

Third Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 1, 2004

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Pension Benefits

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Pension benefits for thousands of Manitoba health care workers are being cut because the government has refused to support the front line health care workers in their desire to maintain their existing Healthcare Employees' Pension Plan (HEPP).

The government is doubling the early retirement penalty to 6 percent a year from 3 percent.

There will be no cost-of-living benefits for retirees in the foreseeable future, which means that inflation will erode retirees' pension cheques over time.

The government's refusal to support the existing pension plan will have a negative impact on hundreds of front line health care workers.

The government is demonstrating a lack of respect for front line health care workers by its decision to allow administrative costs in the regional health authorities to skyrocket by millions of dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider redirecting administrative cost savings to front line health care workers.

To request the provincial government to treat front line health care workers with the respect they deserve, and to consider supporting the health care

employees' pension plan by not cutting pension benefits.

Signed by Val Bakker, Dorothy Lahr, Hilary Green and others.

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

* (13:35)

Highway 200

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Highway 200 is paved from Winnipeg to the Canada-U.S. border except for approximately a 10-kilometre section between highways 205 and 305 which remains unpaved. School buses, farm equipment, emergency vehicles and local traffic must travel on Highway 200 which is dangerous, if not completely impassable, during wet spring weather and other times of heavy rainfall.

Due to unsafe conditions, many drivers look to alternate routes around this section when possible and time permits. The condition of the gravel road can cause serious damage to all vehicles.

Insufficient traffic counts are not truly reflective of the traffic volumes because users tend to find another route to avoid this section. Traffic counts done after spring seeding, during wet weather or during school recess are not indicative of traffic flows.

Maintenance costs for unpaved highways are high and ongoing. It would be cost-effective to pave this section.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux) consider

paving Highway 200 between highways 205 and 305 to ensure a smooth, safe and uninterrupted use of Highway 200.

Signed by Eveline Ritchot, Henriette Verrier, Jocelyn Trudeau and others.

Minimum Sitting Days for Legislative Assembly

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Legislature sat for only 37 days in 2003 and 2004 is not much better.

Manitobans expect their government to be accountable, and the number of sitting days has a direct impact on the issue of public accountability.

Manitobans expect their elected officials to be provided the opportunity to be able to hold the government accountable.

The Legislative Assembly provides the best forum for all MLAs to debate and ask questions of the government, and it is critical that all MLAs be provided the time needed in order for them to cover constituent and party duties.

Establishing a minimum number of sitting days could prevent the government of the day from limiting the rights of opposition members from being able to ask questions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider recognizing the need to sit for a minimum of 80 days in any given calendar year.

Signed by Jennifer Lukovich, Antonio Dalayoan and J. Dalayoan.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) provides intervention, rehabilitation, prevention, education and public information services on addictions for the citizens of Manitoba.

Manitoba's provincial Budget 2004 cut funding to the AFM by \$150,000 and required the organization to absorb a \$450,000 wage settlement.

In order to operate within its budget, the AFM was forced to close 14 treatment beds in its primary care unit and eliminate 10 nursing positions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health to ensure that his attempts to balance his department's finances are not at the expense of the health and well-being of vulnerable Manitobans suffering from addiction.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider monitoring the waiting lists for addiction treatment and to consider ensuring that timely treatment for Manitobans with addictions is not compromised by the provincial government's decision to cut the AFM's annual budget.

Signed by Garry Nixon, Jim Olynyk, Brad Hercina and others.

Pension Benefits

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Pension benefits for thousands of Manitoba health care workers are being cut because the government has refused to support the front line health care workers in their desire to maintain their existing Healthcare Employees' Pension Plan (HEPP).

The government is doubling the early retirement penalty to 6 percent a year from 3 percent.

There will be no cost-of-living benefits for retirees in the foreseeable future, which means that inflation will erode retirees' pension cheques over time.

The government's refusal to support the existing pension plan will have a negative impact on hundreds of front line health care workers.

The government is demonstrating a lack of respect for front line health care workers by its decision to allow administrative costs in the regional health authorities to skyrocket by millions of dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider redirecting administrative cost savings to front line health care workers.

To request the provincial government to treat front line health care workers with the respect they deserve, and to consider supporting the health care employees' pension plan by not cutting pension benefits.

Petition by Linda Klyne, Kathy Clark, Janice Rempel and others.

* (13:40)

Physician Shortage—Westman Area

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Westman region serving Brandon and the surrounding area will be without an on-call pediatrician for 20 days between November 10 and December 31, 2004.

As a result of the severe shortage of pediatricians to serve the Westman area, Brandon and area women with high-risk pregnancies as well as critically ill children are being forced, at even greater risk, to travel to Winnipeg for urgent medical attention.

The chiefs of the departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Family Practice and Anesthesia at the Brandon Regional Health Centre have publicly voiced their concern regarding the potentially disastrous consequences of the shortage.

Brandon physicians were shocked and angered by the lack of communication and foresight on the part of the government related to retention of a local pediatrician.

The Minister of Health has stated that Brandon has to put its best foot forward and recruit its own doctors.

Doctors have warned that if the current situation is prolonged, it may result in further loss of services or the departure of other specialists who find the situation unmanageable.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To strongly urge the Minister of Health to consider taking charge and ensuring that he will improve long-term planning efforts to develop a lasting solution to the chronic problem of pediatrician and other specialist shortages in Brandon.

To strongly urge the Minister of Health to treat this as the crisis that it is and consider consulting with front-line workers, particularly doctors, to find solutions.

To strongly urge the Minister of Health and the Premier of Manitoba to consider ending highway medicine now.

Signed by Edith Arason, Skapti Arason and Arlene Jamieson.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

World AIDS Day

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister responsible for Healthy Living): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Today, December 1, is World AIDS Day. Every year on World AIDS Day we recognize both the accomplishments and the tremendous obstacles we face. It is a time to reflect on this tragic disease and the way it has affected our world.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of this Assembly for formally recognizing this day by wearing the red ribbons as a symbol of remembrance of the 40 million people worldwide who are living with HIV and AIDS, and of those we have lost to this disease.

The theme for World AIDS Day this year is "Women and Girls Affected by HIV and AIDS."

Many women and girls are vulnerable to HIV, not just because of their own behaviour but also due to the high-risk behaviour of others. We can no longer continue to associate HIV with only high-risk groups. The virus affects people from all walks of life.

Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, women account for approximately 30 percent of newly diagnosed cases of HIV. Our government has been aware of the growing problem of HIV and AIDS since coming into office and has been taking proactive steps to address this growing concern through harm reduction and prevention programs. We have been working with Teen Talk to implement peer-based training in communities with high rates of sexually-transmitted infections among youth.

In 2003, we funded a new STI co-ordinator in the North. We are one of two provinces to have a health and corrections partnership providing education, testing and counselling in five provincial correctional institutions. Our government is committed to continuing to work with and support our community-based agencies and public health units such as the Nine Circles Community Health Centre and the Sexuality Education Resource Centre, who are working diligently to prevent the spread of this disease and to increase the quality of life for those living with HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that today, World AIDS Day, we honour and remember all those who have died and are living with HIV and AIDS, and for all those who every day fight the battle against HIV and AIDS and, indeed, that we do so with a moment of silence.

*(13:45)

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): The first World AIDS Day was declared by the World Health Organization in 1998. Since then, health care workers, scientists, politicians and people living with AIDS and HIV have used this day to focus the world's attention on the AIDS epidemic and the people it has affected. For 2004, the theme of this World AIDS Day is Have You Heard Me Today? Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS. Today is the day to recognize how AIDS is affecting women and girls around the world in particular. Today is a day to celebrate progress made in the battle against this epidemic, but to also bring this focus, the many challenges that do still remain.

About half of the 40 million people living with HIV worldwide are female. Globally, women and girls are becoming infected with HIV at a faster rate than men and boys. A United Nations report says, and I quote, "Despite this alarming trend, women know less than men about how HIV-AIDS is transmitted and how to prevent infection, and what little they do know is often rendered useless by the discrimination and violence they face."

In Canada, approximately 56 000 Canadians are currently living with HIV-AIDS. Stigma and discrimination are major obstacles to effective HIV-AIDS prevention and care, and the infection rates are actually rising in large part as a result of ignorance and social stigma surrounding the epidemic.

Over the past decade, the AIDS epidemic has also risen steadily amongst the Aboriginal population of Canada. We must recognize and address the many unique challenges facing the Aboriginal population affected by AIDS. Culture, geography, isolation and small community size may cause gaps in services and poor continuity of care, which must be addressed by the provincial strategy.

I, too, on behalf of the members on this side of the House, do urge the government and all of us to continue the fight, the battle against HIV and AIDS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The honourable Member for River Heights has leave.

Mr. Gerrard: I join with the minister and the Health critic for the opposition in recognizing the importance of AIDS Day today, and the importance of HIV-AIDS as a health issue not only here in Manitoba, but of course globally and indeed particularly globally. As a doctor, I am particularly aware of the consequences of AIDS and, you know, the need for us to pay particular attention to this disease which has caused so much devastation to so many people, their families and friends.

We are lucky in Manitoba that we have experts in infectious disease, The Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health, to help us in our

efforts to ensure that we are doing the very best possible here in Manitoba, and indeed helping with others elsewhere in the world, but there is no doubt that it needs constant vigilance. It is very important that we are watching and making sure that people are aware, day by day, of the risks and the need to prevent the spread of AIDS, and the things that can be done by individuals as well as by governments and by organizations.

The concerns for AIDS around the rest of the world have drawn closer to us who travel in communications, and our responsibility, clearly, is not just here in Manitoba, but it is a global one and it is nice to recognize that there are in Manitoba, leaders who have been playing an important role in the global fight to decrease the incidence of AIDS and to find better treatments for it.

Mr. Speaker: Could we rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

* (13:50)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 7—The Personal Investigations Amendment Act

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that The Personal Investigations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes relatives aux particuliers, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Attorney General, that Bill 7, The Personal Investigations Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Selinger: Under the current Personal Investigations Act, a personal investigation may include information about a bankruptcy that occurred in the last 14 years. This bill reduces that time to 6 years for persons who have been bankrupt once. For persons bankrupt more than once there is no time limit.

Other amendments update the language of the act and permit regulations to be made to modernize the consent requirements for a personal investigation.

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

Bill 202—The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 202, The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de santé et la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster, that Bill 202, The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this bill emphasizes that health services delivered in Manitoba under The Health Services Act and The Health Services Insurance Act must comply with the fundamental five principles currently set out in the Canada Health Act.

This bill also includes the fundamental principle of accountability in the delivery of all aspects of public health care in Manitoba.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Crystal Springs School 32 Grades 2 to 12 students under the direction of Mr. Victor Kleinsasser. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

Also in the public gallery we have from Maples Collegiate Institute 13 Grades 9 to 12 students under the direction of Mr. Murray Goldenberg. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub).

Also in the public gallery we have with us today 40 fourth-year nursing students from the University

of Manitoba. These students are under the direction of Linda West.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Gang Activity Reduction Strategy

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last night for the fourth time in the past month a young Winnipeg woman was attacked by a gang of street girls. The most recent victim was a 17-year-old woman who was slashed with a knife, had her mouth cut, was bruised when she fell and when she was kicked.

Instead of what we hear of puffery and press releases, the question is knowing that the Hells Angels have moved in under the Doer government's watch, knowing that there are more gang activities. Mr. Speaker, to protect communities as this Premier (Mr. Doer) said he was going to do in the 1999 and 2003 elections, when is this Premier going to finally come up with a comprehensive plan that will attack gang activity in Winnipeg?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, first I want to pass on my concerns to the victims of these crimes. I think it is important that, aside from the bluster in this Chamber, there are people who are often terribly hurt by crime. I recall when I was 14 being robbed in downtown Winnipeg. I recall how hurtful that was. So we always have to be mindful of the impact on victims.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the opposition to join us and support the Throne Speech that is before this House and which will be voted on tomorrow. It contains a commitment to 40 new police officers in Manitoba.

* (13:55)

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a very serious issue when you have four women attacked in downtown Winnipeg in November.

My question is to the Premier of the province of Manitoba. The Premier has the ability to set the level of policing in the province of Manitoba. That is his

responsibility. It is very clear that we see a pattern with the Doer government. They either turn a blind eye or they have policies in place that clearly are not working. Again, Mr. Speaker, it was this Premier that promised Manitobans in 1999 and again in 2003 that he would make Manitoba communities safer. He has failed.

If you talk to the police association, they are very, very clear when they say that there is a serious, alarming lack of police in the streets. They need more officers and they need them now. This Premier is sitting on half a billion dollars of additional revenue. Will he do the right thing and ensure that he provides adequate policing for the people of Winnipeg so they can feel safe in downtown?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that when he had an opportunity to present his agenda and cost it for the future of Manitoba, he had, I believe, zero percent for the Department of Justice. They would have been laying off prosecutors. He would have been laying off police officers. He would have been closing down courthouses. You would have had a radical decrease in every part of the criminal justice system, jails, other parts of our justice system. So, when they took duct tape and put it together with their platform, that was the priority they had for justice.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Winnipeg city police. I understand that they have already made two arrests in this matter. All of us in this Chamber who have family members who travel on the bus and are vulnerable to those kinds of attacks want to have more safety in our communities. The RCMP officers in Manitoba are at the highest level they have ever been with the authorization of those new positions and, of course, the 20 new police officers in the city of Winnipeg we think are very important.

We are going to vote for the Speech from the Throne tomorrow. I hope members opposite do the right thing and vote for more police officers here in Manitoba.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, that answer from the Premier of the province of Manitoba is cold comfort for four victims who were assaulted by young gangs of girls. This is what is happening in the community of Winnipeg under this Premier's watch. We know

full well that the Hells Angels have moved into Manitoba under this Premier's watch. We have seen gang activity—[interjection]

Well, they groan when I say that because they know it is true and they know their policies have failed to keep Manitoba a safe province. We see the highest murder rate in Winnipeg, 31 murders in the city of Winnipeg. Now we see four young women attacked in downtown Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Premier is he going to do something to ensure that Manitobans are truly safer in their communities or is he telling young women like the one that was attacked last night and the other young women who were attacked, that those people should be appreciated, and only appreciate his inability to do it, that his Throne Speech, his empty rhetoric in the Throne Speech, should make everybody feel safer. Is that what he is saying to Manitobans?

Mr. Doer: Twenty police officers for the city of Winnipeg, twenty officers for rural Manitoba, the highest complement of RCMP officers in—

An Honourable Member: Thirty-one deaths.

An Honourable Member: Under your watch.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Twenty police officers in Winnipeg, twenty new, additional police officers in rural Manitoba, eight additional Lighthouses to build upon the many Lighthouses already opened in Manitoba since we have been in office. That is not rhetoric. Those are specific investments in the safety of our citizens. Members opposite can choose to vote against police officers—

* (14:00)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. When honourable members are asking a question, they deserve to be able to hear the answer. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

The honourable First Minister, to conclude his answer.

Mr. Doer: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite have the opportunity to vote for real police officers with real funding, 20 in rural Manitoba, 20 in the city of Winnipeg. They can stand up and vote for it or they can vote against it tomorrow, and we will hold them accountable.

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

Education System Capital Projects

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, while we appreciate in government that from time to time serious issues arise that cannot be helped, surely there should be no reason when these issues come forward that the government of the day does not come clean with Manitobans.

Just over a week ago, the Education and Youth Minister refused to explain what a mysterious glitch was that delayed construction of new schools. I would like to just quote what he said. "We ran into this glitch. I cannot elaborate. We have run into this hurdle. I am not really at liberty to elaborate on what this hurdle is."

Well, Mr. Speaker, considering this glitch is having an impact on the numerous school construction projects that the Premier (Mr. Doer) announced prior to the election campaign, I wonder if the Premier could explain to Manitobans this glitch that his Minister of Education and Youth did not have the liberty to do so. Can he explain to Manitobans what the glitch is?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss our record with respect to infrastructure in the public schools.

