to question this Government's resolve, because they do not trust the NDP in regard to the way they have provided financial direction in this province. They basically say they are now spending more per capita than anybody else in Canada on health care. They fail to say the Conservative government, the previous government, was doing the same thing. They were spending \$2,100 per man, woman and child in this province. Number one in Canada. So, if spending more money was going to fix the health care situation, it would have been done a long time ago, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the problem that this Government has is that they have a history of previous NDP governments in the province of overspending, and being on a spending binge as happened from '84 until '88, and the credibility, as I said, in the Throne Speech last spring, Mr. Speaker. They took this province from \$1.4 billion in debt in '84 to \$5.2 billion in '88. If allowed at the same extension that they have had in the last two years; by 2005, we would have a \$12 billion budget, twice anything the Conservative government ever had in this province in its 11 years of rule in Manitoba, and so that is why citizens in Manitoba do not trust them. I think, to their credit, they thought, and they probably will be able to come in and balance the books again next

spring which will be a major feat for them given the fact that I think they have already spent a good deal of what they expected to get prior to September 11 in equalization payments and transfer payments from the federal government.

Having done that, and Mr. Martin, the Finance Minister in Canada indicating that he will have to perhaps cut back in some of those areas, will leave the governing body in Manitoba today with a large hole to fill, if you will. So, clearly, they have gone out and warned the citizens of Manitoba that we will be dipping into the reserves of this province and the rainy day fund. I would just like to be on record as other members in our caucus have been to say that if anyone has seen the rain happening in Manitoba, then let me say it is the Finance Minister who has caused it to rain.

That has been said before in this House and perhaps not he, but he is the one responsible for it, and he needs to be able to control or their caucus, their Cabinet needs to have a Treasury Board, needs to have a better control of the departments that are out there spending money hand over fist, if you will. We know that there are concerns throughout the province, a need for dollars in many departments but during five tough years of balancing, of trying to reduce the deficit in Manitoba in five more strong years of no deficits in Manitoba.

Hard decisions needed to be made and they were made by the Conservative government in this province, and it is an issue of dealing with priorities, not just saying, well, you can have what you want, and you can have what you want, and every department can go ahead and spend helter-skelter because I am telling the citizens of Manitoba today are telling me that they are now in grave concern.

After only two years of NDP rule in this province, they are very clearly indicating that they would have liked some tax reduction. They would have liked to see the Government continue with deficit free financing in the province of Manitoba, but this Government has missed the opportunity perhaps to do that. Of course, if it became a priority for them, they still

could and they could do that in some areas. That would be helpful.

Mr. Speaker, the last thing I am going to say before I close is that in Arthur-Virden today there are more new fence posts going in the ground than anywhere else in Manitoba, and while all of Manitoba focusses on the development of the hog industry in Manitoba, we have got record numbers of cattle, particularly cows, in the province of Manitoba and there are a lot of acres being seeded down to grass.

There is a rejuvenation of the agricultural community throughout rural Manitoba, but I would say particularly in my region. Our citizens under duress made some very major changes in their operations. Many of the communities are doing much better at this time than they were in 1999. Thanks in no part to the Government that did not support them when the flood was on, but has not been able to reduce taxation, that has forced amalgamation upon them and in school areas and virtually changed the hospital structure and the health care programs that we have in our region of rural Manitoba as well.

So these are citizens with dexterity. They certainly know how to deal with hard time and they have taken it upon themselves to try to restructure their operations and families to the ones that have not been forced off the land in our area, to try to make sure that they are going to do everything they can in their power to develop greater opportunities in the rural areas of Manitoba.

I am very proud of the citizens of Arthur-Virden that have continued to bring forward new ideas and new opportunities in all of Manitoba as well.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): It was with interest that I listened to the comments from the Member for Arthur-Virden and I am very pleased that he indicated in his final comments that certain sectors of agriculture are doing well, because we often get this picture of this doom and gloom in agriculture and I often say this to producers, that

we have to start telling some of the good stories, some of the good things that are happening in agriculture rather than just painting a picture of doom and gloom.

I give a lot of credit to the farmers of his region and the farmers across this province for the steps that they have taken to diversify their businesses, their farm operations to take advantage of the opportunities that are out there. I guess I say to the member, I am really pleased that he recognizes that this Government has taken positive steps, because he said there was gloom and doom in 1999, that things have turned around since 1999 in the farming community. I am pleased to hear that he appreciates the work of this Government.

