

Second Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

Vol. LXV No. 5 - 10 a.m., Friday, November 23, 2012

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	PC
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 23, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Morning, colleagues. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 3—The Employment Standards Code
Amendment Act (Leave Related to the Critical
Illness, Death or Disappearance of a Child)**

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill 3, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave Related to the Critical Illness, Death or Disappearance of a Child); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congés en cas de maladie grave, de décès ou de disparition d'enfants), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: This bill implements consensus recommendations of the Labour Management Review Committee to provide working parents of children who are deceased or missing as a result of a crime and parents of critically ill children with leave and job protection to help them deal with those tragic situations without the fear of losing their jobs. These leaves will also allow parents to access available federal income support benefits during these leaves.

I want to thank, of course, the members of the LMRC, which consists of senior representatives of employer and worker organizations, for their review of these important amendments.

I do want to note for the House that some of these federal benefits do come into place at the end of December of this year, and so we will be seeking co-operation of the House, after members have had a

chance to review the legislation, to see this bill passed in this session so that parents, if they find themselves in this tragic situation, will be able to access these leaves and benefits. Thank you.

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

**Bill 6—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act
(Flexible Short-Term Regulation of
Vehicle Weights and Dimensions)**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), that Bill 6, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Flexible Short-Term Regulation of Vehicle Weights and Dimensions), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ashton: This bill amends several provisions to The Highway Traffic Act regarding weights and dimensions. It allows the minister or delegate to make short-term orders reclassifying highways. It allows the minister or delegate to make adjustments to short-term and seasonal orders. It has a number of penalties for weight-based offences. It's something that's been requested by agricultural community, Mr. Speaker, and I recommend it to the House.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

PETITIONS

Mount Agassiz Ski Area

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

The operation of Mount Agassiz ski area was very important to the local economy, not only

creating jobs but also generating sales of goods and services at area businesses.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

Number 1: To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

And No. 2: To request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by B. Kirk, J. Kirk, A. Hunter and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

St. Ambroise Beach Provincial Park

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the reasons for this petition as follows:

The St. Ambroise provincial park was hard hit by the 2011 flood, resulting in the park's ongoing closure, the loss of local access to Lake Manitoba, as well as untold harm to the ecosystem and wildlife in the region.

The park's closure is having a negative impact in many areas, including disruptions to the local tourism, hunting and fishing operations and diminished economic and employment opportunities, potential loss of the local store and a decrease in property values.

Local residents and visitors alike want St. Ambroise provincial park to be reopened as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider repairing St. Ambroise provincial park and its access points to their pre-flood conditions so the park can be reopened for the 2013 season or earlier if possible.

This petition's signed by R. Gretsinger, B. Ingram and A. Partridge and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Vita & District Health Centre

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Vita & District Health Centre services a wide area of southeastern Manitoba and is relied on to provide emergency services.

On October 17th, 2012, the emergency room at the Vita & District Health Centre closed with no timeline for it to reopen.

This emergency room deals with approximately 1,700 cases a year, which include patients in the hospital, the attached personal care home and members of the community and surrounding area.

Manitobans should expect a high quality of health care close to home and should not be expected to travel great distances for health services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Health consider reopening the emergency room in Vita as soon as possible and commit to providing adequate medical support for residents of southeastern Manitoba for many years to come.

Oh, sorry, yes. And this petition is signed by—that's twice—petition is signed by the following residents: M. Storozuk, M. Baryliuk, A. Adolphe and many more fine Manitobans.

* (10:10)

PR 520

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The rural municipality of Lac du Bonnet and Alexander are experiencing record growth due to especially to an increasing number of Manitobans retiring in cottage country.

The population in the RM of Lac du Bonnet grows exponentially in the summer months due to increased cottage use.

Due to population growth, Provincial Road 520 experiences heavy traffic, especially during the summer months.

PR 520 connects cottage country to the Pinawa Hospital and as such is frequently used by emergency medical services to transport patients.

PR 520 is in such poor condition that there are serious concerns about its safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to recognize the serious safety concerns of the Provincial Road 520 and to address its poor condition by prioritizing its renewal.

This petition is signed by B. Biddulph, B. Vrooman, L. Davidow and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw the attention of the honourable members to the public and Speaker's Gallery and in particular to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Rhiannon and Catriona, who are the daughters of the honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. Swan).

And also in the Speaker's Gallery, from the House of Commons, we have with us the Honourable Ted Menzies, Minister of State (Finance), who is also accompanied by Ms. Everson.

And also, in the public gallery we have Lynne Scott, who is the guest of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers).

And also in the public gallery we have with us today members of—from the Independent Gilbert Park Youth Co-op and the Willow Park Housing Co-op Ltd., who are the guests of the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight).

And also in the public gallery we have with us Gene and Doug Amy, who are the parents of our Legislative page Austin Amy.

And also in the public gallery we have with us today Kevin Cullen, councillor of the Village of Wawanesa, and also Avery Cullen and Brynn Cullen, who are the guests of the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's been quite a first week back, Mr. Speaker. On Monday we learned that the government would be breaking its promise to balance the books in 2014-15, but we also learned that it wasn't their fault. On Tuesday we learned that the NDP, in spite of the fact that it had jacked up taxes over—close to \$200 million this year so far, was adamantly opposed to our plan to let Manitobans keep 200 more dollars in their households. Yesterday we learned about the government's plan to end hallway medicine by keeping patients in storage in parking lots in ambulances.

And now we've learned of another exciting NDP initiative in the coming year. In the coming year the NDP plans to introduce a bill which would allow their party to be supported by Manitobans. Not just the subsidization of election campaign expenses, something that's done across the western world, Mr. Speaker, but also operating costs would also be subsidized, saving the NDP both time and money.

I'd like them to elaborate on the benefits this would offer to Manitoba's taxpayers.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I just want to clarify for the member.

Last session there was a bill introduced to, for the first time in Canadian history, have an independent person—independent from government, independent from politicians—take a look at financing

made available to political parties and make a determination about what that level of financing should be. In that bill, it was very clear that in making those determinations that financing should be for the operational costs that a party faces in order to be in compliance with the law, with the law that requires audited statements and other things. It's very clear in that legislation that those costs shouldn't include things like polling and advertising.