In our five years in office we have invested \$288 million in infrastructure. In our five years in office, Mr. Speaker, we have built eight new schools, eleven replacement schools, 35 major capital projects, and we have completed over 600 projects in our first five years in office. Members opposite invested \$134-million less in the previous five years.

We are committed to providing safe learning environments for our students. We will build

schools. We have promised to build schools, and we will continue to build schools. It is first and goal, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the Minister of Education and Youth did not know what the glitch was. I am very surprised, however, that the Premier did not know what the glitch was.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has been hiding for the last five years the fact that he has ignored changes in 1999 that were made to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and now they have to account for that money. That was money that was used for school capital construction projects. This Premier is manipulating the Public Accounts of Manitoba, and now that the Auditor General has caught him, it leaves Manitobans to wonder what is happening with the school projects that this minister promised.

Mr. Speaker, I ask very, very clearly of this Premier: Why did this Premier not incorporate these new standards? Why did his Education Minister not come clean when the Auditor General caught them?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): If the Leader of the Official Opposition would have read the Public Accounts report that was brought out this year, we did incorporate the new accounting standards for schools in it, which is why there was an additional \$45-million draw from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The member opposite is already a year out-of-date, and we continue to build schools for children and families in this province.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the fact is when the Auditor General caught this manipulation of the Province's accounts, rather than apologize to the taxpayers, the Premier tried to pull the wool over their eyes. In the press release they simply said that the Public Sector Accounting Board issues periodic changes to generally accepted accounting practices. The Province is required to incorporate these standards into its reporting practices and does so in consultation with the Auditor General's office.

This year the timetable for the application of revised reporting practices require the Province to withdraw an additional \$45 million from the Stabilization Fund, Mr. Speaker. The board issues periodic changes. That was issued to this government in 1999, and they manipulated and they ignored it. It

will require a \$45-million drain from the rainy day fund.

Mr. Speaker, they got caught manipulating the accounts. They got caught and now they have had to take money from the rainy day fund to fund it. That is money that should be used for school construction projects and other items that who knows what this Premier has budgeted for. Why did this Premier not follow the rules? When he got caught, why did he not come clean?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the news release that the Leader of the Official Opposition just quoted from confirms what I just said in the previous answer. We complied with the recommendations of the Auditor. We disclosed it in the Public Accounts. We put a press release out that he is now quoting from. If only they would have been as honest when they were in office, we would not have had the problem.

Education System Capital Projects

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, this Doer government is absolutely notorious for sending out news releases absolutely devoid of action. A government news release dated April 14, 2003, "New school assessment stage begins in Winkler." Another government news release dated September 24, 2003, "Ministerial award issued for new school in Winkler." Today, no school in Winkler. Why? Because of a mysterious glitch in the system.

Mr. Speaker, another news release, April 30, "New school to replace Deloraine Elementary School." Another press release, February 2, 2004, "New school to replace Deloraine Elementary School." Where is this school? Why is it not there? Because of some mysterious glitch in the system. When will this government stop sending out empty press releases and get on with building these schools?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): I was very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that one of the first official duties I had as Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth was to cut the ribbon in Mitchell, Manitoba. We built the school for \$6.8 million. We have promised to build schools. The schools that we have promised to build, we will build and with the investment that we made

in capital, a very significant investment in capital, \$288 million.

Now, yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when the procession for the Speaker was coming into the House, I was instructing the students in the gallery that they should stand. One of the members opposite was saying, "You can take the teacher out of the classroom."

Well, they sure took teachers out of the classroom, 800 of them over the course of the nineties. They did not need to build schools because enrolment was going down. They were taking teachers out of the system. We invest in Manitoba. We invest in our education system, and I am proud to be on this side of the House that believes in the public education system.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, that answer clearly suggests that there is not a lot of hope for the people in Winkler and Deloraine any time soon.

Another government news release dated April 15, 2003, "New school assessment stage begins in East Selkirk." Today, Mr. Speaker, no new school in East Selkirk. Why? Because of a mysterious glitch in the system.

Another news release dated April 16, 2003, "New building to replace Inwood School." Today, no new school in Inwood. Why? Because of a glitch in the system. Mr. Speaker, how much longer do parents and children have to wait while this minister irons out some mysterious glitch? When will he get on with building these schools?

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, as I said, with eight brand new schools, eleven replacement schools, over 600 projects, we are committed to building new schools in Manitoba. We promised to build new schools in Manitoba. We will follow those promises. I do not need a lecture from members opposite who on seven occasions promised to build the Brandon hospital. What we had under members opposite was an 11-year glitch.

* (14:10)

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, this government has promised a new school to parents and children in East Selkirk. In *The Winnipeg Sun* today it says, and I quote, "Originally built for a student population of

about 350 kids, Happy Thought, now has about 700 students enrolled, many of whom are being taught in portable classrooms and sometimes in school hallways and stairwells." What have we come to in this province? This is hallway education. When will this minister get on with it and build these schools so these kids can get back into school?

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, had the member from Tuxedo looked at the news in *The Interlake Spectator* she would see that, indeed, the school is moving forward. As I said, we promised to build schools, we will build schools. Members opposite did not have this problem we call growth because so many people were leaving the province, they were laying off teachers, they were laying off nurses. We believe in Manitoba. We are investing in Manitoba, and a big part of that investment is a \$288-million record, thus far, in our capital schools project. We are building schools. We promised to build schools. We are going to build schools.

Children in Care Emergency Housing

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, in August of 2002, the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) told us in this House that the problem of housing children in hotels was virtually solved. He indicated that there was one and possibly two. Last spring, we asked for similar numbers, and we were told then by the now-Minister of Family Services that, in fact, the numbers were far lower than they were in the 1990s. When we got the numbers we found out that, in fact, they had doubled.

In Hansard of June 10, and I quote from the minister, "The area we are looking at now, through May, is showing that there can be spikes, so there can be highs and there can be lows. What we see right now is that we are going into a period of lows." That was in June. The numbers: May average 53, June average 59, July average 52, August average 60, September 61. These numbers are scandalous. I would ask the minister to tell this House today what concrete action she will take to reduce the stress on vulnerable children by providing proper care instead of hotel rooms.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, we know that when children are brought into care, it is a very serious and concerning time for them. In May of this

year, we decided within the department that separating sibling groups was, perhaps, not in the best interest of the children, so we made the decision that we thought it would be better for sibling groups to remain together when taken in care. We have been using hotels, yes, to keep those children together. We opened a sibling shelter in the spring. We have another one on the verge of opening, within a month's time. We will continue to keep sibling groups together because we believe.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, the issue here is not grouping siblings. The real issue here is are we getting substance for kids, or are we just getting public relations statements from this minister and from this government. I refer the minister to the Child Advocate's review on the Emergency Assessment Placement Department which indicates on page 7 that the review found no valid process to determine the monthly allotment or realistic EAPD budget. In fact, in 2003, the report goes on to indicate the budget for shelters was established at a level of 41.7% lower, 42% lower than the prior year's actual expenditures.

Can the minister explain to Manitobans: Is this what we are providing our children? We are giving them hotel rooms because we have to cut budgets, because we are afraid to offer them the proper care? Is that how her department operates?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, in reference to the shelter report, we have been working through some 77 recommendations that the Advocate made on the shelter system. We prioritized those recommendations, and one of the first areas that we worked in was the creation of 50 emergency foster care beds, which we also agree is a better way to have children in our system. We will be announcing very shortly the operation of those beds.

Mr. Loewen: I have read the response from the department. Nowhere in here does it try to explain why the budget was cut 42 percent. Even worse than that, and I quote again from the review, "This review has found little evidence that substantial change has taken place within Winnipeg Child and Family Services or the EAPD shelter system. There remain deep-seated suspicions within the organization, and there still appears at times to be an adversarial relationship with DFSH."

This minister was giving us press releases. She has done nothing of substance to solve the issues that

were brought up in the report from the Child Advocate. I would ask this minister would she detail today concrete actions, or is she prepared to simply issue press releases and see those 60 children stuck in hotels over the Christmas period. Is that her answer?

Ms. Melnick: Just for clarification, it is not "adversial," it is "adversarial."

We have made progress in several areas. We are implementing the 50 emergency foster beds, Mr. Speaker. We have hired two new positions within the provincial abuse investigator area. We are working on another concern, which was the 24-hour shift work, that we are implementing 8-hour shifts. We are working with all of our workers to provide provincial competency-based training program.

We, unlike members opposite who ignore recommendations when they are made, Mr. Speaker, are implementing these recommendations for the betterment of children who are being brought into emergency care.

St. Boniface Hospital Replacements for Sick Workers

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, St. Boniface Hospital is not replacing nurses, health care aides and other health care workers who call in sick. This new policy is going to continue, I guess, until somebody dies from it or falls through the cracks. According to Michele Schrader, a senior nurse who works in the hospital's gynaecology unit, she says, and I quote, "It just has the potential for disaster. Potentially, it could get out of hand very quickly."

I would like to ask the Minister of Health why he has allowed such a dangerous policy to be put in place at St. Boniface Hospital.

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): As members know, St. Boniface is one our most important and treasured health assets. St. Boniface Hospital has not changed its policy. The memo to which the nurses and the member refers, I am told, is simply a reminder of the existing policy that has been in place for some time and it simply is this. If you need to replace someone because you are very busy, the ward is full or the area is needing every staff member, then replace them. You have the authority

to do it right now. Go and do it. If you have a number of empty beds or if your schedule that day is lighter, and you have the opportunity to work with the staff that you have available, then do not replace unnecessarily, Mr. Speaker. Managers are expected to manage. When there is a needed replacement, they do it. This is not a new policy.

Mrs. Driedger: In fact, it is a new policy because for the first time in history it has been put in writing. It has never existed in writing.

I would like to table the memo right now dated November 9. The first line in the memo says, "In order to achieve a balanced financial position at year-end, it is necessary to institute more stringent guidelines related to staff replacement and overtime usage."

Mr. Speaker, as a nurse that has worked in the trenches before, as a nurse that has worked on units, where we have worked understaffed, I do believe that this is a dangerous policy that has been implemented, particularly in a tertiary care centre. I would like to ask the Minister of Health why he has allowed such a dangerous policy to be put in place at a large tertiary care centre.

* (14:20)

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, if 1573 nurses had not left the system during the 1990s, we would not be facing a continued nursing shortage in this province. We are still finding difficulty filling all the available positions. Secondly, St. Boniface Hospital, I am told, has approximately \$5 million a year in extra overtime. Why do they have to pay overtime? Because there were 1573 nurses who left our system in the 1990s. Thirdly, St. Boniface Hospital has informed us they do not expect to have a deficit. They are simply managing appropriately and asking staff to fill empty spots when they need to and to think before they fill them if they do not need to on a given shift.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I just want to remind our guests in the public gallery there is to be no participation, and that includes applauding.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Minister of Health this is all happening under his watch. This is not something that happened six years ago. This is something that is happening under his

watch, and he is the one who is forcing the nursing vacancies by decreasing the numbers of nurses working in the hospital at any given time by not replacing sick calls. This is a recipe for disaster.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health today if he will tell St. Boniface Hospital they have to reverse this dangerous policy, and why is he allowing it to happen? Somebody is going to die because of it.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, the nurses and skilled professionals who manage St. Boniface Hospital will make the calls for replacement as they deem best based on the needs of patients and the skills that are needed to meet those patients' needs. I am confident they have those skills and they will employ them.

If we were not in a situation where, when we formed office, only 210 nurses graduated, and we had instead the number they are graduating this year of over 700 nurses, we would not be in the position of still having \$5 million of overtime in our second largest acute-care hospital. We are moving towards having a balanced supply of nurses, and within the next couple of years, we will have those nurses, but when you lose 1573 nurses in a decade, it takes a little while to replace them. Our skilled managers make the right calls to replace nurses on shifts when they are needed, and they will continue to do that.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Funding

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, Clarence Bakaluk, who is in the gallery today, has said the Addictions Foundation saved his life. It was a beacon of hope, but the Doer government has cut funding to the agency, forcing the AFM to fire staff and close 14 treatment beds at a time when we know crack cocaine and methamphetamine use is on the rise in our province. Drugs are easy to get, help is not. Why is this government turning its back on people like Clarence?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister responsible for Healthy Living): I thank the member opposite for the question. I would assist her somewhat about the notion that we are turning our backs on AFM. Indeed, we have increased funding to AFM from 1999 to the tune of plus 14 percent. In fact, what is probably most important about AFM, in addition to treatment, is the kind of educational programming

we are doing to prevent the notion of addictions happening in the first place. In the time of the previous government, there were some programs in place, about 19 schools had programs. Today we have programs and counselling and outreach in 58 schools across Manitoba.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, this minister knows full well there has been a reduction in positions at the AFM. One day she is saying they are going to increase funding, and the next day she is saying they will not. Mr. Bakaluk has been so distressed that when he heard of these cuts, he went out and got a petition with 500 signatures on it. When people need help, it is a moment of clarity when they ask for and seek help. It is something they have to get immediately or the moment is lost, and that person may not come back and seek help. The former Minister of Healthy Living said, "We just don't have the money. The AFM will have to find a better way." Well, this is a cold and callous response to a very serious problem in our society.

I would ask this government why they want to balance their books on the backs of people like Clarence.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, it is true that when people seek help at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, they need to have the kind of counselling and the kind of care that these experts can provide, and it is indeed very important that they seek this care.

In reference to a cut that occurred at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, indeed this was a cut that occurred as a result of two retirements. It was able to be absorbed internally and, in fact, no change happened to care within the system.

Mr. Speaker, in 1996 there was a cut in funding to AFM; '97, cut in funding to AFM; '98, cut in funding to AFM. This opposition has no credibility on this issue.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Healthy Living said she would be open to providing additional funding to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. She said, "I certainly would not rule out an increase in funding, but I would not commit to it today either."

It is not a difficult decision. People like Clarence say that the AFM saved his life. She should commit

today to reinstating the funding to the Addictions Foundation. Will she be cruel or will she be kind? Will she save the lives of people like Clarence?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the work that the staff at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba does for the people of Manitoba. It is, indeed, very important help. Certainly, when we work on prevention and education in 58 schools now, and rising, we know that we are helping people at the front end.

When the member opposite makes suggestions about the importance of funding programs, I recall, of course, during the campaign this was a government that said that not only were they going to do things in education like cut band, art and music, but they were also going to sustain health care with 1 percent. No credibility on this issue and so many others.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Surgical Procedures Standards

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, when it deals with BSE, this NDP government has talked a lot about using science for decision making. Yet when it comes to surgical procedures, this government is not doing it. Indeed, the government has no standards for surgical procedures like carotid endarterectomy, used for preventing strokes.

I table today an article from the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* from late August which reported that 50 of the surgical procedures performed in Manitoba were conducted contrary to the best scientific evidence, because the patients fit in a category where the procedure is associated with the higher likelihood of harm than of benefit to the patients.

I ask the Minister of Health why he is using public funds to pay for procedures when the science shows the procedures in these instances would do more harm than good. Where are the standards? Where is the accountability when it comes to health care?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member, who is a physician,

for bringing this particular issue to my attention. I am sure it has already been brought to the attention of Doctor Postl.

The decisions about surgical standards are made generally by the surgeons and by the colleges and by the medical faculties, and those standards are shared and are expected to be adhered to, Mr. Speaker. If, when I have had a chance to review this, I see that there is evidence that this is not the case, I will certainly be asking questions of our medical leadership as to what their plans are in relation to the issue that the honourable member raises.

* (14:30)

Faculty of Medicine Rural Student Admissions

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of Health.

When it comes to increasing the likelihood of medical graduates of the University of Manitoba practising in rural Manitoba after they graduate, the scientific evidence shows that the most effective strategy is to ensure that a reasonable proportion of medical students come from rural areas.