* (17:50)

I am pleased that our Government has had the opportunity to make some negotiations with the federal government and bring some money into this province, although I would have loved to have seen much more money. Some of the money that we brought in helped some producers. Certainly, I am proud of the work of our Department of Agriculture and Food and of the leadership role that they are playing, and the leadership role that the department is playing, in working with producers and providing information and working with them as they work to diversify into many, many areas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all also welcome you to the Chamber and wish you luck as you try to maintain decorum in this House. Sometimes I know that that can be a challenge. I certainly want to welcome all the pages that are here in the Legislature with us and I hope that they find this term a worthwhile learning experience. I am sure that they will also find it very challenging at times, as many of us do.

I am very proud of the Throne Speech that our Government has brought forward. I have to say that I regret that I have to speak to an amendment that has been put forward by the Opposition. However, I will address some of those points put forward in the amendment.

I want to begin by talking about the security legislation that we have brought forward and

about the issue of how the whole world has changed since September 11, and share with you an experience and how it has touched each and every one of our lives.

On September 11, I happened to be in Mexico at an agriculture conference and on a trade mission. I saw the incident on television. I walked out of my hotel room and met the staff person who was with me. The look on his face told me that there was something very serious going on. In fact, the person who was with me, his son worked in the World Trade Center. Of course, he was devastated because he was not sure whether his son was in New York or whether his son was in Toronto. He left immediately to try to make a phone call to find out where his son was. He was very lucky that, in fact, his son had decided to work from the Toronto office rather than the New York office. But the floor that the plane hit at the World Trade Center was the floor that his son was working on, and the whole unit that they worked with was wiped out. It was very tragic.

I share that with people just to say that I think that, in each and every one of our lives, there is someone that we can identify with that has a friend or a family who had been touched by this incident. It certainly brings a whole different perspective to us, what kind of steps we have to take. That is why our Government is taking some steps to address security issues. I am very pleased that all sides of the House have been able to work on this issue.

The member from Arthur-Virden raised the issue of the impacts on the agriculture industry by the amendments to the legislation. I want to assure him that regulations will be brought in that will be as little burden as possible to the farming community, but we have to recognize that we are in a different time and that we have to take the precautionary steps. I am very pleased with the work that the security committee has done.

I want to talk briefly about some of the issues in my constituency and the work that our Government has done. There are a few issues. One of them is the whole issue of the steps that we have taken with the improvement of water quality and drainage. In the Swan River

constituency, I was very pleased the other day to be able to announce that our Government was putting money into a new water-treatment plant in Swan River. This will expand good quality water, not only for the town of Swan River, but for surrounding areas as well. I think we have taken many steps to improve the quality of water.

There is also the issue of drainage, and I am proud that we are now taking steps to improve drainages, because drainages and agriculture go very closely together. We have seen under the previous administration there was a huge neglect, a huge cutback in the drainage budget, in the staff involved in drainage, the provincial drainage program, and it has caused some very serious problems. In fact, the member from Emerson indicated in one of his comments to the media that it was cutbacks by his government that resulted in the difficulties that many of the people in the southeast part of the province are facing.

So this year, Mr. Speaker, we were able to put some additional money in. We put an extra million dollars into drainage. No, that is not enough, but it is a step forward. It is a step forward for where the previous government was going, because the previous government was choosing to neglect the whole drainage issue.

The member talked about the Northern Plains Producers Conference, and I want to say that I was pleased that Manitoba could host this conference just last week to have producers from North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Saskatchewan and Manitoba come together and talk about issues that are of a challenge to them. This is the second Northern Plains Producers

Conference, and at this conference producers had the opportunity to share their ideas. Many times when conferences like this are held, it tends to be the politicians that are doing the talking and the producers are there listening. Well, this is much, much different. At this conference, politicians spend very little time talking, and it is the producers that spend the majority of the time talking.

One of things, Mr. Speaker, that we did do at this conference was recognize the tragedy of September 11, and, in a very touching ceremony, we were able to send our condolences to our U.S. friends and offer our supports to them and their families. The member talked about the need for a resolution and a debate on the floor on this issue. Well, we do it everyday in our lives. We did it when we held this Northern Plains Producers Conference in a very fitting ceremony and gave our support and appreciation to our neighbours across the way, and the ceremony was very much appreciated. The people who were at the conference also made a point of thanking Manitoba and thanking Canada for what we did on September 11 to open our airports, to open our homes and provide, when all of those planes had to find a place to come down during that tragedy. So there is very much an appreciation for the support that Canada gave.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk) will have 31 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 20, 2001

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