Paul Thomas has been appointed to do that work. He is doing that work, and we look forward to his recommendations.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the minister hit on it. They look forward to the recommendations. I think we all see this coming, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP is sending a clear message to Manitobans, and the message is: The NDP is too tired to raise its own money. The NDP wants the taxman to raise the money for their party. The NDP wants easy money without working for the money.

Now, there is a sense of detachment that already separates Manitobans from their government, and the PC Party believes very strongly that state funding of political parties will worsen that growing trend by converting political parties from popular democratic institutions into top-down bureaucracies.

I want the NDP to give Manitobans one good reason why Manitobans should do for them what they're quite capable of doing for themselves.

Ms. Howard: I think there's not a member in this House that isn't engaged with Manitobans, that isn't engaged with—when we go out, we go door to door and we talk to people about their issues and their questions about what's going on in government, not just at election time, Mr. Speaker, but in between elections.

I think that engaging with Manitobans is a lot more than asking them for money. I think engaging with Manitobans is the work that we all do every day. And it's clear that no political party is going to be successful without doing fundraising, and all of us work at that every day.

What public financing for political parties, what the principle that it's based on is, is that there should be a level playing field when it comes to political engagement, that those with money should not get an advantage. That's why we banned union and corporate donations in our first term in office. And that may be why they've never said—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: The member speaks about level playing fields, but the disparity between the opportunities for the government to use its power to its advantage and the powers of an opposition party are enormous, and they understand that. This level-playing-field argument is a phony one and people see right through it.

Manitoba leads our nation in volunteerism. We lead our nation in charitable giving, something every member of this House is proud of. And the fact is Manitoba has a wonderful record of supporting worthy charitable organizations we believe in. We have great respect for our friends and neighbours who donate their time and money to support the causes they choose to support.

Now, what we don't respect is anyone who would try to take that choice away. Now, that is exactly what the NDP is planning to do. They propose to take their operating funds from tax dollars.

Manitoba's charitable and community organizations raise their own money, Mr. Speaker. What makes the NDP leader think that his party is too good to do that themselves?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, we just witnessed an election in the United States where big money played a tremendous role, \$6 billion spent in that election.

And I want to point out that the opposition embraces public financing. They embrace using taxpayers' money to support political parties. In fact, in the last election, they took a bigger rebate than this party did and then, Mr. Speaker, they bragged about it at their annual general meeting. In fact, I'm told at their AGM that their chief financial officer said this amount was the highest they'd ever seen, and we're receiving higher reimbursements than the NDP are. So, clearly, they are proud of accepting more taxpayers' money than we have in terms of rebates.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And the greedy NDP, Mr. Speaker, don't think that they're getting enough money. They want to bilk the taxpayers more.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), with good reason, congratulated a

group in her community that went out and fundraised to support a good cause.

Contrast this to the NDP and the member for Kirkfield Park, who feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families through taxes to fund their political party.

What makes the NDP think that they deserve this money more than the group in Kirkfield Park that went out and raised it themselves? If that group can do it, why can't they?

* (10:20)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, I think it's—I think it should be very clear to all political parties in this province that no political party is going to be successful without going out and engaging with Manitobans and without going out and raising money for our election campaigns. All of us do that. That will continue.

What the public financing bill that we have put in place will do is, for the first time, have an independent person, a person who is held in high esteem nationally, take a look at the system of providing public financing to political parties, make a determination and make recommendations. That is what is taking place now.

I thought that we were more or less in agreement in this House that having some level of public financing for political parties was appropriate. Certainly, the party opposite has accepted that money in the past.

So we will see as we go forward what those recommendations are for—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): We all know where this is going. It's a vote tax. It's never enough for this NDP.

Mr. Speaker, a seniors group in St. Norbert church wanted to raise some money for a family, a refugee family, to buy some winter clothes for their kids. They didn't want to just go and ask the church congregation for the money. They decided to go out and ask individuals to donate if they wanted to or not, and they did and they raised \$600 for the family.

Contrast that to the NDP and the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), who feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families to fund their political party.

What makes the NDP think that they deserve to get money from Manitoba families? What makes them deserve to do it when the seniors group from St. Norbert want to go out and raise it themselves? If they can do it, why can't they?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I thought the new motto over there was aim higher, not, how low can you go?

I think, you know, this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Family Services, to continue her remarks.

Ms. Howard: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think this government has done a great deal to help support volunteer organizations, charitable organizations. We all do that in our own life.

We also, Mr. Speaker, we have done things like helped those organizations to reduce some of the red tape that they face when they seek funding from government. We have worked with them to—in the voluntary sector to help ensure that people who work in that sector have good training, that their boards have good governance instruction.

We're very proud of our ongoing partnership with the United Way. I think it's the only one in the country where we provide funding for all the administrative costs of that organization so everything they raise can go—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, students from Fort Richmond Collegiate have taken fundraising to—for their athletics department into their own hands. They have entered a competition to become Canada's most undeniable school and win \$100,000 for a school athletic [*inaudible*]. We can help them succeed in the undeniable funding

challenge by voting at undeniable school Fort Richmond.

The NDP feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families to fund their party. Does the NDP and the member for Fort Richmond (Ms. Irvin-Ross) think that they deserve the money more than the students from Fort Richmond high?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting we want to talk about education funding for a minute.

I think that probably, you know, the member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) has talked about it very succinctly when he talked—when he compared in the 1990s when members opposite were in charge, what they did for education funding. It looked more like a November forecast: -two, zero, -two. We have been able to fund education at the rate of economic growth and continue to do that.

I applaud the fundraising that charitable organizations do. All of us on this side of the House support that and are involved in that.

I also believe in a democracy there is a role for public financing to support political parties so that those with the most money don't have the strongest voice.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Ayla and Van Hamilton, two young constituents of mine from Russell, have raised over \$19,000 to assist new Canadian families who want to reunite with their family, especially their children. They help pay the cost to assist the family members to Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

It is shameful that this yesterday's NDP feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families to fund their party.

What makes the NDP think they deserve the vote-tax money more than Ayla and Van Hamilton, who went out and raised this money themselves? These young Manitobans can do it. Why can't they? And I hear the member opposite from Riel chatting, and I think what she has done is very disgraceful to young families who are trying to raise money to bring families to Manitoba.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I think the actions that the

members opposite is talking about are things to be applauded. We're all very proud of organizations and young people in our constituencies that work to raise that money.