The minister's government, for five years, has pursued a strategy in which a mere 16 percent of the students in medicine at the University of Manitoba come from rural Manitoba. I ask the minister when there has been so much difficulty ensuring we have Manitoba graduates practising in rural Manitoba, why is the minister pursuing a 16% solution for 48 percent of the population? Where is the accountability with this minister?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, we concur that the best way to recruit nurses and technicians and doctors to serve in rural and northern communities is to help those excellent students from those communities to get to university, which is why our university admission programs have supported a variety of access programs to make sure that students will be trained and supported. I think that clearly that is the best strategy.

In the interim we are working very hard with existing students for whom 140, I believe, have now signed return-of-service agreements with our government to practise outside of Winnipeg.

Frankly, our strategy is working. There are 139 more doctors today in Manitoba than there were when we formed government. Over 5 years, 139 more; over 11 years, 116 less. We have more to do but we have done a lot, and we will continue to work on it.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there is a shortage of physicians all over rural Manitoba. The government is not accountable. It is not doing its job.

For five years, Mr. Speaker, what this Minister of Health has done is to pursue a strategy in which students are exposed to four-to-five week experience in rural Manitoba. I table today an article which describes the NDP policies. The article is entitled, "Abandoning Manitoba."

The Minister of Health talks about using science, but when it comes to the practices of his own government, it turns out that they are ad hoc; they are given without scientific evidence, as this article clearly shows. Why is the minister so against the use of scientific evidence in delivery of policy and planning for health care? Where is the accountability of this government? We need that accountability. Will the minister stand up and tell us when and where he is going to be accountable?

Mr. Sale: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, admission to the Faculty of Medicine was decided by the Faculty of Medicine. I do not imagine that the member opposite would want us to start dictating who got into the Faculty of Medicine. We have tried to make it possible for rural students, through our ACCESS programs, through our medical bursaries program, through the return-of-service in return for tuition payment program, and through working with our education system through our Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), to make it clear to students in rural Manitoba and rural and remote communities how attractive a career in medicine, whether it be nursing or technology or any medical career, including a career as a physician, how attractive and valuable that career would be to them. We work every day at this. There is a shortage of doctors all across Canada, in Winnipeg and in rural Manitoba. We will do more. We are doing more.

Rancher's Choice Beef Co-op Federal Funding

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, in the midst of the BSE crisis, in an effort to increase

slaughter capacity in our province, this government has been instrumental in capitalizing the Rancher's Choice cull cow plant proposal in Dauphin. This support of the Province has been critical, and I thank the government on behalf of the ranchers of Manitoba for this continued support.

Can the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives update the House as to what progress has been made to ensure the participation of the federal Liberal government in Ottawa in this important project?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this important issue because it is an important issue for the producers of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed and remains committed to supporting the Rancher's Choice project. Unfortunately, we are getting no support from the federal government. The federal minister came to Manitoba on September 11, saying that they had put together a loan-loss provision—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: A loan-loss provision that would help to secure funds for the producers, a processing proposal, Mr. Speaker. We asked them for the proposal. They put the proposal in place, but they are not meeting the needs of Manitobans. They will not accept the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation as a valid lender. They will not allow our credits to work with—*[interjection]* The federal government is not working with us.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

Following Oral Questions on November 23, 2004, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Derkach) rose on a matter of privilege regarding the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that had been presented during Routine Proceedings and that had been received on a motion to receive the report.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader raised a concern that certain actions that had been adopted by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts were not going to be acted on because the committee report had been received and that there was no mechanism for those actions in the committee report to be extracted for action. At the conclusion of his remarks, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader moved:

"THAT when matters under consideration for a particular Public Accounts Committee meeting have been determined, that the Chair shall notify by letter, the administrative heads of organizations whose mandate relates to the Auditor General's reports under consideration, requesting them to attend the meeting with such other officials from their organizations as they deem necessary to respond to questions the Committee may wish to ask them; and the above motion be referred to the House Leaders and the House Rules Committee for consideration; and request the Rules Committee report back to this Committee by September 30, 2004.

THAT the Public Accounts Committee recommend to the House that the Public Accounts Committee meet a minimum of 20 occasions each year and more often as required to clear up the backlog of reports before the Committee.

THAT the Public Accounts Committee recommend to the House that the Committee's Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson be given responsibility for determining when meetings are convened, proposing meeting agendas and determining who to call upon to attend the meetings in order to answer questions from the members".

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) and the honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) also offered advice to the Chair on this matter. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to determine that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

Regarding the first condition, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader asserted that he

was raising the matter at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member. Regarding the second condition, whether there is sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House have been breached, it is important to determine whether parliamentary privilege has been breached in the actions complained of.

Joseph Maingot, in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* advises on pages 13 and 14 that the allegations of breaches of privilege by a member in the House of Commons that amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are, by their very nature, matters of order. Also, on page 261, Maingot advises that the traditional acceptable motion for dealing with a matter of privilege should refer simply and briefly to the complaint raised by the member, and except in the case of the House disposing of the matter forthwith, then refer the complaint to the committee on privileges.

I should note that in the case of Manitoba, the applicable committee would be the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs. On the basis of these references, I must respectfully rule that there is no prima facie case of privilege.

* (14:40)

I would, however, like to note for the honourable Official Opposition House Leader that the motion to receive the report of the Public Accounts Committee, which was the motion that had been adopted by the House, simply means that the report is in the possession of the House.

This does not prohibit further action from being taken with regard to the content of the committee report. For example, it would be possible for a motion to be moved in the House to concur in the report of the committee, which means that the House endorses the recommendations contained within the report.

Nor does the motion to receive the report prevent any other body, such as the Rules Committee, from dealing with the issues contained within the recommendations of the committee report.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): For clarification, in your recommendation, it is my understanding that if a motion in this House

were to be moved that the committee report be concurred in, that, indeed, those matters that I raised in my matter of privilege then would have to have some action taken on them. Is that correct?

Mr. Speaker: First of all, I want to be very helpful to the House. But we have a rule in the House that when the Speaker makes a ruling, either the House accepts them, or they challenge them. If members wish to have things clarified, or to deal with other issues, I would be more than happy to meet with any member that wishes a clarification. But under our rules, prevents me from dealing with it on the floor because our rules are very clear that the House either accepts or challenges a Speaker's rule.

So, I welcome any member to meet with me if they wish, and I will give any clarification that any member wants on the ruling in my office after.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, my understanding was that once a ruling was made, the matter was put to rest. I am simply asking a question after your ruling, whether or not we can concur in the report.

Mr. Speaker: Order. For the clarification of the honourable member, there is no provision in our rules to deal with a ruling that the Speaker has just made. There is only challenge or accept it and, like I said, my office door is wide open and if any members wish to speak to me, I will be more than willing to give my explanation as to how I came about these rulings. I would be more than happy to do that.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Morris, on a point of order.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): On a more congenial note today after the raucous Question Period, I would just like to say that, after Question Period, we all do enjoy a very amiable working relationship.

So I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Oswald) on her forthcoming marriage this weekend to Stephen McCreedy. On behalf of all my colleagues on this side and, perhaps, on behalf of all the honourable members in the House, I would like to offer her congratulations.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Derkach: Well, I guess we will do a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am going to ask for leave of the House to bring a motion forward and to move that the House do concur in the report that was tabled from the Public Accounts Committee Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the honourable member—the honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the matters in this report from this committee are all underway. The Rules Committee meets next Tuesday to deal with the issues that are raised. I think it is moot. Instead of talking about it here, we are taking action, and we are going to get together and see how we move forward on the substantive matter.

An Honourable Member: Ask for leave?

Mr. Speaker: What I have been requested is the honourable member has asked for leave. Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has not been granted.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Keystone Agricultural Producers

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Today was a memorable day in the legislative dining room when the Keystone Agricultural Producers, who represent virtually all aspects of agriculture as an organization in the province of Manitoba, demonstrated today the worth of the agricultural community and the contributions made by the members of that community to agriculture and the economy of this province. I think it was very appropriate when they handed out a folder which says, "Make every day farmer appreciation day. For every dollar you spend on food, only 7 cents goes back to the farmer who produced it."

I think, Mr. Speaker, that says it all, that there are a tremendous number of people in this province who are agricultural producers, who produce the food that we eat and rely on every day of the week. We believe that we, as a society, those of us who serve the people in the province of Manitoba as members of the Legislature, all these farmers deserve appreciation for the work that they do to ensure that we will have adequate food supplies on our tables on a daily basis. I believe that the BSE situation has demonstrated clearly that the farm community must and is working very closely together to support each other on matters such as closed borders and other matters.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that the United States Agriculture Department has just announced that they will subsidize their corn under the LDP program by about 30 cents a bushel. That corn, by the way, will be bought by Manitoba companies to support the livestock industry and feed the livestock industry in this province. Yet we are blessed with a huge amount of feed grains in western Canada that our own farmers have produced and will probably have to compete with that subsidy. I respect and I congratulate and thank the Keystone Agricultural Producers, all the organizations that belong to it, for the lunch and for the tremendous job that they have done.

Philippines Flooding

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, it is with great concern that I address my House colleagues today. The Philippines was hit with a deadly storm last week and is bracing for another tropical storm, perhaps as early as today. Typhoon Winnie hit the Quezon province last week, resulting in a dozen landslides and flooding from rivers overflowing their banks. Quezon province is located approximately 65 kilometres east of Manila. The CBC reported this morning that 412 people are reported dead, with another 177 still missing. Rescue officials are racing to save stranded residents and provide relief before the next storm, Typhoon Nanmadol, hits the region. Landslides and flash floods, however, have washed away bridges and roads, making relief efforts more difficult.

The Winnipeg Philippine community is well aware of what is happening in the Philippines right now. The Quezon Province Association of Manitoba has already fundraising efforts on the way. The Quezon Province Association of Manitoba will be

accepting donations of clothes and money in kind to help those hardest hit. Donations can be dropped off at the Philippine Canadian Centre of Manitoba, offices at 737 Keewatin Street, until January 15, 2005. Office hours are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Quezon Province Association of Manitoba will be sending over these donations to the Philippines in late January. Once in the Philippines, representatives of the association will take donations directly to communities in Quezon province.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to donate clothes or money to the Quezon Province of Manitoba Association so that they in turn can provide much-needed assistance to people of Quezon province. Mr. Speaker, I thank the members and this House for their attention in their matter.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Emerson, on a point of order.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I wonder if I would have leave to table a document that was presented by the Keystone Agricultural Producers to all those attending lunch in the dining room today, which demonstrates clearly the economic impact the agriculture community has to the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: He can table it. He has tabled it.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Thank you very much. I table the document.

* (14:50)

Métis Hunting Rights

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a disservice made by the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government toward Manitoba's Métis population. When the Supreme Court made the Powley decision regarding Métis hunting rights just over a year ago, the Manitoba Métis Federation indicated they felt the decision extended those hunting rights to Manitoba Métis as it does for those in Ontario recognized by the Powley decision. To that end, the Manitoba Métis Federation created the harvester card system and began issuing cards to recognized Manitoba Métis.

The Doer government indicated to the Manitoba Métis Federation they would be supportive of the endeavour, and this past September, at the Manitoba Métis Federation annual assembly, President David Chartrand announced to the assembly that, based on guarantees of the Premier, the province was going to respect the new harvester cards being issued.

In the September 26 *Winnipeg Free Press*, a government spokeswoman even said an agreement was reached between the Manitoba Métis Federation and the minister, echoed by Premier Gary Doer. However, that did not prevent the minister and the Doer government from betraying the Métis people when, on October 20, a conservation officer seized a gun and a duck of Will Goodon, a recognized Métis harvester card holder, later charging Mr. Goodon for hunting without a licence. To the Métis people this was a major outrage, Mr. Speaker. President Chartrand called the minister untrustworthy. It did not have to be this way. The Premier and his minister did not have to mislead the Manitoba Métis Federation and their President Chartrand.

If the NDP government did not feel that Powley was applicable in Manitoba, they could have referred the matter to the provincial appeals court for a decision on the matter. Instead, they chose to create conflict with the Métis nation in Manitoba. As President Chartrand said, it is a sad day for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), I just want to remind all honourable members, when making reference to other members, that they please do so by the titles, the portfolios they hold or constituency.

Peace March—Flin Flon

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): In Flin Flon yesterday at noon, about 25 concerned citizens, ranging from teenage students to senior citizens in their mid-eighties braved the bitter cold to march for peace and against some of the harmful policies of the Bush Administration. The organizer of the march, a local activist and my friend, Greg East, was earlier quoted as saying, "If the Americans are our friends, which they are, and are our neighbours, which they are, I think it is our responsibility as friends to tell them if we think they're doing something wrong."

Speakers and participants included a United Church minister, a city councillor, two ex-American citizens who have been long-time residents of Flin Flon and others. Mr. East told me his main objective was to join with numerous other Canadians to give a message not only to President Bush but to our Prime Minister, Paul Martin. The message is, "Do not sign on to the missile defence system." Those sentiments, Mr. Speaker, are shared not only by the majority of Canadians but by virtually the entire world.

We do not need the militarization of space. We do not need another cold war. We do not need another arms race. We do not need to spend trillions of dollars on weapons of mass destruction. What we do need is common sense. We need to alleviate poverty. We need to fight the HIV-AIDS epidemic. We need international co-operation, not superpower unilateralism.

One speaker at the peace march, a committed Mennonite Christian, speaking in the proud and laudable Anabaptist pacifist tradition, told me later, "As a Christian, I am reluctant to judge, but I really believe the way George Bush presents himself is not Christian. Christians should be pacifists." One young man said, and I quote: "I don't know how Bush can say he's pro-life, when he's the cause of thousands of deaths." Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the activists in Flin Flon. Let us wage peace, not war.

Health Care Services Accountability

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I, like so many Manitobans, am concerned about health care in our province. That is why today I move to introduce Bill 202, The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act. This adds the fundamental principle of accountability to the five fundamental principles of health service delivery. This bill also emphasizes that health services delivered in Manitoba under The Health Services Act and The Health Services Insurance Act must comply with the program criteria set out in the Canada Health Act.

In 2002, the Romanow report on the future of health care in Canada clearly recommended that accountability must become a fundamental part of the Health Act. This bill would ensure that accountability is a fundamental legal principle which must be applied in all aspects of the delivery of public health care services in Manitoba.

As stated in the Romanow report, as the owners, funders and users of the health care system, Canadians have a right to know how their system is being administered, financed and delivered, and which order of government is responsible for which aspects of the health care system. Accountability in health care is sorely lacking in this province. We have a bloated bureaucracy while Winnipeggers search in vain for a family doctor. We have one of the highest rates of spending on health care in Canada, yet Brandon does not have pediatricians. For the next two weeks in Ashern there will be many days where there is not even a single doctor available to provide any kind of care, emergency or otherwise, for a large region in the Interlake.

Manitobans have a right to know how their health care dollars are being spent. That is why I am calling for accountability to be made a fundamental principle of the Manitoba health act. Time and time again, the government has failed to use science-based decision making in the delivery of health care. We need science-based delivery, we need science-based decision making, we need accountability in this province.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Seventh Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and the amendment of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto. The debate remains open.

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be standing before you and my colleagues today in this House to support the Throne Speech that was read to us by the Lieutenant-Governor on November 22, 2004.

Before I begin, I would like to thank the numerous people who ensure that this House runs this smoothly. First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for ruling over this House fairly and equitably.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Clerk's office for their continued services to this House, our

security services, and also welcome our interns and our new legislative pages. I have also noticed that one of our pages, Jennifer Bernardo, is the niece of a friend I have known for many, many years. I hope her and her fellow pages' experiences in this Chamber will help them with their choice of careers.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech focusses on the success of Manitoba's economy since our party took power in 1999. The growth in our economy has continued into this year, as the Throne Speech reports, and I quote, "Based on the performance of the past 12 months, Manitoba ranks first among provinces for growth in earnings and third for growth in investments."

A large part of this economic growth, Mr. Speaker, is due to the growth in immigration that our province has seen. In fact, Manitoba has seen a 40% growth in international immigration in the last year alone. These immigrants have chosen to make Manitoba their home and to contribute to the economic health of our province.