You know who I'm also proud of when it comes to dealing with newcomers and refugees? I'm proud of the stand that our Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) took to say to the federal government and to say to refugees that we will fund health care for people who need it, that we will take on that responsibility. The federal government may want to abandon that responsibility, but I'm proud that our Minister of Health has taken on that responsibility.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's NDP feel entitled to take the money from Manitoba families to fund their party. What makes this NDP think that they deserve this money more than the citizens of St. James, Kirkfield Park, Assiniboia, other west Winnipeg citizens who volunteer their time to the over-100-year-old Lighthouse Mission on Main Street?

Mr. Speaker, these citizens who volunteer their—volunteer serve lunches every day to the homeless. They run a clothing distribution centre. They served over 400 meals this last Thanksgiving. They also raised \$400,000 with no government support for their own operating funds—no government support.

These volunteer citizens provide these services and raise these funds on their own initiative. Why can't the NDP?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I think—as I've said before, I think we all applaud organizations—and we all have them in our constituencies and our communities—who work hard to put in place supports for people who need them.

I know this morning there was the annual wild blueberry breakfast that was held by LITE Manitoba. I know many of my colleagues were able to be there; I was at home with my son who's battling an ear infection this morning. I know many of my colleagues were able to be there and have proudly supported that organization for many years, and I support that organization as well.

We can have an organi—we can have a debate—an intelligent debate, hopefully—about how democracy is best served in this province. Is it best served by

letting those who have the most money speak the loudest, or is it better served by having a level playing field where we can all—

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

**Children's Advocate
Call for Resignation**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled a petition calling for the removal of Children's Advocate Darlene MacDonald. It was prepared by AMC Grand Chief David Nepinak, MKO Grand Chief David Harper and SCO Grand Chief Murray Clearsky.

The Minister for Family Services and Labour has repeatedly said the NDP wouldn't remove Darlene MacDonald as Children's Advocate, even though after she was hired she called the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry wasteful. The minister has justified and protected the Children's Advocate position because the minister doesn't want the Children's Advocate's removal from office to set a precedent for the possible removal of other independent officers in the future.

I ask the Minister of Family Services and Labour: Why is she protecting the interests of the Children's Advocate as opposed to the interests of children in care, who would greatly benefit from her removal?

* (10:30)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I answered this question yesterday, and I stand by my answer yesterday.

I think that for this Legislature to say to the independent officers whose job it is to hold us accountable to serve Manitobans, whose job it is to advocate for children in care—the Children's Advocate office also has the job of investigating those deaths and making recommendations—for us to send a message that if you say something that one of us finds objectionable, that's it, you're gone, I don't think that's a province that we would want to continue to be living in. I think that that would be a very damaging precedent to set.

So I stand by what I said yesterday. I think that the Children's Advocate has clarified her comments. She has said that she believes the inquiry is telling the story that needs to be told, and I do not think her removal will serve anyone.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it's not just me; it's the three grand chiefs. I'd like to read from yesterday's joint media release by the grand chiefs of Manitoba.

AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak said: I hope all members of the Legislative Assembly see that the removal of Darlene MacDonald is the only way to go forward in light of her outrageous comments that clearly appear to try to influence public perception on the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

MKO Grand Chief David Harper said: We require immediate changes in order to have true advocacy that all children require, including Phoenix Sinclair, who needed advocacy even after her death. Her cries for help were not heard while in the child welfare system.

I ask the Minister of Family Services and Labour: Will you respect the wisdom of the grand chiefs and ask Children's Advocate Darlene MacDonald to step down?

Ms. Howard: This isn't a question of respect for the chiefs, the grand chiefs. Of course I respect them. I meet with them often and we discuss issues related to child welfare.

I also respect the need for independent officers of the Legislature. I think that is something not only in place in our Legislature but legislatures all over the Commonwealth, where you have people who are charged with making sure that the Legislature is accountable, with making sure that the interests of Manitobans and some of the most vulnerable Manitobans are protected. And it does not serve the people of Manitoba well to say that if we the politicians disagree with something that one of those people say, we will fire them. I don't think that that will serve people well.

So I respect people. I can also disagree with them while I respect them.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, in the joint media release, SCO Grand Chief Murray Clearsky said: Ms. MacDonald's public statement and position has clearly destroyed any semblance of impartiality and has totally undermined the critically required public confidence in knowing our children have a truly impartial voice from which their issues, concerns and well-being are of paramount priority. He also said: It is in the best interests of all children in care, their families and society at large that Darlene MacDonald be removed from this position immediately.

I ask the Minister for Family Services and Labour, who should first and foremost advocate for the best interests of children and not for the former head CFS Darlene MacDonald: Will she today ask Darlene MacDonald to step down as Children's Advocate, at the very least for the duration—

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

Ms. Howard: I think, you know, as I said yesterday, as I've said before, the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry is a very painful experience for everyone who is witnessing it. It is a story of extreme tragedy and sadness.

We called that inquiry because we wanted a full airing of that story and we wanted to be able to learn from that and we want the system to be able to make changes, and I believe that in her public comments Darlene MacDonald has said that she understands the need for that public airing, that she understands that that is what's happening.

I, with great respect to the member opposite, will not support the removal of an independent officer of Legislature for no other reason than she has said something that someone disagrees with.

Rossbrook House Learning Always Program Funding

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, we know how important it is for children and youth to have a safe and supportive place where they can go after school.

Will the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities please inform the House of our government's recent announcement of new support for Rossbrook House's Learning Always program?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): Our government believes in supporting young people in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, and outside of the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, Rossbrook House supports over 2,000 Aboriginal inner-city children and youth 365 days a year, including all holidays. Every day there's over 100 children and youth participating in education, recreation and cultural programs. The Learning Always program provides homework support, computer, math and reading, healthy snacks, traditional teachings and the arts.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Rossbrook House and the programs that we invest in not only improve

graduation rates but also build healthier, stronger, more vibrant communities.

Thank you.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Family Services and Labour says that she believes there is a role for the public to play in supporting political parties. That's not in dispute; we believe that as well. What we believe is that it's adequate. The issue is this government thinks it's not good enough; they want more.