Manitoba is, in fact, enjoying a 20-year high in terms of provincial in-migration. Immigration into our province is key to making our economy healthy and sustainable. It is so important, Mr. Speaker, that we include immigration in our economic growth plan. From March 2003 to March 2004 alone, we have welcomed over 7500 immigrants into our province this year, a threefold increase since 1999. We are well on the way to meet our targeted goal of 10 000 new immigrants annually by 2006.

Speakers before me, from this side of the Chamber, have highlighted a lot about our government's accomplishments, its achievements and other innovations we have committed to do.

* (15:00)

All I can say is everything looks positive and the future is bright under the watch of the NDP government. I am proud to be part of such a government, and so I will focus my remarks on my constituency and issues surrounding the immigrant community.

As the MLA for The Maples, I know how important immigration is to the economic health of my constituency, my city and my province. The Maples is a very diverse constituency. It is made up

of many people from different ethnic groups. The Maples is also a home to people with different socioeconomic situations and in different stages of their lives. This includes new families just starting out and older people enjoying their retirement years.

Mr. Speaker, the diversity of people and services available in The Maples is significant. The Maples is home to several key health facilities including the Seven Oaks General Hospital and the Wellness Institute. It is also home to several nursing homes, care homes and retirement housing units.

The constituency is also home to several schools. These include Arthur E. Wright, Elwick, École James Nisbet Community School and O.V. Jewitt School. Middle and high schools include École Leila North and Maples Collegiate. It is in this school that I find how diverse and rich The Maples area truly is. Indeed, there are so many cultures represented in such a small area.

Since becoming the MLA for The Maples in 1999, I have learned a great deal more about the issues and challenges facing the people who live in my community. The state of our health care system, taxes and public safety are the major concerns of residents living in my constituency. Many young, working families in The Maples also have concerns about the quality of education for young people and availability of child care. I am happy to say that last week's Throne Speech makes some positive steps to address these many concerns.

This summer, I had the opportunity to represent our government and participate in many events and functions in my community, for instance, the Annual March for Unity Against Racism, and the consequent Unity Dinner in May. I also took part in the Safeway "Because We Care Fair," and Maples Collegiate graduation ceremony, where I presented an MLA scholarship award to a deserving student.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

July was a particularly busy month. I had a chance to bring greetings on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Doer) to a Hindu ring ceremony, and in mid-July I was one of the delegates that took part in the Midwestern Legislative Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, where we successfully passed a resolution calling for the opening of the U.S. border. At the end of July, I took part in the blessing and official

opening of the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba.

Folklorama took place during the first two weeks of August. I made it a point to visit as many pavilions as I could. In every pavilion I saw the pride on the faces of volunteers who shared and displayed their culture, traditions and their own unique brand of hospitality. The experience is both educational and entertaining. The diversity of our people and their cultural traditions make Manitoba truly unique.

I also attended India's Independence Day celebrations held at the Legislature, and brought greetings on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Doer) on the occasion of the 400-year anniversary of Sikhism and their Holy Book, which was concluded with a sports tournament called Kabadi.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, The Maples is home to a large proportion of recent immigrants. It is a favourite destination of immigrants under our successful Provincial Nominee Program. It is these people who need our help to feel integrated and accepted into the mainstream of Canadian society. I will continue to work hard to ensure that they have the opportunity to fully participate in society culturally, socially and economically, and in turn contribute to our community, our city and our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I speak from experience in regard to this process of integration and acculturation. I immigrated to Winnipeg from the Philippines in 1969. Winnipeg has been my home for the last 35 years. I established my roots here, and I want to help new immigrants do the same thing. We have the capacity and the determination to help them establish their new lives in Canada.

Manitoba has the most successful immigration program in the country, the Provincial Nominee Program. This program allows our province to sponsor applicants from foreign countries who best meet the needs of Manitoba's economy. Applicants are chosen based on how well their skills can fill specific shortages in Manitoba and their willingness to move to Manitoba.

This program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, gives successful applicants status when applying for permanent residence. This special status speeds up the application process for permanent residence,

often making it easier for successful applicants to immigrate to Canada and Manitoba. I am happy to report the Provincial Nominee Program has been very successful. Last year alone 3085 provincial nominees arrived in Manitoba. This is over six times the number that came in 1999 and our commitment to immigration continues.

In the 2004 budget we increased funding for immigration by nine percent. Much of this funding will go towards improving services for new Manitobans once they arrive in Manitoba. These include services such as language training and employment assistance. Our government has improved the Provincial Nominee Program in 2004 making it easier and faster for qualified immigrants to come into Manitoba. Applicants are now assessed under five new fast-track streams. One of these new streams is the employer-direct stream. This stream allows employers to offer qualified applicants guaranteed employment. Other streams also make it easier for immigrants to come to Manitoba, including international students and people who are sponsored by family members.

In the meantime, the general Provincial Nominee category, still exists to allow all other qualified individuals to proceed with an application. The Provincial Nominee Program is a success. All you have to do is witness the economic boom and the optimism it brings to the provincial economy. The Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan) is working very hard to achieve the yearly target of 10 000 immigrants.

I am delighted to note Manitoba will extend the Immigrant Investor Program to allow more farmers the opportunity to purchase land and settle in our province. This is a welcome initiative because it targets younger farmers and their families at the same time that older and more established farmers are starting to retire. Promoting immigration is an important part of my government's mandate. Not only does immigration contribute to the socio-economic health of our province by stimulating economic activity, it also provides a source of skilled workers to replace our aging workforce.

Yet, having said that, there are still big challenges ahead. Foremost is the difficult issue of recognizing the qualifications that immigrants bring to our country. Many newcomers experience difficulty in having their foreign degrees and

credentials recognized. This is a tremendous barrier that prevents many immigrants from full participation and contribution to Manitoba's society. Recognition of qualifications has proven to be a 30-year problem. It has been a problem for as long as I have been here. Indeed, the Conference Board of Canada has estimated nationwide the failure to properly recognize learning and professional credentials has cost the economy \$4 billion to \$6 billion per year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one can immigrate into this country as an independent immigrant without some kind of post-secondary training or education. As a prospective immigrant, the prospective immigrant is assessed on a point system based on a combination of several factors, age, education, experience and adaptability. Depending on the level of post-secondary training acquired, the higher the education, the higher points you get. In most cases it determines whether you are in or out. So, if you have a Master's degree or a PhD, the better chance you have to obtain the desired points.

Yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what actually happens when an immigrant arrives and goes for professional accreditation is that he is often told to go back to school for more upgrading. It sounds so simple, but the reality is how can an immigrant think about upgrading when he has only \$10,000 in his pocket to support himself while looking for a job. The end result is that too often we witness an immigrant trained as a pharmacist making his living by driving a taxi. We find trained engineers doing housekeeping work in hospitals. We demand a high level of education, training and skill from those we allow to immigrate, only to deny them the full use of their skill and abilities once they settle here. This only serves to limit their contribution to Canadian society.

* (15:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is this so? If a doctor in China, the Philippines, or India can diagnose SARS, what stops them from making a similar diagnosis here? If engineers can design and build tall buildings in Manila, in Bombay, or Hong Kong, what stops them from doing so in Manitoba? Why do we have so much difficulty recognizing foreign training and credentials? At a national conference on Canadian Immigration in the year 2000, a prominent immigration lawyer reporting for Group 5 said, and I quote, "To maximize the benefits of immigration, we

have to ensure that immigrants can fully utilize their skills. We have to ensure that accreditation procedures are in place to fully utilize the skills that people bring to this country."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must create a society that appreciates and values the skill and expertise that immigrants bring to Manitoba. In the past, we seemed to have been more concerned about numbers than recognition. We must provide the recognition in order to make immigrants feel welcome so that they will be able to make that transition into a new place, a new environment, a new culture, and to restart their lives and career. Only then can we say to ourselves that they are taking advantage of the opportunities our society offers, and only then can they participate and contribute fully to our society.

Fortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are solutions to the problem of recognizing qualifications if we have the political will. We often say we are short of skilled workers, but the skills are already here. We just do not acknowledge and recognize them. One solution is to mandate professional bodies to grant a second level of licensing. This is a positive step in the right direction. Granting a second level of licensing will allow them to work and gain meaningful experience, and hopefully contribute to their full licensing. Such a process provides a minimum acknowledgement of the skill and experience that immigrants bring to this country so that they can restart their life and their careers, and contribute to Canadian society at the same time.

Many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it may seem like the voices of new Manitobans get lost here in the halls of the Legislative Building. The needs and concerns of Manitoba's ethnocultural communities, many of whose members are new immigrants, need to be addressed by government. Fortunately, our government has been very proactive on this issue.

The Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council was created in 2001. This committee examines important issues facing our ethnic community. This includes immigration, anti-racism initiatives and how to promote cultural and linguistic diversity. Committee members represent a number of different ethnic groups here in Manitoba making the committee truly representative of Manitoba's diversity. The importance of this committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cannot be understated. The committee meets with the Minister of Labour

and Immigration (Ms. Allan) to discuss how government should move forward in its immigration initiatives.

Many of these consultations have been reflected in our most recent Speech from the Throne, a speech that highlighted how we are making it easier for qualified immigrants to live and settle in Manitoba. Our government has been very proactive in moving to recognize new Manitobans with foreign credentials. In October 2002, we released our strategy to remove barriers to foreign-trained professionals.

We also established the Manitoba Immigration Council. The council plays an important role in supporting immigration initiatives in Manitoba. The council advises government on a number of immigration issues. These issues include how to better attract professional immigrants, how to improve immigrant retention rates, and how to improve services for new Manitobans once they arrive here.

As outlined in the Speech from the Throne, the Council on Immigration will tackle the difficult issue of recognizing foreign credentials, allowing all foreign-trained Manitobans to work in their chosen professions. Our government will also be hosting a credentials summit which will bring together stakeholders for different professions, immigrant groups and educators to discuss this issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have just given a number of examples on how our government is committed to supporting and promoting the immigration of skilled and hardworking immigrants into Manitoba. Our Throne Speech recognizes that new immigrants enhance the economic, social and cultural fabric of Manitoba. Therefore, I will be voting in favour, and I recommend that all members of this Assembly do likewise.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): I rise today to participate in the debate regarding the Throne Speech. I am speaking in support of the amendment as brought forward by Mr. Murray, the honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

Before I get into the meat and potatoes of the Throne Speech debate, though, I would like to welcome all members back to the Chamber and this

Assembly for active debate. It is my regret, though, that we took so long to come back. I believe that we had pressing business and should have been brought back to the Assembly here earlier than we were.

I also would like to welcome back the members of the Sergeant-at-Arms, Sergeant-at-Arms Garry Clark. I appreciate all of the efforts and responsibilities and duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms and the respective personnel.

I also want to recognize the work done on the Chamber during the recess by the building maintenance staff under the direction of Todd Miclash. The refinishing of the steps within the Chamber as well as new carpeting are greatly appreciated, and do a lot to enhance the appearance of the Chamber which, I believe is, in fact, part of the most beautiful legislative buildings in all of Canada. I want to also take this opportunity to thank the maintenance staff that is working very diligently to put up the decorations for the Christmas festive season.

To the Chamber, I say welcome to the pages that were entered into the record on the very first day. I would once again like to reiterate that Joel Voth, Kristy Rydz, Jennifer Bernardo, Stephen Leavitt, as well as Amos Wiebe, Andrea Berger, Julene Buys and Heather Morgan are also joining us here in the Chamber from day to day and providing very valuable service. Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to bring recognition to this year's Manitoba Legislative interns: Jonathan Mays, Tara Baxter, Martin Frigo, Kerri Holland, Alexandra Miller and Miles Morgan.

Let me say, from my perspective of involvement with the selection process of interns to serve here in the Legislative Assembly, I believe that the program is one that benefits all members of the Legislative Assembly, having these young people serve in capacity as interns, which they recognize as a very valuable learning experience, and is recognized toward their postgraduate work.

I know that the program has been expanding year over year. Last year we had 42 applicants, which had absolutely stellar resumés, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it was indeed a difficult challenge to make the selections because only 6 will have the opportunity to serve in any given year.

I do want to thank the other members of the selection committee, that being Professor Jean Friesen and the honourable Doug Martindale, the Member for Burrows.

* (15:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will say that there has been a great deal of hype behind the Throne Speech, that was provided by the Lieutenant-Governor in his address to the Chamber on November 22, about the progress and about the vision that the New Democratic Party has for Manitoba. The only comment I have, I am wondering about that vision, whether or not it needs a white cane to find its way through to Manitobans on their day-to-day lives. It is said that Manitoba is progressing under the New Democratic Party, and I will provide for you facts to the contrary, even though the government wants to put a lot of emphasis through, shall I say, spin doctoring of the truth, the facts.

May I enter into the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some actual facts provided by the federal government, Statistics Canada. According to Statistics Canada, the number of new jobs grew by only 0.3 percent last year, well below the national average of 2.2 percent. Manitoba ranked ninth out of ten provinces in job growth last year. That is fact. The year before that, Manitoba's job growth was only 1.6 percent, again, below the national average of 2.2 percent. In fact, Manitoba's job growth was well below the average growth for Canada, each and every year the New Democratic Party has been in power here in Manitoba, since 1999.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concerns me greatly. Another point, in fact, that was raised in the Throne Speech, about the average weekly earnings, and I would like to, again, refer back to Statistics Canada, as to how, in fact, it is occurring here in Manitoba. Manitoba, back in 1999, ranked seventh out of 10 provinces in average weekly earnings. We have fallen below that ranking. In fact, right now, we are below Newfoundland, at \$631 per week last year, below New Brunswick at \$625 average weekly earnings, below Saskatchewan at \$624 per average weekly earnings. And what are we earning on average here in Manitoba? A paltry \$615 per week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is grave news that Statistics Canada reveals, that we are sinking in our rankings in regard to other provinces, especially our

neighbours to the east, where the average earnings in Ontario is \$733. All of us look to our Prairie cousins in Alberta and they are making \$708 per week average. I believe I could sum that up, our performance is embarrassing to me as the Member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are other statistics here that fly in the face of the spin doctoring, that our economy in Manitoba is booming. Also, in the Throne Speech there was much fanfare made to the in-migration of persons to Manitoba. However, out-migration exceeds in-migration. Let us truly look at the figures. In 1999, the actual population of Manitoba was 1.14 million. Last year, it was 1.16 million; an increase of only 20 000 people. Only 20 000 persons. On average, if just Manitobans had been staying in Manitoba, the place of their birth, we should have more than 30 000 more people than in 1999, but it is evident that we continue to lose Manitobans to other jurisdictions in Canada. Last year, we lost 3044 to other provinces, up from 2733 people the year before. That is appalling. We obviously are not creating a climate in which Manitobans want to stay in Manitoba. That should concern all of us.

Much of what is in the Throne Speech, as far as calling Manitoba a booming jurisdiction, I believe the contrary is so, although I do appreciate very much the mention of Portage la Prairie no less than six times. That is, I believe, a record for the government to recognize a constituency held by the opposition. I do want to compliment the government. In my own personal experience, the doors of the ministers have been open, and they have been willing to listen to the concerns that have been raised by me on behalf of the constituents I represent. For that, I do want to compliment the government.

The government has brought to Portage la Prairie needed improvements to services in health care such as the establishment of the CT scanner at the Portage and District General Hospital and the extension of cataract surgery that is now underway in the OR of the Portage and District General Hospital. I do want to also acknowledge the participation of the Portage and District General Hospital Foundation who have seen the merit of supporting these two projects very handsomely using dollars raised through the foundation's work from persons in and about the Portage la Prairie area. It has been a co-operative endeavour to extend services that we now

appreciate are being offered by the Portage and District General Hospital.

I also want to recognize the past minister, the Honourable Jean Friesen, who, on two occasions, came to Portage la Prairie three years ago and put the spade in the ground for improvements to the waste water treatment plant and the water treatment plant in Portage la Prairie that both now function at levels that exceed any standards found anywhere else in the nation. That is something we in Portage la Prairie are extraordinarily proud of, and the government should be proud that that can be achieved. But what we want to see is an extension of that technology and to see those improvements at other locales within the province of Manitoba for the benefit of all Manitobans.