The Wildwood Park Community Centre is a vibrant community asset. Programs include the ski program, the Wildwood preschool playgroup and hockey program and arena facilities.

It takes a commitment from the community to keep the centre open and running every year, and each year the community centre conducts a fall canvass to raise funds for the operation of the centre. Last year, they successfully raised \$10,480.75.

Mr. Speaker, what makes the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) think that he is entitled to a handout, an additional handout from the public when volunteers from the Wildwood Park centre go out—they have the drive and determination, they mobilize the volunteers, they find the support as they engage the community—and they find the money themselves? They can do it. Why can't you?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I'm not sure the member opposite heard my answer to the first question that was asked, but the reality is that after the last election, when the rebates came to light, the party opposite received more money in public financing than this party did.

They received about a million dollars. And at their most recent AGM, Mr. Speaker, I am told that their chief financial officer was very proud of that fact that they had received more money than we had. They're very proud of that fact.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that at least we should be intellectually honest in this debate that public financing has benefited all parties. It has actually benefited their party more than this party. And we believe that there is a role for public financing to support political parties.

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): The minister's certainly making our point. There's enough money going out of public coffers to political parties now without adding to it.

A number of years ago, the intermountain fish enhancement council, a group of volunteers in the Dauphin area, realized the wildlife fishery in Lake Dauphin was in jeopardy. This group voluntarily raised thousands of dollars to revitalize the Lake Dauphin fishery.

Why does the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) and the NDP feel entitled to money-taking money from Manitoba families? What, does the NDP think they deserve money? Why do they think they deserve money more than the intermountain fish enhancement council? They can do it. Why can't you?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's a member in this House that hasn't volunteered to do fundraising either for their political party or for an organization that needs it. I think we are all engaged in doing that kind of fundraising.

I also believe one of our first actions when we became government was to ban union and corporate donations, because we believed at the time, and we continue to believe, that there is not a place for money, big money, in special interest in the electoral system.

Now, we did that. The opposition has never supported that. They have never said they supported that. And we await to hear if they support the cancelling of union and corporate donations to political parties, Mr. Speaker.

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): The Manitoba High School Athletic Association volleyball provincials are being played right now in my hometown of Elm Creek—population less than a thousand, it should be noted. The teams come from all over Manitoba, including a team from Churchill, Manitoba. For the team members, the flight cost to Winnipeg was \$1,300 each, hotel and food will be at least another \$800 each, all through local fundraising and from their parents.

Why does the member from Kewatinook feel entitled to raiding the taxpayers' pockets to support the NDP when his own constituents have to fundraise to support their own activities? If these boys can do it, why can't you?

* (10:40)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm starting to sense a theme to—I'm starting to sense a bit of cut-and-paste organization over there to today's question period.

I will say again for the members opposite that of course we applaud community fundraising. Many of us are involved in community fundraising for many kinds of initiatives. All of us are involved in fundraising for our own political party.

We also believe that in a democracy money does not equal a voice. I do not believe that, Mr. Speaker. I believe that in Manitoba everybody should have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. That's why we cancelled union and corporate donations, and that is why we have asked Paul Thomas to look at a public financing—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Member's—minister's time has expired.

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): The minister obviously really doesn't get it here. She seems to be upset that we're able to work a little harder in fundraising than they can, so we'll continue to do that.

The Brandon family YMCA in—has been helping families and youth since 1886. Their programs are supported by a variety of annual fundraising events, most notably Y Kids—the Y Kids campaign and the annual spring run. Donations are used to work with youth at risk and to assist families and individuals who are not able to afford a Y membership. The Y is a tremendous community to the Brandon community, and especially in Brandon East.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) was there the other day for his photo op, Mr. Speaker. Wasn't that fabulous.

The NDP and the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families to fund their party.

What makes the NDP think they deserve this money more than families in Brandon and families in the Brandon YMCA? Why don't they go out and raise their own money, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I'm pleased the member opposite references my hometown, Brandon, where I grew up and where I got to work with many families and many individuals.

I remember, in particular, working with some of those families in the 1990s when, in one fell swoop, in one budget, funding for the foster family network was cut completely, funding for friendship centres was cut completely. I remember working with those organizations wondering how they were going to survive, given that the government of the day had decided to cut their funding completely.

I know all the ways that the members opposite are going to want to try to spin the fact that in the last election, when it came to the rebates, they took more money than we did, Mr. Speaker.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Well, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it. This NDP government doesn't support volunteers. They tax them in order to line their own political pockets. That's what this is all about.

Mr. Speaker, parent volunteers in the River Heights, Tuxedo, Varsity View community centres, as well as community centres all across the city of Winnipeg and, indeed, the province, are working hard to raise money so their kids can play on hockey teams and basketball teams and soccer teams. They're working hard by raising their own money.

Why are they working hard to raise their own money, Mr. Speaker, when these members opposite won't do the same?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): You know, there are many things that this government has done to help support kids who want to play sports that don't have the means to do that. In my own constituency, I was very pleased to be able to work with a Fort Rouge school who had put in place a tae kwon do program teaching kids who have no access to any organized sports, giving them the opportunity to participate in tae kwon do because of the leadership of a principal in that school.

And they were also able to be supported by a small grant from this government in order to do that work, Mr. Speaker. So we have no problem supporting kids who want to play sports.

We also believe, when it comes to elections, money doesn't talk, Mr. Speaker.

Political Parties Public Financing

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): On—*[interjection]* Excellent. On October 2nd, the community of Vita was hit hard by wildfires. Several houses were destroyed and many people lost everything they had.

Earlier this month the community held a fundraising social to help those affected get back on their feet. The community raised almost \$20,000, with the proceeds being split between four families.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families to fund their political party.

What makes the NDP think they deserve this money more than the community of Vita, who went out and raised it themselves? They can do it. Why can't the NDP?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, many of our members are involved in fundraising of various kinds, not only for their political parties but for charitable organizations.

I know the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) has taken a tremendous leadership role in fundraising for cancer care and for cancer research and I—because that has touched her very personally in her life, and she is to be commended for that. She doesn't just go out and raise money for her own political future; she goes out and raises money for the community, and I think that's something to be commended for.

Despite the advice of the member opposite that she shouldn't do that, that she should only be concerned about her party, the member for St. Vital has taken on a larger community role and I am surprised that all of us don't commend her for that.