It is a very serious matter when we see 36 different jurisdictions under existing boil-water orders. You and I in the city of Winnipeg can take a drink of water from our faucet and not think anything of potential bacteria because we have that technology and the water treatment facilities that afford that, but many Manitobans do not. I want to emphasize to the government this should be a priority. I know the government recognizes this as a priority and has stated so in the Throne Speech, that they are wanting very much to improve water quality here in the province of Manitoba, but currently the facts speak for themselves. We have more Manitobans under boiled water than at any previous time in current memory.

* (15:30)

I also want to take this opportunity to look at a couple of comments that were made by the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) in his address to the Throne Speech. I want to quote Paul Harvey in saying that I would like to provide this Chamber with the rest of the story. It was recognized that we on the opposition side of the Chamber did not support the MTS Centre and its development in downtown Winnipeg. That is where the truth and the facts end.

We took every and all opportunity on this side of the House to point out about the True North centre group that proposed the development of the MTS Centre, that there were failings within that agreement that brought onstream millions, tens of millions of dollars, of taxpayers' money in concert with private

investment, that the agreement that had been signed was extraordinarily restrictive.

In fact, I brought to the Chamber the concern that not only those in Portage la Prairie had, but those in Brandon and Dauphin and Gimli and elsewhere in the province, that the agreement that was originally signed prohibited any government dollars going to any community within Manitoba. Because they had adopted Winnipeg Enterprises' business plan and sales area. Winnipeg Enterprises identified all of Manitoba, in fact, they identified parts of the United States, parts of Ontario, parts of Saskatchewan all as areas of draw to activities and events in the Winnipeg Arena.

Now, if they had adopted that particular definition of area that was going to be granted to the True North group as being exclusive area and that no facilities of arena style would receive any government monies, this prohibited any other arena being developed in that geographic area. I brought it to the attention of the First Minister, and the First Minister was gravely concerned that this had not been brought to his attention prior to that, and there was a great deal of negotiation and rewrite, and in the final stages of agreement it came down to 100 kilometres, which then made government support for arena facilities in The Pas, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, Winkler, Morden, areas still available to those communities if they wanted to redevelop in the next 25 years.

As well, I did ask the First Minister at the time, and this is why I did not support the contributions of taxpayers' dollars to this endeavour, and that was the First Minister's response being that this was not a template for any other community in the province. Only Winnipeg would receive this level of support from the Manitoba government. Why would those persons residing in Gimli, those in The Pas, those in Portage la Prairie—those persons are relegated by this agreement to being second-class citizens under the Doer government.

I, as a Manitoban, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cannot support any agreement that segregates and discriminates between Manitobans. A government should respect all Manitobans and treat all Manitobans in a fair and equitable fashion.

So bringing those points of fact once again to the forefront is important to me and all members on the

opposition benches. I hope it is important to those persons that supported the government in this endeavour, that perhaps they can look to the agreement and look to remedying this particular concern I air today, and show support for a redevelopment of arena facilities in Dauphin which are gravely needed, as are they in Portage la Prairie, because our junior hockey teams can no longer host the all-star game because we do not have adequate seating, which is necessary to host that event. I know that the honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) and myself have drawn this to the attention of the government, and I would hope sincerely that the government does take a different viewpoint as to the one stated in the debate regarding the True North group proposal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was also stated on numerous occasions about how much support has been given to our infrastructure, especially our highways throughout our province of Manitoba. Yes, it is true that, in the budgetary process, the level of support to Manitoba highways is increasing year over year, but that is solely in the budget document. When we look at the actual expenditures in the department of highways, we see that not only the current minister of highways, but the past two ministers of highways, have all underspent their budget.

Let me look at the actual figures of expenditures in transportation. Transportation left unallocated, unspent, \$13,979,000 for the year ending March 31, 2003. In March 31, 2002, year end, the Department of Transportation left \$14,267,000 unspent. In March 31, 2001, again, the Department of Transportation left \$3,254,000. If I go on and on, in all of the years of this government, we see underexpenditure of budgetary dollars. So, when one comes to acknowledging that increases have been seen in various departments, until one looks at the actual expenditure, one should remain doubtful.

But I do compliment the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton), currently, about his fanfare, about some of the things that have been undertaken. Also too was mentioned about us having 139 more medical practitioners currently in the province of Manitoba than we did in 1999. However, if one was to look at the actual allocation, where these practitioners are practising, they are not in the rurals of Manitoba. They are in the city of Winnipeg.

If you look even further to the actual practitioners, most of these individuals are general practitioners. What we have effectively lost in our province is the specialists, and that is why we are hard pressed to increase the number of heart surgeries in any given year. We are hard pressed to increase the hip and knee surgeries in any given year, because we do not have the surgeons, the specialists for those particular surgeries.

Also, too, in the medical field, this government has, indeed, and I will compliment them for adding additional seats to those that are entering training as doctors here in the province, rising from 75 to 85, and the Throne Speech indicates going to 100. But what I would like to mention, at this point in time, is that there is significant definition within those now entering the medical field, and I think it is folly of this government and the Faculty of Medicine to differentiate between individuals on the basis of race, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (15:40)

I believe that all persons who are entering the Faculty of Medicine should, in fact, have to be judged by the same yardstick, if you will, because I do not believe that it serves good purpose to expect less of someone because of their skin colour. It instils mediocrity. It does not instil the sense that one has to achieve, and it gives rise to those that would be considered racist in the province because of their discrimination based on skin colour. I do not believe that any government policy nor government agency which is supported by government monies should in fact discriminate against persons on the basis of race. That concerns me greatly. I believe all persons are created equal and should be treated equal, and personally, I do not see skin colour. I respect each and every person as an individual and will continue to do so.

There are some things that are going in the right direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I applaud the government there. I do see an increase of enrolment at our post-secondary educational institutions here in the province. But again the honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) made a statement that it was this government that brought post-secondary education through the University of the North to residents of the North. That is factually incorrect.

The Keewatin College was established in The Pas, and it is a proud institution, part of the fabric of

that community that has been offering post-secondary educational opportunities to residents in and about The Pas since the Duff Roblin era. I want to recognize the continued support and participation of the honourable member from The Pas because I know that he has been extraordinarily supportive of post-secondary opportunities in and about his constituency, and I would like to recognize him for that.

To draw out and extrapolate on opportunities of a post-secondary-education nature without mentioning the Honourable Duff Roblin and his undertakings, because he indeed developed the community college concept here in the province of Manitoba to provide for those individuals looking for vocational careers in the province of Manitoba, for that former Premier Duff Roblin should be recognized.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I continue in the debate, I do also want to take this opportunity to support the earlier comments of my honourable colleague from Emerson recognizing December 1 as farmer appreciation day. In regard to the meal that we partook down in the legislative dining room, I noted that virtually all MLAs from all political stripes were in attendance, and I believe that the meal was thoroughly enjoyed and recognize, too, those that spoke at the event of that day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that I only have a couple of minutes left, but I do want to leave, as I always do, some advice for the government. A lot has been made of the need to recycle and reuse, and we know that there have been extraordinary gains within that area. In fact, what we currently now recycle on a yearly basis will take the geographic area of the city of Brandon. If we were to look at that geographic area and cover that area by six metres—that is almost 20 feet—that is the level of landfill that would have occurred without recycling.

Now to look at that area, I want to compliment the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation for their incredible accomplishment in doing so. With the government I do want to leave this message today. In its thirst for more money, what this government has done is it is now clawing back from the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation, the provincial sales tax that they once received under the Tory administration, because a PST is charged on the levies attached to recyclable items, and that, Sir, is

double taxation. The government of Gary Filmon recognized that that was a wrong and returned this to them.

So, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity for making the address to the Throne Speech.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I would like to begin by welcoming the new pages to the House and also our two new colleagues, the new Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) and my new colleague, the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan), to this House.

I do want to begin by making a few comments about the member who has just spoken, the Member for Portage la Prairie and point out that, if you compare the Member for Portage la Prairie to the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), you find that there are some members over there that are a little smarter than others.

I want to point out that, historically, opposition members who are smart usually will point out the odd good thing that the government does. I can tell you that Abe Kovnats, who was here on the opposition side when I first got here in 1986, the member at that time for Niakwa, used to point out that in opposition you could have it both ways. Because he would stand up one day and he would criticize the government for not spending enough on this bridge or that road, and then he would turn up the next day and say that he wanted the taxes cut, and he was just all over the map. But he had no concerns about that. Consistency was not something that he ever tried to maintain. He was just right up front and said in opposition you could have it both ways.

I also want to point out that back in the 1973 election, when the NDP was being led by Ed Schreyer who was enormously popular at the time, we had a bus tour out to southwestern Manitoba and, in fact, the MLA who was in attendance at that, the Tory MLA, when the premier showed up in the bus, rushed up, pushed the NDP candidate, this is in the middle of the election now, pushed the candidate right out of the way and proceeded to take the premier on a tour down Main Street introducing him as if he was his leader.

So there is an example of a very wise, wise opposition politician.

The Member for Steinbach will learn over time that there is maybe some merit in following what the Member for Portage la Prairie has done and recognize some of the positive things that the government has done, by Jean Friesen and other people. I congratulate the member for first having the good sense to point those out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Throne Speech, we noted that, in fact, the Throne Speech actually reflects the buoyant Manitoba economy and the very prudent management of this government. Let me tell you that the Throne Speech points out that Manitoba is the first among the provinces for growth in earnings this past year, it is third in Canada for the growth in investment, it has the best population growth since the 1980s.

*(15:50)

No wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Tories over there are so grumpy and grouchy. Every day they come in here and it looks like the world is coming to an end. They are so disappointed in the success that this government has had for the last five-plus years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, housing construction is at an all-time high. This is after four years of double-digit increases. When you have record housing starts, it means that the real estate market is hot. It is buoyant. People are buying houses. They are buying new furniture. The whole economy is churning favourably.

As the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) had pointed out, and he seems quite happy about it, since 1999, enrolment in Manitoba colleges has increased by 33 percent. You know, the Tories were in government for 11 years. We never saw any activity in downtown construction. The downtown dropped under the Tory 11 years. The enrolment in Manitoba universities stayed stagnant. There was really nothing going on for those 11 years. This fall, the Red River College campus had its first full class. There are, since 1999, 13 000 more students enrolled in Manitoba universities and colleges, 1300 more Aboriginal students. Tuition has been reduced by 10 percent since 1969. Where in the 11 years of Tory government did we ever find a year where tuition dropped in Manitoba universities and colleges? It never happened. As a matter of fact, there were demonstrations by the students against the government of the day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the aerospace sector is starting to grow in Manitoba with the Boeing plant selected to work on the new 7E7 passenger liner and Standard Aero's \$300-million engine servicing deal with SkyWest Airlines. I mean, these are signs of an economy that is on the move, and we do not know how things will end up two or three years from now, but what we know is, all the fundamentals are sound in the Manitoba economy.

Manitoba is expected to post a 5.4% increase in capital investment, well above the national average of 3.1 percent. Manitobans have the lowest electricity costs in North America and the lowest car insurance premiums in Canada. We have had a balanced budget for the last five years. You know, all of these things rankle and irk the Tories, because that is not what NDP governments are supposed to do according to their book, the book of rules. We are just not following their book of rules, and we are not helping them out as they expect that we should. Our credit rating has improved. We have had two credit bond rating improvements over the last five years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had repayment on the pension liability. You know, successive governments ignored that liability. Eleven years of Tories, before that the NDP, all blindly ignored the pension liability, but it was this government, this Finance Minister who recognized that pension liability, taking steps, steps that you would not take when you were in government, steps to reduce that liability.

Since 1999, individual income taxes, have been cut for members, and are worth a total of \$220 million a year. Members are always talking about tax reductions. Well, we gave tax reductions, but do you hear any of them giving us credit? No. They want more tax reductions. We reduced the taxes \$220 million. Provincial property tax credits and reductions totalled \$92 million. Business taxes are down \$74 million. The small business tax rate has dropped from 8 percent to 5 percent. Did it drop during the pro-business years under the Tories, those 11 pro-business years? No. They left the small business tax rate at 8 percent. It was the NDP government that reduced it to 5 percent. We raised the threshold from \$200,000 to \$400,000. Did that happen under a Tory government? No. The general corporate tax rate dropped from 17 percent to 15 percent. Was that under a Tory government? No. It was under an NDP government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the 1990s, the education property taxes across Manitoba increased 60 percent while housing values remained flat. Since 1999, property taxes have remained flat while housing values have increased. That is the difference since the NDP formed the government in 1999.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba has set a target of 10 000 new immigrants annually under the Provincial Nominee Program. It has been so successful that other provinces are looking at our program. I believe it was New Brunswick, on a trip that I was on recently, where they were telling me, they were asking questions about our program, and saying they were so impressed that they wanted to find out how we did it so they could follow it.

This year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 7500 immigrants will come to Manitoba, a threefold increase over 1999. So that is 100% improvement in every point I dealt with. As hard as I try, I cannot find any negative statistics on this government, and I have really worked at this, but I will keep trying.

For 20 years, we have been talking about foreign degrees and credentials being recognized in Canada. I remember this being an issue way back in 1981. One wonders after all these years why we are still talking about this issue. I think that it really boils down to a structural problem because it is not just Manitoba. Every single province seems to have the same problem.

To increase the supply of doctors in the province, they pour money at the problem but because the rules of how many doctors can be trained, or how many professionals can be trained, are being controlled over the years, in this case, by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. By the teaching hospitals saying, "You have to put this amount of money into and hire this amount of people to train a certain number of doctors," the governments find their desires thwarted. I would think that governments, either this one or a government in the future, are going to have to look at that whole issue of how much power do self-regulating professions deserve in the economy.

I will give you an example. I am told that Japan is graduating a very high percentage of engineers, and computer-related people, and doctors, medical people and a lesser amount of lawyers. So it is incumbent upon the governments of the day to make

public policy decisions as to where the money is going to go, and whether it might not be better to train more doctors or more engineers than some other profession. So that is, I think, the area that we are going to have to take a look at. To be able to make a promise that we are going to increase the number of doctors, but we are going to have to be able to make some decisions here about how much power these bodies, these self-regulating professions should have, and how much control they should have and how much they should be able to tell the government that you have to do this and you have to do that.

I do not know, I always thought that the bosses were supposed to be the elected governments. The governments were elected to restructure the economies and not the other way around. But that is an issue for another day.

Now, I hope I do not run out of time here, but I want to deal with a couple of issues. One of them is certainly this new wind farm development that we are developing here in Manitoba, and some of the comments that are being made. Over the years, Canada is a country developed by a national railway going east-west when it would have been better to develop north-south. But we made a decision to be a separate country years ago, and we developed a railway.

At a certain point, a number of years ago, governments should have made decisions to construct an east-west transmission line because it only makes sense that we need a grid system across the country so that power can be moved back and forth across the country, as opposed to going north-south. That is what we are seeing.

*(16:00)

Our whole energy patterns are developed on a north-south basis, where our pipelines run north-south, our transmission lines run north-south. So we have to do that, in the sense that if we have this transmission line and we have this grid we can go ahead and construct Wuskwatim, we can construct Conawapa and all of the other dam sites that we are going to build in the future. We should be able to sell that power on an east-west basis as well as a north-south.

Now, with that comes the whole area of the wind power. I want to tell you that the *Free Press* had an

article here just yesterday, I think it was, about wind power. The headline is "Wind power is just a wasteful fad." Alberta, which has half the wind production in Canada, built its first wind farm back in 1989, opened the first one in 1992, and they have half the installed capacity in the country in Alberta.

You know something? That capacity in Alberta was funded by the Alberta Heritage Fund, a government fund. I would like to know if the *Free Press*, in all of these years, ever wrote any articles saying that wind power is just a wasteful fad about the Alberta Heritage Fund putting money into wind power way back in '89. Now in '89, who was the government here in Manitoba? They were the Tories. While Alberta was showing the foresight to develop wind power and other provinces and states were doing the same thing, what was happening here in Manitoba? The Tories were ignoring the development of wind power.

What is even more interesting is that this particular development in Manitoba is private-sector money. The amendment of the Tories to the Speech from the Throne states that the government's failure to recognize and encourage the importance private sector involvement has in growing Manitoba's economy, exactly what we are doing. We did what they could not do for 11 years. We enticed a private company to develop a wind farm, the largest in Canada today, 100 megawatts, here in Manitoba, a private sector development. We did what they could not do.

Here in their amendment to the Speech from the Throne, they are criticizing our failure to recognize and encourage the important role of the private sector. What the heck is this if this is not recognizing the role of the private sector? Before you draft these things up, why do you not look around and check the facts first, before you fit in your little amendment here to the Speech from the Throne?

I wanted to make some comments about the wind industry in general, because a lot has changed in the last few years. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a number of things that have changed over 20 years. The *Free Press* considers that wind power is a fad, and I am telling you that over the last 20 years, forward-thinking governments and forward-thinking individuals have developed wind farms in other areas. For example, over the last 20 years, the turbines themselves have gotten huge. We are

looking at 1.5-megawatt turbines. The ones here in Manitoba are going to be even bigger, the Vestas machines. There are machines even bigger than that. These ones run around a million dollars apiece. There are 3-megawatt machines out, but I think those a little too rich.

If you go out and actually see these things, you will see that the old ones are quite small and have a limited capacity. The prices of the turbines have dropped considerably over the last number of years.

Another thing that has happened to make wind power a much different proposition is that energy prices have been deregulated. For example, in Alberta the price of energy is around \$72 a kilowatt hour and that can vary, whereas in Manitoba we are looking at \$5 or \$6. In Saskatchewan, it is \$5 or \$6. But you are selling this power on an export market, and you all know what happened in California with Enron in the last couple years. When they deregulated the pricing, the prices went sky-high. So what might have been a marginal enterprise four or five years ago, ten years ago, when the Albertans were developing their wind farm with the help of the Heritage Trust Fund, is totally different today with the bigger turbines, with the lower prices for the turbines, with the deregulated energy market in a number of areas.

The turbines operate differently. The technology is changing. It is getting better. They operate now at higher speeds than they did before and lower speeds because with these turbines, they cut out when a wind speed gets beyond a certain 80 miles an hour, or whatever it is. They just shut right down. When it drops below 40 miles an hour or whatever, it just shuts right down. Well, the technology has changed to expand the limits so we are getting more production out of these things.

The only point in this *Free Press* article that I can really agree with is that there is a problem with the storing to generate electricity. That will be solved over time, and I would think that we will be able to develop storage batteries over the next 10 or 20 years that are going to be able to store the power. That will eliminate the last problem that this newspaper author here has regarding wind power.

I did want to say that the global wind industry has increased by over 8000 megawatts in 2003. The generating capacity is over 39 000 megawatts. Wind

is the fastest growing source of electricity in the world with growth averaging roughly 25 to 30 percent over the past five years. Most of the installed capacity is in Germany, Spain, Denmark. As a matter of fact, Vestas, one of the big companies that produce these turbines, is from Denmark. They produce about, I think, 30 percent of all of the wind turbines.

In North America, we have General Electric as a big producer of the turbines. You will find a lot of those in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and other places like that. Canada has an installed base of 439 megawatts, and has about 50 000 megawatts of developable wind resource, enough to supply 20 percent of our electric supply. The reason I give you these statistics is just to point out that while our wind farm will be the biggest to date, it is not huge in comparison to the capacity in other provinces and in other states.

If we are looking at 39 000 megawatts globally, then the Manitoba component is a hundred out of 39 000. But for us, it is a big deal. For us, it is the biggest machines, the newest machines and the biggest farm for the moment in Canada. Now, if you go to Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, they will have a different story on this. They are in the middle of constructing their turbines as well, and they claim to be at the hundred megawatt as well. So maybe we have to go out there and count the turbines. Maybe he has put in one extra one to make sure we are bigger for the moment. But anyway, these are all very good signs that the government is on the right track.

The United States has nearly doubled its capacity in the last two years in wind production and currently has 6000 megawatts in installed capacity, or 16 percent of the global capacity.

* (16:10)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of reasons why, and you know, this is kind of a moving target. People never really thought of Manitoba as a great area to produce wind power, but the reality is that there are two or three other locations that are even better than the one that is being developed, but there is a cost to running power lines, and so on, to the sites. We could have a better site, but if it is 50 miles away from a transmission line, and you have to pay a million dollars a mile or so to run your power

lines, then it does not become as attractive a proposition.

So we are not even developing the best of the three sites at this point, but we are developing the one that is close—

An Honourable Member: Most cost effective.

Mr. Maloway: "Most cost effective," the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurschou) said, and he is right. If it is close, we do not have to run these power poles for miles and miles and miles. But the more work that has been done in this area, we are discovering new things. In fact, I do not know how they made the projections that said you are going to have this capacity over 10 or 20 years. To me it is voodoo economics to be able to make projections 5 and 10 years down the line.

But the fact is that when you get out into the field, and you start testing your sites, what they are finding in some cases is people phone in a report that there is a lot of wind in their area. When they go out and test it, it is the wrong kind of wind. You cannot just have a windy area, it has got to be a certain kind of wind. I do not know what that kind is, but they play with it. They test it for a number of months. They determine that that site is good. So a site that maybe was not considered good initially, may in fact, come around. A site that you think that would be really good may not be good. That is my point. So we are looking at southern Manitoba very favourably.

There is another component here and that is the local development of the farmers. The Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) during Question Period said: "Why are you spending money on a wind farm? You should be spending the money to keep the children out of the hotels." In actual fact, he is not recognizing the fact that this is a private development. That is exactly what these guys wanted but they did not do for 11 years. We have a private development, and we are not putting money into it.

He has failed to point out all the money that is going to go to the farmers in the area who allow these turbines to sit on their lands, those farmers are quite happy. I am sure they would not be happy to hear that the Member for Ste. Rose is running down their project. I am sure that he will be up here real soon to correct the record on this. I am sure, I am

positive that this member will be the first to support this project and support Manitoba farmers' rights to have economic development and contribute to the power to the grid.

This particular site, the St. Leon project, is located 150 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg. It is within 3 kilometres of a transmission line, which is a good thing to be. The project is going to bring \$187 million of new capital, and \$108 million in lifetime operating expenditures. Now, in Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, their new project, not the turbines but the actual cones, are actually being built in Saskatoon. The contract is given to Hitachi. There is no development in Manitoba for constructing these things.

An Honourable Member: Not yet.

Mr. Maloway: Not yet, but you know if you go into North Dakota, there is in Fargo, I think, in Grand Forks, there are plants right in there, building the pieces. What they do not build are the blades, because evidently the blades are hard to calibrate correctly, so they bring those in from Denmark, or, well, at least in terms of Vestas.

Now, the question is, as someone said to me earlier, we have this great aerospace industry in Manitoba, you would think that we should be able to adapt these blades and be able to manufacture them here. But, nevertheless, I am sure if the government has got this far on this project, I am sure that they will get past those next little hurdles in due course because this is not the only project that we are going to be looking at. I am sure we will be looking at more projects, more private development.

I would like to see Hydro develop their own capacity as well. But, there is an endless scope here. There is an endless development. I do not believe for a moment that somehow you can say that it is all going to end with so many megawatts. I do not think there is really a limit. As a matter of fact, in Alberta what they are doing with some of their sites, they are moving some of their old windmills out, or turbines out, and they are putting some new, bigger ones in there. I do not know how close you can put these things but I am sure that if you have got a hundred in there right now, you can probably put 300 of them in there.

Now, in the United States, I will tell you that if you are interested you can go down to Edgeley,

South Dakota. There is a big farm there. There is another one in Highmore, South Dakota. *[interjection]* Now I see I am getting the hook here already, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I did not want to take you on a travelogue here. We could go into Minnesota, we could look at Minnesota and other areas, but I know there are other people that want to make the address here to the Speech from the Throne and I am prepared to defer to the next speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A point of order, the honourable Member for Portage.

Mr. Faurschou: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not want to interrupt the honourable member in his address to the Throne Speech. However, he did make mention in regard to absence or presence of honourable members, and I believe that is contrary to our rules. I would ask that the honourable member not do so because it is, as I say, contrary to the rules.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the same point of order, I listened very carefully to the member's comments, and his reference to the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) was that the Member for Ste. Rose had, in his speech, said something that the Member for Elmwood was disproving, and that he thought very shortly the Member for Ste. Rose would be on his feet to dispute what the Member for Elmwood had corrected him on.

So I was listening very carefully, and I noted that the Member for Elmwood was very careful to refer to a previous speech of the Member for Ste. Rose and was anticipating a future speech by the Member for Ste. Rose. We are just attempting to clarify the record, and I heard no mention of absence or presence in the House during those comments. I stand to be corrected, but I certainly did not hear that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is a difference of opinion. The only reason why the Member for Portage had an opinion is because he is here looking around. You basically notice what is physically the fact, whereas in the statement the Member for—*[interjection]*

We are wasting time here. The Member for Elmwood was saying in the former speech and that

he will be speaking again. It does not serve to any physical presence or absence. So there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I hate to take valuable time in this House, certainly time from my speech, to comment on the ruling, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is another one of your appalling rulings. You should show members a little bit more respect. You should show members more respect when you give rulings and not mock them for why they raised a point of order.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only thing that is appalling is the member of this House, after you have made a ruling, commenting, reflecting on the Chair. The member should know that the appropriate thing when the Speaker or the Chair makes a ruling is to challenge the ruling, if the member feels it is inappropriate.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the fundamental principles of this Legislature, of parliamentary democracy, is respect for the Chair and appropriate processes. This member may wish to shout down a member—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Somebody has the floor.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask that you call the member to order. In fact, I think the member should apologize for reflecting on the Chair because that is totally inappropriate. If the member disagreed with your ruling, he could have challenged that ruling. He chose not to do so, and for him now to stand, purportedly to speak, and reflect on the Chair is unparliamentary and completely out of order. You should call that member to order.

* (16:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Our rule states, section 71(1) "The Speaker should be protected against reflections on his or her actions." That is the rule. I plead to all members of the House to please be careful about what you do, what you say, with respect to the office of the Speaker. *[interjection]* I am speaking to all honourable members.

A point of order is a violation of the rule. Who violated the rules here? The rules say the Speaker should be protected against reflection on his or her actions. So the honourable minister has a point of order.

Mr. Schuler: Thank you. Shoe fits, wear it, is my comment to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as far as the Throne Speech goes, I would like to, first of all, begin my comments on the Throne Speech—*[interjection]*

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you just made a ruling that I had raised a legitimate point of order regarding the member's comments, and instead of doing the appropriate thing, which would have been to withdraw those comments, the member made a comment about if the shoe fits wear it. I do not know if he was talking about the shoe that is on his foot that he is placing in his mouth on this, but the member should realize that when you have made, in this case, unparliamentary comments that have been the subject of the Speaker's ruling, the appropriate thing to do is to withdraw those remarks.

I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you ask the member to withdraw those unparliamentary remarks and apologize, not to you personally, to all members of this Legislature because we rely on the respect for the Chair to enforce all our rules. That is something all 57 MLAs need to respect. This member is showing disrespect for the Chair and should withdraw those remarks and apologize.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the same point of order.

Mr. Schuler: There has to be respect shown by 57 members of this Chamber, not just by one or the other. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have pointed out to you on other occasions where I have felt that comments made from the Chair were over and above what I felt a Speaker should be making, and making fun of a comment of a member of this Chamber and saying the only reason why you know somebody is not here is because you are sitting there making light of it, I just do not believe that is acceptable. I will stand by that comment. I have a right to make that comment, and I stand by that comment.

The Chair should be treated with respect. It should not be a place to cast aspersions on any

member of this House. I just do not believe that is appropriate, and I have said so. I do not care what advice you get from the table in front of you, that is not appropriate, not now, not before, not in history, to actually make aspersions on a member. I actually do not think it is appropriate. I believe that comment was made and it is proper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has been advised to take the matter under advisement, so it is being taken under advisement.

* * *

Mr. Schuler: I wish to begin my comments on the Throne Speech that we heard a week ago, and I would like to, first of all, begin by thanking—

An Honourable Member: Apologize, never mind.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the howling and the hoying from the back bench is making it difficult, increasingly difficult, to give a speech, and I know the members have had their opportunity to speak and should use their time appropriately when they speak.

I would like to thank the people of Springfield for the opportunity to have served them in the last year. We have certainly gone through a lot of difficult times in the R.M. of Springfield. The BSE issue clearly has been a difficult issue for my community. In fact, I was at the Springfield ag society dinner a couple of nights ago and had opportunity to speak. Our Member of Parliament, the Honourable Vic Toews, was present at that time, and I spoke about the fact that, though we faced times in agriculture, whether it was drought or whether it was too much rain, those are issues that are from a natural perspective. As tough as they are on a farmer, you still cannot really fight against it because it is there. It is something that happens.

However, the BSE issue and the fact that decisions are made in Washington, D.C., based on political reasons, we know that now the defeated member of the U.S. capital, Tom Daschle, of course, was one individual that felt the border should be kept closed permanently. These kinds of political issues left our farmers very frustrated because it was not as if it was a natural occurrence, whether it was too much rain or a storm or something like that. It had all to do with politics. That was what was very frustrating for the people of Springfield and our

farming communities. You know, we have had to work through that. There have been other issues that we have had to deal with in the R.M. of Springfield and the R.M. of East St. Paul. I thank the people for their support and for the fact that at times like this they pulled together and they worked in the best interests of the community and have done so in the last year.

I would also like to thank my employees, the individuals who work for little pay in my office and do tremendous work. Gayle Dowler, who has worked with me from day one, has done so in a selfless way. She has worked hard and has done just a great job not just for myself as the MLA but also for the people of Springfield.

* (16:30)

I would like to also thank Matthew Pruse and Lucas Golembioski, who do a lot of the legislative work, basically getting paid a very little amount of money, and yet just do an incredible amount of work. I consider them part-time-volunteer, part-time-paid staff, because the hours that they put in, I certainly cannot pay them for, and the work is just 110 percent. I really do appreciate their efforts on my behalf and on behalf of the people of Springfield.

I also want to thank this Chamber and my fellow colleagues for the opportunity I had to go to the BILLD Conference that was held in Madison, Wisconsin. It was a leadership institute that is under the Midwest legislators' conference and it is called The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development. It was just an amazing opportunity. I know next year, from the other side of the House, one of their members will be allowed to go. It is just an amazing, amazing course to participate in, not just do you get to meet individuals from the entire Midwest, but you also get what I would suspect is probably a \$15,000 course crammed into about a week's time. It was really worth it. I would wish for this Chamber that we could send more members.

In the last year, since we have had the last Speech from the Throne, we have also had the U.S. election. I would suggest there are a lot of positive things to come out of that for members of Canada and for this Chamber. Certainly, Tom Daschle the Democrat, I almost said the New Democrat, but he is actually an old Democrat. He was defeated. He stood in South Dakota about two, two and a half months

ago. He stated clearly that his preference was that the border with the United States and Canada be closed permanently.

What most Canadians, and certainly the Liberal elite, the left-wing elite like what we see across the way, did not want Canadians and Manitobans to know, when Senator Daschle was making those comments, standing next to him was John Kerry, nodding his head vigorously, agreeing that the Canadian border should be shut permanently. I would suggest to many that we dodged a bullet in Canada. John Kerry and John Edwards are probably two politicians who had very little love lost for Canada and for Canadian issues. Certainly, with Tom Daschle and individuals like himself, I do not think we would have fared very well if the election would have been otherwise.