I will say again, Mr. Speaker, public financing for political parties is about a level playing field—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, for years my family has enjoyed taking the short trip to visit relatives and friends in the Selkirk riding.

The Selkirk Rotary Club 1355 works really hard for years and years and years fundraising for their community. In fact, this year they're celebrating their 75th year.

Recently, they fundraised close to a million dollars for their skate park in 2010, along with many other organizations in the Selkirk constituency.

What makes this NDP and the member from Selkirk think that they deserve the money more than the Selkirk Rotary Club 1355 who went out and raised it themselves? They can do it. Why can't they, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, you know, I don't know we have enough time for them to ask a question about every seat we hold, but we got five and a half minutes left, so we'll see.

You know, I actually spoke at a fundraising dinner that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) was at, that celebrated his, I think, 20th anniversary at the time as the MLA for Selkirk, where he was raising money for his political party. All of us do that, Mr. Speaker.

We also believe that when it comes to democracy, there should be a role for public financing. They also believe that, even if they don't want to say that today. They also believe that, because they, after the last election, accepted a million dollars in taxpayer money in order to support their political party. And then they brag—

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

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, she just made the case today that we have enough money and we're willing to work for our own.

The member for the Interlake stated that municipalities under a hundred people are dysfunctional. However, they're mandated to balance their books and they do it. Too bad you weren't dysfunctional like that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

We're all—with respect to what the member has just placed on the record here, I wish to caution the honourable member to direct his comments through the Chair. We have our rules in place to ensure that we have fair and reasonable debate that occurs in this and that we're respectful to all members of the Assembly.

So I'm asking the honourable member for Emerson, please, sir, direct your comments through the Chair.

Mr. Graydon: Thank you for the reminder, Mr. Speaker, and I'll continue to do that.

The Bridge drop-in centre in Arborg, Mr. Speaker, provides vital programming for youth in the Interlake. Every day, youth access the centre to foster a sense of community and establish friendships by taking part in activities. The centre is funded through fund drive—fundraising drives solely.

The NDP have decided in their latest tax grab on Manitobans that organizations like the Bridge drop-in centre, rather than worrying about their own fundraising campaigns, should now fundraise for the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, why does the member of the Interlake feel entitled to take money from Manitoba families to fund the NDP party? What makes the NDP think they deserve the money more—

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

* (10:50)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Of course, there's been a system of public financing for political parties in this province for some time. That system continues.

When we banned union and corporate donations, we received no support from the members opposite to do that to try to ensure that there was a more level playing field when it came to elections.

I would say to the member opposite who asked the question that, according to the information that I have, he is eligible for a \$9,000 rebate from Elections Manitoba based on the result of the last election.

I'm not sure if he's already taken it, if he plans to take it or if the cheque's in the mail, Mr. Speaker.

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I thank the minister. She keeps making our point.

Mr. Speaker, six youth soccer teams represented Manitoba at Canada's pre-eminent soccer tournament held in the Maritimes. Each team had to raise over \$30,000 to go and represent Manitoba. I know this; I was part of the fundraising.

Three teams came from the area represented by the member from Kildonan. Why does he feel he's entitled to government cash and his teams have to work hard for fundraising?

My question is: Has the NDP really become that lazy?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for that question. I know the member opposite's passion for soccer. I've sat in this House many times where I've heard him talk about that.

And it's interesting for me to note that in the last election, this member that asked the question, he is eligible for a \$16,000 rebate from the last election, more than his mate there next to him. And so we will see if he accepts that money or if he holds to his new position that public financing should not be allowed. I will live and see whether or not they are consistent in their position or not, Mr. Speaker.

**Political Parties
Public Financing**

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I always appreciate the warm welcome from all members of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we've heard today is what we should all already know, that Manitobans are a hard-working—they give to their communities, they work in their communities and they're the most generous people across this great country.

But contrast that with this government. This is a government that's lazy. This is a government that feels entitled. They raise taxes on Manitobans to the highest level in 25 years. They try to create a spin that they're trying to find savings.

Well, we're about to find a good savings for them. They don't need any more money. The minister has made her point throughout the last 40 minutes. There's already enough public funding in

the system. She can list off all the members. There's enough money in this system.

I want to ask the minister, and I will reflect it on all of these members in the Legislature: Will they reflect on the good-working, hard-working, generous work of Manitobans and say they're not going to take any more money in this system? You don't need any more. Take your hands out of the taxpayers' wallets, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to be in the member opposite's constituency a few weeks ago where we were present at the opening of a new school where I was—I got to be there to celebrate the opening of 150 additional child-care spaces, some in that new school. So we know that government investment is at work in his constituency.

And I would submit to the member opposite that, if it is his position now that there should be no public financing of political parties, then I will await the return of the \$14,000 that he is eligible for after the last election.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Association for Community Living
Beausejour Branch**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I rise today to pay tribute to the Association for Community Living—Beausejour Branch—ACL-BB. Due to the road conditions and their efforts getting ready for their own fundraising event tomorrow night, they were unable to be here today. The ACL-BB is a non-profit community-based organization which provides opportunities for adults living with intellectual disabilities, allowing them to lead the life they choose with dignity and respect. The ACL-BB began in Beausejour in 1961 with a mandate to provide educational opportunities for children with intellectual handicaps. In 1967, the Conservative government in Manitoba passed legislation designating the responsibility of education for special needs to the educational system. As a result, the ACL-BB changed their mandate to focus on providing day services for adults with intellectual disabilities. ARC Industries was born, and over time

the association expanded its focus from being a workshop endeavour to become person-centered, enabling them to provide individual supports that were of interest to the person instead of the group.

Partnered with the Welcome Home Program in 1987, ACL-BB opened its first living residence for four people and in the same year sponsored the first apartment living program enabling people to live semi-independently within their own community. It makes me extremely proud to say that since that time, the ACL-BB has grown to support 15 people in independent living, 25 people in group homes and five people in family homes in our community.

With the expansion of services and increased numbers of clients, the ACL outgrew the building they were situated in and in 1989 they ran a very successful Turning the Dream into Reality campaign and raised enough funds to allow them to move to a larger facility that they still call home today.