I do want to just make a few comments on issues that have taken place since the last election. I would like to headline one of my comments with promises made and promises kept. I made the promise in the election of 2003 that I would fight for, and see to it, that my community would get an interchange at Highway 59 and the Perimeter, and that the Perimeter be twinned, the completion be done. I am pleased to report to the people of Springfield that that is, in fact, taking place now. Certainly, I will continue to be on top of the issue, keep promoting that project be completed, not just as it benefits my constituents, in fact, it will benefit more those individuals from the city of Winnipeg who want to travel to the beaches, that want to go to the lakes and cottages, and rightfully so. The interchange was a mess. It was long overdue, that that project be undertaken.

The twinning of the Perimeter was also very important. It seems to be a problem area with icing and had some very unfortunate accidents with loss of life. Thus, I am very pleased that I, on behalf of the citizens of Springfield and East St. Paul, can report that that is one of the promises that I made and that is one of the promises that I have, indeed, kept.

There is, however, another issue that I will be pushing the government in this upcoming season. That has to do with the situation that happened approximately June of 2004. That is about six months ago where 46-year-old Peter Krahn had a heart attack while exercising at the rec centre in East St. Paul. It took 18 minutes for an ambulance to

respond from Selkirk. Just for the record, the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service uses a benchmark of four minutes. Regrettably, Peter Krahn did not make it. He died.

So I will keep pushing that an ambulance be provided for East and West St. Paul. Between them now, East St. Paul has 8000 and West St. Paul has 4000 citizens, so between them about 12 000 people. There is no ambulance available to them in a timely manner. What is of great concern, not just to the residents of East St. Paul and West St. Paul, is the fact that those two communities are dissected by major highways which carry an awful lot of cottage country traffic, a lot of people travelling to and from other areas, for example, the Perimeter Highway which goes through East and West St. Paul and then through Springfield, Highway 59, which has become a major artery for those individuals heading up to Beausejour and Lac du Bonnet and so forth. Even a lot of people from Selkirk take Highway 59 heading north and then, of course, conversely, coming back.

Certainly our hope is that something will be done. The R.M. of East St. Paul has indicated that they are more than agreeable to have the ambulance housed in their facility in East St. Paul, certainly in the short term, and I am sure some kind of agreement could be worked out there. We will keep pushing the provincial government to do something on that file.

I would also point out that there is a whole section of St. Clements that is sort of cut off by the floodway going into the river by Lockport, that corner in there of St. Clements which has a lot of population growth. They also have no access to an ambulance or timely access to an ambulance.

So we would like to continue to push, certainly on behalf of myself and my office, that that continue, and I will work with all of those involved that those three communities get timely access.

I would also like to make a few comments about where the government has come in the last year, and I guess it can be best put in the terms that we have seen a government that runs its government by headlines. They have perfected the art of announcing very little and accomplishing nothing. We see it over and over again, the Premier (Mr. Doer) the other day crowing about he was going to spend all kinds of time with the President over a latté and biscotti, talking about the important issues of the affairs of the

province. We know that is all spin. It seems to suit the newspapers well in this province. They love those kinds of headlines, and again, has very little substance to it. If the Premier got into a receiving line, he was probably more than lucky, and very little has come of that.

This Premier has been probably the least effective leader in the nation when it comes to BSE. We have heard it over and over again spun not once, not twice, but on multiple occasions how he is this big champion of BSE. He flew to Washington, D.C., on a holiday, so it was a mere junket. Nobody was there to receive him; nobody knew he was there. But he took his big tour de force and went off to Washington, D.C., and picked a long weekend to do it and accomplished nothing. Often now, it has been referred to as the Doer-nothing government, and again, if the shoe fits, wear it. It is an appropriate tag.

We have heard over and over again issues being announced. Time and time again we have heard announcements made and nothing comes of it. I already have it marked in my calendar. We have Conawapa Monday. We have wind-farm Tuesday. We have Devils Lake-diversion Wednesday. It is like on a rotation. Oh, it must be that day to send out a press release to get that issue into the media. Not that this government seems to get a lot accomplished, six years they have been working on these files, and we have seen nothing on it yet.

* (16:40)

We have heard members crow about this east-west power grid, the same power grid that they campaigned against in 1981, which was committed to at that time between the three western provinces. I am glad to see they have actually seen the light on it. I suspect, again, nothing will come of it, but we hear project after project announced and re-announced, triple-announced and quadruple-announced, and I think Manitobans are tired of it.

We have seen that this government now cannot just have a budget. They have to turn their Throne Speech into a budget because they are so behind the eight-ball, and there is so much pressure on them to actually do something that they have to use a Throne Speech to try to get headlines to try to convince people that they are doing something even though they are doing very little.

This Throne Speech is a grave disappointment. It is another one of these re-announcements of promises made, promises broken. Certainly, the people of Springfield are disappointed in this government again, continue to be disappointed with this government, and it certainly is not a Throne Speech that can be supported. It showed no vision. It showed no clarity. It actually gave no hope to Manitobans. They had a little bit of the little Dutch boy sticking his finger into the holes of wherever there was water leaking and that was about the extent of what this does. It was a stopgap kind of a Throne Speech to backfill the problems that this government is facing.

Unfortunately, this government has run out of any kind of vision it might have had and even that is a tenuous statement. They have, basically, run out of jam. They are a fairly lacklustre government and have proven themselves inept at dealing with issues as they come up. Only when it is at a crisis proportion, then do we see any kind of movement on behalf of this government. So certainly from this member, on this side of the House, it is not a Throne Speech that one should be supporting. It is certainly not a Throne Speech that the people of Springfield were looking for. I would, again, say to the government: Where is vision? Where is hope? Where is there a plan for the future? All of those are terribly lacking.

I, as one member of this House, will continue to push the government in an attempt to see them move the province forward that we can grow and develop this province so that we might someday, where we were almost more in '99, become a have province rather than deteriorating under this government into a have-not province.

One of my NDP colleagues once said he was thankful for poor people in Manitoba because they vote NDP. That, clearly, is the mantra of this government. That is where they want to go. They want to keep Manitoba down, keep it a have-not province, increase the debt, spend money beyond any kind of comprehension and show that you have no vision, no plan, no hope for the future. Unfortunately, that bodes very poorly for our province. I, as one member, will continue to push this government that it takes a point of view that this should be a have province, that we should build a strong economy and certainly that is what I will be doing over the next weeks, days, months of the following session.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak in favour of the Speech from the Throne. Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our two new members to the Legislature and congratulate them on their successful election victories. The member from Minto I have only known for a short time, but I can tell that he is a genuine and sincere individual who is very interested in improving the well-being of the citizens of Minto. I had the pleasure of campaigning with him and the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), and I can also attest that he does have a sense of humour.

I also want to welcome the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen). I know that this member will also be a hardworking elected official. I have the pleasure of working with him on the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force and he appears to be very interested in his community and the health of our province's young people.

I also want to take a minute to pay tribute to two previous members in those two constituencies who recently decided to make changes in their careers. MaryAnn Mihychuk and Merv Tweed very ably represented the constituencies of Minto and Turtle Mountain since 1995. I want to say that it was a privilege to work in this House with both of these members. I know that both of them worked very hard on behalf of their constituents. Although the issues they encountered were undoubtedly different, as the member for Turtle Mountain represented a rural area and the member from Minto represented an urban constituency, they both exhibited an enthusiasm for their constituencies that was obvious and very much appreciated by the people they represented.

In particular, I want to thank MaryAnn Mihychuk for always being willing to spend extra time with me to coach me in my new role as a member of the Legislative Assembly. She was somebody who worked hard in this Legislature and was very passionate about her beliefs. She serves as an excellent role model. I wish both former members of this House good luck as they undertake new challenges in their lives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to welcome the new pages to the Chamber and congratulate them on their outstanding academic achievement, which has provided them with this unique opportunity to serve

as pages in the Legislature. Their commitment to their schoolwork has allowed them to be selected to fulfill this role. I hope they will find their time here interesting and educational. I have it being said, by many of the past pages that they look forward to the days of the week where they worked here in the Legislature. I hope that the new pages share in the enthusiasm expressed by their previous colleagues.

I also want to welcome back the Clerk of the Assembly, the table officers and the Sergeant-at-Arms. I want to thank these people for always being there for us. I have the honour of serving as the Chair of the Social and Economic Development Committee of the Legislature. I have had the pleasure of working side-by-side with several of the table officers. I want to express my appreciation to them for always being so very well organized and helpful to me in performing my job. They always go that extra mile and execute their work in a very professional manner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as many of my colleagues in the Legislature are aware, there has been a much-talked about televised competition taking place across Canada recently to definitively clarify who the "Greatest Canadian" is. The accomplishments of 10 people were highlighted, and who won? Yes, who did win? The winner of the greatest Canadian contest was a man who started his life as a Baptist preacher from the prairies. In 1935, Tommy Douglas was elected into Parliament under the CCF banner. He served for 10 years as a member of Parliament and was a five-time Premier of Saskatchewan. As a Premier, he was responsible for the passage of over 70 bills that helped to reform the social and economic structure of Saskatchewan. In his first four years in government, Mr. Douglas paid off the provincial debt, created a province-wide hospitalization plan, paved roads and ensured that electricity and sewage pipes ran through many more Saskatchewan communities. Most important to Canadians was his passion to ensure that health care would be affordable and accessible to everyone, no matter what their economic situation entailed. As a New Democrat I can say with pride that we are working hard to maintain his legacy.

It is disturbing to see the Manitoba Conservatives urging our government to change the direction we are on and to turn our services over to for-profit businesses. At their provincial convention, held earlier this month, they debated a resolution

calling for increased competition in the health care field. I hope that the results of the "Greatest Canadian" competition give them pause to reconsider if they are on the right path. Our government believes in supporting public facilities as it has been shown that non-profit facilities provide a better quality of care. Researchers at McMaster University examined the performance of 26 000 hospitals in the United States over a 15-year period and found that for-profit hospitals have a 2% higher death rate than non-profits. This is because the for-profits cut corners, for instance in hiring less-qualified staff. They have to so that they can ensure that they make profits to provide for the shareholders who need a 10 to 15% return on their investment.

Five years ago, we began a plan to renew our public health care here in Manitoba. Our initial focus has been on rebuilding the needed human resources to ensure the health care system functions well. This has included increased training for doctors, nurses and health technicians. The number of nurses being educated throughout the province has doubled. Almost 900 more nurses and 139 more doctors now practise in Manitoba than in 1999. There are now more doctors practising in Manitoba than at any time in the previous decade. The number of students training to operate diagnostic equipment has also increased, to the point where it has more than doubled from previous years.

* (16:50)

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Since 1999, our government has invested \$800 million in new equipment and infrastructure. These investments are improving the lives of Manitobans and ensure they receive the health care they need.

Part of our plan is to focus our energy on capital investments in hospitals and in purchasing new diagnostic and treatment equipment. Some very important capital projects, such as the Health Science Centre redevelopment, Brandon Regional Health Centre expansion, and the introduction of an ACCESS centre in River East have taken place.

We have also been able to increase the number of MRIs at Pan Am Clinic and also in Brandon and at the Health Sciences Centre, as well as purchased 15 new CT scanners across the province. Our investment in infrastructure and equipment has

provided us with the tools necessary to treat Manitobans in a more timely fashion.

We have also tripled the number of services we have been able to provide with the MRIs and more than doubled the number of CT scans since 1999.

Manitobans have also benefited from the introduction of new technologies, such as gamma knife surgery. This cutting-edge technology has improved immensely the treatment for people who need to undergo brain surgery, to the point where patients are able to recover and resume their normal lives much quicker.

We have made great strides in cancer treatment. People waiting for radiation have seen their wait time reduced from an average of over six weeks to just one week. This change in wait time represents one of the shortest times across the country.

Our government has also made it a priority to reduce the wait time for cardiac care. Cardiac care wait lists have been reduced by two-thirds over the past 15 years.

I am very pleased to see that this Throne Speech directs attention to the areas of hip, knee and cataract surgeries. In addition of two operating rooms at Concordia Hospital, along with the recruitment of an orthopedic surgeon for the Boundary Trails Hospital, means we will be able to more quickly address the needs of Manitobans.

The people of St. Norbert will benefit greatly from our capital investment of \$5.5 million in Victoria General Hospital. Our investment has helped leverage additional contributions from the private sector, bringing the total investment in this project to \$11 million. The hospital plans to expand the emergency and oncology departments, in addition to providing a library and a meditation garden. These improvements will modernize the current facilities at the hospital, thereby enhancing the services provided to the residents of St. Norbert and south Winnipeg.

Our planned expansion of cataract surgery at Winnipeg's Pan Am Clinic and Portage General Hospital will ensure that we are able to perform more procedures. The costs of performing cataract surgery at Pan Am Clinic have been reduced as the result of our purchasing this facility. When the Pan Am Clinic

was a private business, our government paid \$1,000 for each cataract operation. After our government purchased the clinic, costs dropped to \$700 per operation. The reduced cost to perform each operation enables us to perform more operations with the same amount of money.

Our government will be improving the safety of the workplace for health care workers by introducing new legislation to make Manitoba the second province in Canada to mandate the use of safer needles in health care facilities. This new technology will provide peace of mind for health care workers, who have sometimes been forced to endure the long agony of awaiting the outcome of tests for HIV and hepatitis C, resulting from a needlestick injury. The new legislation will reduce accidental needlestick injuries and exposure to infectious diseases. The health care professionals have been advocating for the use of this new technology and are very happy to hear of our commitment to their welfare.

In the past year, we have placed an increased emphasis on healthy living with the introduction of the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Oswald). The work of the all-party task force that resulted in the introduction of the environmental tobacco legislation was a very positive step forward for the health of Manitobans. The Stop Smoking campaign that our province has undertaken targets teen smoking, and it has resulted in the highest reduction of teen smoking in Canada.

The Healthy Child Initiative is an example of a very successful program that has been paying dividends in the area of healthy living. The Healthy Child coalition of Fort Garry and St. Norbert communities have been working very hard on behalf of the residents of St. Norbert and Fort Garry to ensure that the objectives of the programs are met.

In the St. Norbert area, the Ryerson family centre, the south Family Resource Centre, the Parc La Salle Parent-Tot Centre and le Centre de la jeune enfance de Saint-Norbert at École Noël-Ritchot school, are all examples of a very successful program that are funded through this initiative. It is really important to note that a landmark, long-term study involving people from Ypsilanti, Michigan, showed the affects of a high-quality early care and education on low-income three and four year olds. It showed that adults at the age of 40 who participated in a pre-school program in their early years have higher

earnings, are more likely to hold a job, have committed fewer crimes and are more likely to have graduated from high school. The High/Scope Perry Pre-School Study was conducted by the High School Education Research Foundation. Overall, the study documented a return to society of more than \$17 for every taxed dollar invested in early education and early care.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be involved with the consultation process with the public to solicit their views in how to help our children and young people enjoy the benefits of optimal health now and throughout their adult lives. An all-party task force has been commissioned to examine the issues of nutrition, physical activity and injury prevention.

As the vice-chair of the task force, I was especially pleased to be able to welcome the committee members to Fort Richmond Collegiate on November 19. The students provided many thoughtful insights into our discussion and they were especially appreciative of our commitments to involve them in the solution.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not mention the renewed interest that has been seen here in downtown Winnipeg. Our government knows that a healthy, vibrant downtown increases tourism, business investment and pride in our province. The buzz about Winnipeg's revitalization has even been captured in the *Free Press* recently by a headline that said, "Downtown Reborn." This was not the case in the 1990s. In those years, downtown was forgotten. It was a very negative place where people did not want to have their business or live. It was very exciting to see the new Red River College campus downtown take its first class of students this fall. The development of Waterfront Drive is a great example of how an older area can be modernized and made attractive for investment and for people to enjoy. The new MTS entertainment centre shows how effectively a private-public partnership can work. In the upcoming year we will see the Millennium Library and a new Credit Union Central building unveiled. When you have this kind of co-operation from the business community, our province will continue to move ahead and great things will happen.