In 1990, the Supported Employment Options, SEO, was established to provide employment options to individuals with intellectual disabilities. With no shortage of focus or determination, in 1993 the North Eastman Regional Recycling Facility, NERRF, began operations out of the ACL home. It became a viable community service offering a drop-off location and curbside pickup for recyclables and creating employment opportunities for all of the community. After 17 years of service, to make room for the ever-increasing numbers of day program participants and staff, the ACL had to make a difficult decision and close its doors to the recycling program.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is the member requesting leave to conclude his remarks?

An Honourable Member: Yes, I'd like to ask for leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to the—to allow the member for Lac du Bonnet to conclude his remarks on the members' statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, 2011 marked the 50th anniversary of the Association for Community Living—Beausejour Branch, and I had the pleasure of

attending their celebration this past summer. Over 50 years and against all odds, the ACL never lost focus of its mandate. Recognizing the ability in disability, ACL-BB has grown to be a progressive and effective organization that continues to contribute to their community while providing a valuable service. Like the people that it serves, the Association for Community Living—Beausejour Branch is truly an inspiration and I wish them continued success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

International Year of Co-operatives

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives. The aim of such a declaration is to raise awareness of the positive impact that co-operatives have had in the areas of poverty reduction, social integration and employment creation. The theme Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World serves to showcase the strengths of co-operatives as part of a progressive business model that advances socio-economic development.

Of 58 housing co-op—corporations in Manitoba, the Province has formal arrangements with 43 of them. Located in Burrows and built in 1966, Willow Park Housing Co-op Ltd. was the first housing co-operative of its sort in Canada. This enterprise is made up of 200 homes and is managed and owned by each of its residents. Run by a distinct system of self-governance, their collective objective is to provide quality housing at cost to every member. Another such housing enterprise, Willow Park East Housing Co-operative Ltd., was built between 1971 and '74, and comprises 174 two-and three-bedroom units.

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker, these co-operatives are certainly excellent arrangements for those seeking alternatives to traditional housing arrangements.

Another successful co-operative in my constituency is the Independent Gilbert Park Youth Co-op. This initiative was funded in part by Housing and Community Development. It originated with Youth Cooperative Services, which is co-ordinated by the government—government's Community Cooperative Strategy Partner, CDEM. It ran this summer and gave youth participants meaningful opportunities to be involved in the community, work as a team and gain experience and skills. The members developed, implemented and managed their

own businesses, which included lawn care, hairstyling, store inventory, domestic and commercial cleaning and car washes.

Thank you to co-op facilitator, Ryan Bowman, the full-time staff and the community stakeholders who made this opportunity possible. I ask that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time is expired.

An Honourable Member: Ask for leave, please.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member has requested leave. Has leave been granted? *[Agreed]*

The honourable member for Burrows, to complete her remarks.

Ms. Wight: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members.

I ask that all members of this House join with me today to recognize the many benefits of co-operatives on their lives of their members. By participating in what is often a close and caring community, co-operative members support one another in their efforts towards successful co-existence. This aspect of social diversity is certainly a welcome feature in our society.

Mr. Speaker, and would you please canvass the House to see if there's leave for the names of the children involved to be included in Hansard?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow the names the member references to be included in the Hansard of this proceedings? *[Agreed]*

Brendan Jackson, Matthew Martin, Leah Lauzer, Alie Bangura, Jason Sanderson, Shaneil Keesic, Diannadonne Lulinda

Convey-All Industries

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, manufacturing is a key economic engine in Manitoba, creating jobs and fuelling local and provincial economies, and nowhere is this more apparent than in my constituency of Morden-Winkler.

Convey-All Industries, founded in 1983 by Bob Toews, has been in business for almost 30 years. In this time, the business has undergone dramatic change and has prospered. A manufacturer of diverse products, Convey-All Industries specializes in producing equipment for both agriculture and energy sectors with expertise in multiple application conveyors, seed handling and oil field equipment.

In 1996, Convey-All Industries had a staff of 26. Today, the company has over 150 employees, many of whom are highly skilled newcomers to southern Manitoba, immigrants under the Provincial Nominee Program, a successful program enacted by a PC government in 1998 and predicated on an innovative pilot project in Winkler.

Convey-All Industries deserves a lot of recognition. On October the 23rd, I had the pleasure of attending the company's employee appreciation day. It was a fantastic event with Bob and his son, Carl, the company's purchasing manager, and they must be commended for their hard work and dedication to their employees. As proof of the amazing work of this company, Henry Friesen, former vice-president of sales and marketing, was honoured on October the 11th in Calgary with the 2012 Ernst & Young Prairie Region Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Manufacturing.

Mr. Speaker, Convey-All Industries has been doing great work in the city of Winkler for many years, and their commitment to the community and to innovation in manufacturing is admirable. It is my pleasure today to recognize their achievements, and I would ask that the members of the Legislature join me in wishing Bob, Carl and the whole team at Convey-All Industries much success in the future as they continue to grow and diversify. And I extend best wishes to Henry Friesen, as well, as he moves forward to pursue new opportunities.

Thank you.

Craig Street Cats

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is a truly wonderful thing when a community member sees a need and steps to fill it. I rise today to recognize the good work of Lynne Scott and the other volunteers at Craig Street Cats, a group that works to reduce the number of stray and feral cats in Winnipeg. Roughly 50,000 to 100,000 feral cats currently roam the streets of Winnipeg. These strays have never been pets and most can't be adopted because they are not used to people. Removing a colony of feral cats also just means that a new one will move in, continuing the problem.

Lynne Scott, a former teacher, realized that something had to be done and founded Craig Street Cats. Through Craig Street Cats, Lynne and her volunteers manage 500 cats across the West End, North End, St. Vital and St. James. Craig Street traps feral cats, houses them while they receive neutering,

vaccinations and veterinary care, and then returns them to their original spot. They are the only group in Winnipeg that works directly to reduce the number of cats roaming the streets, and they occasionally work with cats from rural areas as well. Lynne also takes in formerly feral stray or abandoned cats that are friendly enough to be adopted and tries to find them permanent homes.

This June, Craig Street Cats opened up a shelter and adoption centre on Madison Street in St. James. The shelter works with a veterinary clinic to care for sick and injured cats, helps them find homes and provides training and resources for people interested in helping out by managing feral cat colonies. I spent some time with Lynne at the shelter, and it quickly became clear, watching her interactions with even the most challenging of animals, that she does her work wholeheartedly. The animals in her care show an immense amount of trust in her, though they have no reason or experience to trust people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Craig Street Cats on their boundless energy and their dedication to this important task. There is little doubt that animal lovers in Winnipeg appreciate the great work of this organization.

Thank you.

Ed Tyrchniewicz

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, on July the 12th, Dr. Ed Tyrchniewicz was inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame, the recognition for decades of important work in the agricultural industry. His work was guided by one principle he learned in his first class at the University of Manitoba: to link the classroom and—to events and issues in the real world.

Ed went on to obtain a degree in ag economics from the U of M in '62 and his master's and Ph.D. in '64 and '67 respectively. After serving as professor at the University of Manitoba, he also served a term as dean of agriculture and forestry at the University of Alberta.

During his career, he chaired commissions on livestock sustainability in Manitoba along with numerous other federal and provincial agricultural commissions. He participated in provincial and national inquiries that shaped agricultural policy related to livestock, grain handling and transportation and natural resource management. His worse—his work also took him to far-away countries, and he was not afraid to deal with unpopular subjects. Many

overseas assignments led him to oversee and influence agricultural policies in countries like the Ukraine, Bangladesh, Thailand, Kenya, India and China. His—our hardest job, and most unpopular, was acting as the director of research for the royal commission on rail line abandonment. This wasn't popular work with rural communities and farmers, but it was necessary work.

Dr. Ed, as he is usually known, remains semi-retired in south Winnipeg and holds the position of senior scholar at the university where he remains active in agribusiness faculty. His career has spanned over 40 years, but he shows no sign of stopping as his real-world knowledge and his ability to share it with students is too valuable to lose at the University of Manitoba.

On behalf of Manitobans, I would like to congratulate Dr. Ed Tyrchniewicz in his induction in the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame, and I would like to personally thank him for his 40-plus years of service to the agricultural industry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to orders of the day, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have from Canada World Youth, eight visitors under the direction of Yamina. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this morning.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH (Fourth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), that the following address be presented to his Honour the Administrator:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Second Session of the 40th Legislature of Manitoba, and the proposed amendment by the Leader of the Opposition in amendment thereto.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler has 24 minutes remaining.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, what we heard through the Speech from the Throne earlier this week is that the NDP government has never learned to manage responsibly, that, as our leader said earlier this week, they are aware–unaware of what it means to Manitobans and they have never demonstrated a resolve or an ability to match expenditures to revenue.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to actually welcome the new Leader of the Opposition, too, back to the Manitoba Legislature, and I welcome him back because he has been here before. But we're looking forward to the road ahead and he's already had a real impact on both the caucus and with my colleagues and with the party itself.

* (11:10)

Mr. Speaker, since they took office in 1999, this government has squandered the best financial opportunity that the province has ever known. They took balanced budgets, they took the opportunity of historically low interest rates, they took record equalization payments and social transfers from the Government of Canada and they squandered an opportunity. Now they're running a \$1-billion deficit. They've doubled the debt since they took office in 1999 and they've brought in \$184 million in new taxes that have hit Manitobans squarely in the pocketbook, whether you're filling up your gas tank or you're paying your Manitoba Hydro bill; whether you're renewing your home insurance or licensing your vehicle. And the approach is disingenuous. It has become, or, indeed, perhaps it always was, an attempt to mislead, to conceal, to disguise and to distort, and I'll tell you why I say that.

In terms of a tax increase that—the NDP made the 2011 election a test of whom voters could trust to not raise taxes, and the Premier said, our plan is a five-year plan to ensure that we have future prosperity without any tax increases and we'll deliver on that; we're ahead of schedule right now. And the leader said that in September of 2011, and yet here we sit, just a little more than one year later and we're looking at \$184 million in new taxes that somehow now this government wants to convince Manitobans are not indeed real, new taxes. It's something altogether different, but it can't be interpreted as a tax. And I assure the government that Manitobans do not accept that kind of explanation.

And the fact is that their actions break the fundamental promise they made in the election to balance the books by 2014. And now they stand up

and they say—they insert in the Throne Speech and say that we're going to give ourselves more wiggle room to deal with reality. And, Mr. Speaker, that's an insult to Manitobans to use a phrase like wiggle room to explain away the fact that you've taken the foundational promise of your campaign and said, we're not going to meet it, but it's just a matter of wiggle room. That is not an explanation that Manitobans are going to accept. It was the cornerstone of their election platform and they will be held accountable for it. I assure them that Manitobans are not pleased by what they're saying this week.

But that disingenuous approach goes further, because we now have MPI slated to fund infrastructure work. We put out a media release earlier that said the I in MPI stands for insurance, not infrastructure. And MPI has as their mandate to provide Manitoba drivers with insurance. That is the mandate of MPI. And there is a need for improvements in infrastructure in Manitoba—we know that, and it's the government's responsibility to fund them. And there is a minister for that. There's an expression that goes: there's an app for that. Well, there's a minister for that, and that minister is irresponsible for MIT. And so we're confusing things when we start to talk about taking one area of mandated responsibility but assigning that responsibility to someone else within the apparatus of government. It's not a good way to govern. It's not clear; it's not straightforward; it's not transparent; it does not serve the taxpayers; it does not serve the best interest of this province.

But there is more. The Bill 24, Energy Savings Act, that was passed last spring in the Legislature—here we have an act that includes the establishment of a fund to provide support for social enterprises and community organizations who assist people or neighbourhoods, to use the support to train people facing barriers to employment in order that they can acquire the skills needed to be employed in activities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again, that is a valid goal. But there's a minister for that. And the minister should have that responsibility. This strays far from the mandate of the Crown corporation and the government should know that. It moves the goalpost, it makes it more difficult for Manitobans to understand what the mandate of that group is. It makes it more difficult to measure later on how successful they have been at meeting that mandate, and that is a disingenuous approach. Measures like this, as I said, remove transparency. They make it

more difficult to measure and to watch, not just for an opposition party; it makes it more difficult for Manitobans and stakeholders and persons who have an interest in this area to be able to hold the government to account, and it would seem to me that that is exactly the goal of these things. In my more cynical moments, I would think that is exactly the goal of these things, because one by one they don't seem to indicate a direction, but when held together and when seen through that lens, then it becomes more apparent that these things are done deliberately and there is a plan.