On the economic plan, it also draws strength from our research and education strategies. Manitoba's biotechnology sector was identified as

the fastest growing in Canada in a 2004 Ernst & Young report. In the past 18 months the number of people employed in biotechnology has increased 35 percent and revenues are up 76 percent. There are many Manitoba agencies that are involved in this field including the Canadian science centre for health and animal health, the only global centre with a level 4 biocontainment capacity. The Public Health Agency of Canada and the new International Centre for Infectious Disease. Just yesterday a new \$7.6-million state-of-the-art laboratory was announced. The Manitoba Centre for Proteomics and system biology will be located at the John Buhler Research Centre on McDermot Avenue. This centre will have the latest in technology to assist researchers in their study of human genes and proteins.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to Red River College is only one example of our investment in capital projects, to help expand and upgrade our university campuses. For example, at the University of Manitoba the province invested \$50 million that was used to leverage over \$200 million in private sector contributions. After years of crumbling infrastructure under the Conservative government, it is very exciting to see a renewed spirit and interest in this campus. At the University of Manitoba we have witnessed the opening of the new Arthur V. Mauro student residence and we are watching the ongoing construction of the facility of engineering and information technology building. Most recently, a new addition to the campus has begun, the construction of the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals. As you walk around the campus you can feel the energy and a new sense of purpose.

* (17:00)

One of our goals in education is to give more Manitobans the opportunity to access post-secondary education. Since 1999, there have been 13 000 more students enrolled in Manitoba. This is as a result of our reduced tuition in 1999 and the maintenance of this reduction.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of St. Norbert for their support over the last year. It is an honour to represent St. Norbert as their elected official. I would also like to say that this Throne Speech points the direction in which we want to take this—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being 5 p.m., pursuant to Rule 45(4), I am interrupting the

proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we must have Yeas and Nays on this one.

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

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, that is, the amendment to the motion for an address and reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Some Honourable Members: Read it.

Mr. Speaker: Read it? Okay, read it.

The proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition in amendment thereto is as follows:

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end of the sentence the following words:

But this House regrets

(a) the government's failure to commit to elimination of all education tax off of residential property and farmland; and

(b) the government's failure to commit to not closing or converting rural hospitals; and

(c) the government's failure to commit to addressing the pediatric doctor shortage in Brandon; and

(d) the government's failure to provide any strategy to address growing wait lists throughout Manitoba; and

(e) the government's failure to initiate a review of health care regionalization; and

(f) the government's failure to meaningfully address the growing concerns related to organized crime including the fact that since November 2000 Manitoba has been the scene of 37 biker-related murders and attempted murders; and

(g) the government's failure to develop a long-term economic strategy to address anemic job growth and make Manitoba a "have" province; and

(h) the government's failure to adequately address the BSE crisis and to provide any plan to

increase slaughter capacity in Manitoba, thereby threatening not only the stability of the livestock sector but all those other sectors in Manitoba's economy that are so reliant on its well-being; and

(i) the government's failure to recognize and encourage the important role private sector involvement has in growing Manitoba's economy; and

(j) the government's failure to acknowledge that balanced budgets have only been achieved through significant raids on Manitoba Hydro and the Fiscal Stabilization Fund; and

(k) the government's failure to acknowledge their raid on Manitoba Hydro contributed to a 10% increase in Hydro rates; and

(l) the government's failure to commit to calling an independent public inquiry into the spending of taxpayer money at Hydra House; and

(m) the government's failure to commit to strengthening the role and function of the Public Accounts Committee

AND HAS THEREBY lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

Division

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

Yeas

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Eichler, Fauschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner, Reimer, Rocan, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu

Nays

Aglugub, Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 20, Nays 34.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Just to be able to address the Throne Speech itself, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I have not called it yet. We are just finishing off the vote—

An Honourable Member: I did not like the tone—

Mr. Speaker: I am not judgmental from this Chair.

We will resume debating the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), and the government side just spoke, so now I will go to the opposition side.

* (17:10)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be able to address the Throne Speech. I guess I have a different perspective than the government members do on this particular bill.

I want to start off by maybe being somewhat critical in terms of the process. When the Premier (Mr. Doer) was the Leader of the Official Opposition, I think he adopted a plan to try to keep him in government for a great deal of time. The first part of that plan was to go out and hug a bunch of Liberals. I must say I think that he has been somewhat successful, but what you are beginning to see is that those Liberals—I thank the Premier for the hug, but I do not know if it will do the job. What you are starting to see is a lot of frustrated Liberals that have maybe given some sympathy to the New Democratic Party, but I think what we are starting to see is those Liberals coming back in large numbers. What you are going to see is, when you see a Throne Speech of this nature and budgets that they have presented in the past, you are going to see more and more Liberals getting elected to the Manitoba Legislature. Then we will be back to happy days, I would suggest to you. That was phase one.

There was another thing that the NDP were very successful at doing, and I believe it was done somewhat intentionally, I must say. Ultimately, it is

what led me to come back to the Manitoba Legislature through our current leader. That was when they brought in changes to The Elections Finances Act. What happened when they brought in that legislation, the Leader of the Liberal Party and I had sat down, and we were concerned about the future of the provincial Liberal Party, and the impact that it was going to have on the provincial party.

Mr. Speaker, I had taken it quite seriously when the leader had asked if I would take a look and come up with recommendations as to what I believed was important for the future of our party. As a result of that, I got myself more engaged in the provincial Liberal Party, and renewed life, if you like, in terms of wanting to get involved and be involved with our leader in trying to make a difference.

What is important to note is the legislation that the government of the day brought in was a genuine, serious attempt, I believe, from the government of the day to financially cripple not only the Liberal Party but also the Progressive Conservative Party. I think that was done intentionally in the sense that there is a process. When you change the legislation, The Elections Act, you go through the advisory committee that Elections Manitoba sets forth. The reason for that is because the representation on that advisory committee is fair in comparison to the elected Chamber inside this House.

What the NDP adopted was not agreed to within Election Advisory Committee for Elections Manitoba. This is something which this Premier and this party imposed. I must say, I support the idea of the grassroots financially supporting our political parties. I was glad to take out corporate and union contributions and bring it to the people. What you have to recognize is there were two components to it. There was the component of dropping those contributions, but there should have been some sort of public dollars assistance toward the political parties. That is what other jurisdictions have done.

I think that the government of the day realized that it was politically to their advantage to do it the way in which they did it. There were no negotiations or discussions in good faith whatsoever to try to make this good, solid, sound legislation. I believe that is where the government was wrong, that it should have attempted to get support in terms of what was in the best interests of democracy within our province, and they did not do that. They did not

allow the Election Advisory Committee to do the work that they should have done.

I applauded the Premier when he made the commitment in 1999 that he would want to ban corporate and union donations. I agree with that. There are some other questions in terms of to what degree the different parties are receiving their money and where they are getting their money, and I would be very much interested in seeing, first hand, and get a report in terms of where that money is actually coming from. Has the NDP manipulated the situation in which they are getting, still, union donations? I think, that is a legitimate question, and I would like to get some assurances. Not me personally, but to the Election Advisory Committee. That has not been the case.

An Honourable Member: You are on a witch hunt here, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: No, no witch hunt. These are all facts. The legislation would have been far better, far superior, if, in fact, you would have gone through the Election Advisory Committee. It is difficult for a political party to say that the legislation was bad because it was missing a very important component because in principle we supported getting rid of corporate and union contributions. I do not think that there was any political party, at least that I am aware of, that would have fought to retain that.

An Honourable Member: You are looking at them, over there.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) says that there was one political party. I can assure the House, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party, and the Liberal Party as a whole, did not support union and corporate donations going, but we do support a level playing field, and the New Democratic Party in government ensured that it would not be a level playing field. I would challenge the current government to make that a priority issue for Elections Manitoba and the Election Advisory Committee.

That was the second part. The third thing that this government has done very, very effectively is it has limited the way in which opposition is able to hold the government accountable through what I would suggest to you has been gross neglect of the importance of this Chamber. I had the opportunity to

address this issue during that long break that we had. I think, someone suggested it was one of the longest. You know, I am not too sure if it was the longest, but it was long. It went from, what, June 8 or 9, or whatever that date was, all the way up to November 22. That is a huge, huge gap. It is interesting in terms of everything that has taken place since then. But I can tell you that this government realizes the benefit of not sitting inside this Chamber, because they are not here for the Question Periods, they are not here for the day in and day out discussions, debates and so forth that occur inside this Chamber, and they realize that it is to their political advantage to avoid coming into this Chamber.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? I was a bit hesitant in terms of what it is that I should do in terms of bringing this to the attention of the public through the media, and I had given a great deal of thought as to what can I do, as one MLA, to try to make sure that Manitobans are aware to what degree this government is neglecting the Legislative Chamber. The idea came in terms of doing a sit-in inside the Chamber. I would be wrong if I took the credit for the idea of using the Rotunda on this particular point. The reason why I would be wrong in taking the credit, one must be honest when they are speaking here—

An Honourable Member: Outside the Chamber, not in the Chamber.

Mr. Lamoureux: Outside the Chamber, in the Rotunda. I stand corrected. I was having a sit-in outside the Chamber, in the Rotunda.

An Honourable Member: A sleep-over.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is right. But the minister will be happy to hear—

An Honourable Member: You could have slept outside Gord's office, constituency office.

Mr. Lamoureux: That might be next. You never know.

An Honourable Member: The Hells Angels are too close to his office.

* (17:20)

Mr. Lamoureux: The Hells Angels are too close to his office, but, Mr. Speaker, the point is that, yes, it

was outside the Chamber; I stand corrected. They would not have let me inside the Chamber, I do not think, or I would have come inside the Chamber.

But, you know what, I cannot take the credit for the idea. I have to be honest with the Chamber. It was actually Premier Gary Doer—our Premier, I am sorry. It was our Premier. I retract stating his name. It was our Premier when he was the Leader of the Official Opposition that had the idea. He was critical of the then-Premier—I can say Gary Filmon, I believe—then-Premier Gary Filmon. He was critical because we were not sitting inside this Chamber. What he did was he said, "Hey, gang," referring to his New Democratic MLAs, "let us get outside into the Rotunda here and let us make a point to the media and say Gary Filmon is not sitting enough inside the Legislature. He is avoiding accountability."

You know what? I could recall that this occurred, and I said to Garth Hilderman, someone that works with me, "Garth, why do you not go back and see if you can find—" because I knew they did a story on it. Well, it is a nice thing about the archives. Garth came back to me and he provided me a wonderful picture. It is a picture of members that are in government today sitting in the Rotunda. In fact, where the Premier is sitting in this picture is almost exactly where I was sitting. We are talking about the very same issue. The Premier was talking about the neglect from not being inside this Chamber—

Some Honourable Members: Not.

Mr. Lamoureux: —by not being inside this Chamber. It was the drivel of the time from the Leader of the Opposition of the day, but he was being critical.

I look at this picture and it is interesting. The member that wanted—where is Diane McGifford from, the minister dressed in green? I realize I should know the ministry that she is from, Advanced Education, is in this picture. You know the member from Transcona, the member from Kildonan, the member from Flin Flon, the former member from Wellington. I can say her name, Becky Barrett. You know what? There is someone hiding behind. It would appear to be the member from Dauphin. I am not too sure who that person is. I think it might have been Jean Friesen, I am not really too sure, the member from Burrows, and I am not sure if this

picture is a picture of the member from Elmwood. Maybe he could take a look at it and let me know.

Mr. Speaker, it is a wonderful picture. You really need to see some of the quotes that go along with this article. I think we have some quotes here. What did the NDP Leader of the Opposition say? He said that the government is subverting democracy by going so long without facing the opposition inside this House. This is what the Premier back then said. You know how things have really changed, how things have really changed, but you know something? When the Premier was the Leader of the Opposition, in this current group where a number of people were sitting in opposition, they recognized the value and the importance of sitting inside this Legislature. They recognized it back then.

It is astounding. This is very relevant to the Throne Speech because in the Throne Speech is when you give your vision for the province. You do not give your vision of the province and then ring the bell and abandon the place and do not allow the opposition parties the opportunity to question the government, whether it is the Throne Speech, or the budget, or legislation that it is bringing through.

This government needs to be held accountable, Mr. Speaker. It is the Premier and the Government House Leader and it is the backbenchers, and to a certain degree, the Cabinet, that have a responsibility to be inside this Chamber and to allow for questions. If anything we should be expanding accountability.

You know, we have a limited time for Question Period. Maybe it should be an hour long. What are we doing to ensure that all members of this Chamber are provided the opportunity to hold this government accountable?

I can tell you that I have a list of questions I would love to be able to ask this government, a list of questions. I would challenge the government even to allow me the opportunity to ask the different ministers. You know how easy it would be to address the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan) and the, I do not know, stupid comments. The answers that she was giving the other day just do not make any sense. She is on a different planet. I would love the opportunity to hold her to account for those answers, but, because of the finite amount of time, I am not provided that opportunity to be able to do that.

We should be working and trying to make this a more effective Chamber. Yes, the government has done some positive things. Even in the area of immigration, it has done some positive things.

There are areas in which the government has been all fluff and no action. The best area is in justice. This Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) looks, and he kind of puts his finger up. What are the popular things that the public want us to come out with strong legislation on? Then they will issue out the press releases like mad. They will issue them out, they will try to get the headlines, and then they will bring in some legislation that you cannot really oppose, but how effective is it really going to be? That has been the history of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, these are the types of things that we should be able to hold the government accountable for, but it needs to sit. It has to acknowledge the importance of being inside this Legislature and allowing opposition members the ability to be able to hold the government accountable.

I made reference to immigration. They have talked for years about 10 000. They want 10 000 in this province. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that if we had a provincial Liberal government we would have achieved the 10 000 goal. Not this year or last year, we could have achieved it in the year 2000. It does not take five years to bring it up to 10 000. It could be done in two or three years quite easily, if the political will was there. But, again, much like the Minister of Justice, we have a government that goes around saying, "We want to increase the numbers," and, yes, there have been mild improvements. They could have been better.

We have a great program within the Provincial Nominee Program, a program that was a Liberal-Conservative agreement back in 1998 which enabled the provincial government to get 10 000 immigrants to our province. But the government of the day is failing us.

I, in Question Period, brought up an excellent example of how we could have brought it up to 10 000. The government had a choice. They could have addressed the questions that were being posed and provide an answer, a genuine answer, or they could do absolutely nothing. That is what we saw with the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan). I do not know where she comes up with the answer. I wonder if maybe—well, I will not go there.

Mr. Speaker, there is an area in which the Minister of Immigration could say, "Yes, we are going to exempt, through the family support stream, people from having to adhere to the workers' restriction list. That in itself, I believe, would be able to achieve the numbers that the government of the day is talking about. Why will the government not at least entertain it? She just kind of shuffled it off to the side as if it really does not matter. I believe the Minister of Immigration is doing a disservice when she does not give the respect that is important to questions of this nature.

One could go on in the many different departments that are there. You expect to see some good things. If you are going to spend \$7 billion you had better be doing some good things. I would like to think you are going to be doing some good things, but, equally, there are ample examples of where this government has been incompetent, where this government has been negligent.

We can talk about, it has been interesting, the Hydra House. Hydra House is an excellent example. The current Minister of Health (Mr. Sale), or this government, has been very successful at manipulating, almost turning it into a wash: "It is not our fault; it is the Tories' fault." Mr. Speaker, if you make a wash of the issue, yes, the New Democrats will win on the issue.

The reality is that it is the former Minister of Health who dropped the ball. That is the reality. It is the former Minister of Health who was given a document that said that something was corrupt and smelled terrible that occurred. He chose to do nothing. Did he not realize that it was a bad thing? Was it not an issue for him? Was he completely incompetent in not addressing the issue? Was he covering something up? Or did he just not care? Which one of those three?

There are ample examples of things of this nature. That is why it is important that we have accountability inside this chamber. That is why it is important that we be sitting—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House the honourable member will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 1, 2004

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