I had an English professor who once wrote at the bottom of paper where I had written all kinds of fancy \$10 words when probably a \$2 word would have sufficed, he wrote, eschew obfuscation, and that's nothing more than an English professor's fumble rule. It means to—you're hiding or you're—you want to—you should avoid hiding things. But he said it in such an obscure way that I could hardly understand him. But it means the deliberate attempt to hide something.

And that's what this government does; they obfuscate. They move the goalpost. They make it more difficult for Manitobans to see what they're doing. They make it more difficult to measure how one area of government is actually performing its function, meeting its mandate, and that is the part that I take strong exception to.

Bipole III is a perfect example of this, that the government would choose a longer, \$1-billion-more-expensive west side route for a hydro transmission line. There was a scathing article by a former Manitoba Hydro vice-president in the Winnipeg Free Press just a few weeks ago. He tells a tale of government interference in the utility's highest levels of decision making. He talks about bullying and the costly conversion equipment required for the alternate route. He talks about the bungling of this whole thing. He talks about the reduced transmission capability.

All of these things done at the expense of the expertise of those experienced, competent professionals within Manitoba Hydro. He talks about the fudging of the project cost estimates. And yet the hypocrisy of the situation is that this same government then embarks on an overly ambitious exercise on the east side—on the east side, to create a road that will have a far greater impact on the region than any hydro line ever would have, because now that road will open up the area. Sure, it will produce

opportunity, but it will open the area up for ATV and trail exploration and all those kinds of things. And, while those are important pursuits—we've got great trail systems in the province of Manitoba, but now we're opening up an area that they themselves have called a pristine boreal forest. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of logic—it's the kind of obfuscation that we take strong exception to.

And they do the same thing—they do the same thing, when they talk about the 1990s. This government misses no opportunity to talk about the 1990s. They've been in power for 14 years; they've got nothing to talk about, so they talk about the 1990s.

And, Mr. Speaker, today I just have to take a moment to chastise those longer serving members in the Manitoba Legislature on the government side of the House who have so seem to hoodwink the newer members of the Legislature on the government side. And I would challenge those newer members of the Legislature on the government side. I challenge you to go and look for yourself, examine the economic conditions of the late 1990s. Be a student of history—be a student of history and read about the Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow. Read about what it was like when the federal Finance Minister asked that—no, forced the premiers, and reduced the federal transfers to the provinces by billions. The provinces lost \$7 billion in federal transfers between 1995 and 1999 and it put a huge squeeze on provinces and their ability to deliver social services.

They know it happened in Saskatchewan under an NDP government, just as it happened in this province. And I am proud of the way that that government responded to a challenge that this government has never had to face, with the fundamentals that they had when they took office. Balanced budgets, the best economic conditions, record transfer payments from the federal government: those are conditions they've never had to face.

They will never miss an opportunity to rail against the government of the 1990s, but they aren't honest enough to actually identify the factors and examine the context, and that's a little rich coming from them.

So, I assure you that when Monday we're back in the session, they'll be up again jumping up and talking about the 1990s but they won't give an accurate reading of history. And I would encourage all those members to be students of history.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans can do better. That's the bottom line; that's the message. Manitobans can do better and Manitobans increasingly are seeing that growing disconnect between the glowing pronouncements, that the Free Press put it, of the Manitoba government, and cold reality.

* (11:20)

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be taking on the new critic responsibility for the area of health, and I want to thank my predecessor in that role, the MLA for Charleswood, who has just done a fantastic job with that file. She's—she has shown determination and integrity and tremendous tenacity in this area. It's a huge responsibility, and it's a huge area of interest for Manitobans, because it affects us all. But I do thank her for the guidance she has given me in the transitional period.

To be able to read the Speech from the Throne with respect to the health promises, you have to be able to decipher NDP code words.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the government says in the Throne Speech that they will increase the Health budget by half the rate they've increased it over the last 12 years, we have to understand that you need a cipher to understand what they're really saying. What they're really saying is increases to health spending have outstripped inflation for years and that Manitoba has the second highest per-capita spending in health in Canada—44 per cent of our provincial budget and 15 per cent of the GDP. At those kinds of numbers, we should have the best system in the country. Sadly, we do not.

When the government says in its Throne Speech about health that they will introduce a five-year sustainability plan, what they really mean is that costs are out of control and that in the WRHA, for instance, from 1999 to 2003, the administration costs tripled to \$16.6 million so the NDP fixed it. They fixed the problem; they stopped reporting the administration costs as a separate line item. Problem solved. And even, in Manitoba we have more nurses than any other province in Canada besides Quebec working in administrative positions; 13.2 per cent of all nurses work not on ward, but in administration.

When this government says they'll train more family doctors, what they really mean is we have to train more family doctors because we've lost 1,800 doctors to other Manitoba practices—doctors who are choosing to practise in other provinces since this government took office.

When they say they will introduce innovations to make home care better, they mean that they better do something fast because the changes imposed in home care over the last year have damaged the system. It's becoming increasingly clear talking to aides and to clients that something significant has changed in the system.

When they say they will provide details on plans for 200 more PCH beds, it means that they're finally waking up and smelling the coffee and realizing that we are looking at a huge, huge coming need, as the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy report is showing now, that we're going to need huge capacity. Sadly, that promise does not include a personal care home for Steinbach and it doesn't include one for other areas of rural Manitoba where the need is so great.

When they say they'll improve productivity, they're trying to obfuscate and say things like we're going to reduce the amount of regional health authorities from 11 to five for a savings of \$10 million over three years. In the health-care budget of \$5 billion that's what you call a drop in the bucket. And even then, I take strong exception to their estimates, because when you measure it after three years, and you can be sure that we will measure for realized cost savings, will it be \$10 million? I'm not so sure.

Those are the health-care issues addressed in the Throne Speech. We know there's many more that their speech writers were directed to not actually address. Ambulance off-load times are off the charts. St. Boniface hospital nurses are speaking out about unsafe conditions due to delivery numbers that exceed their space, their staffing and their funding.

The south Winnipeg Birth Centre celebrated its 100th birth, but it's got a capacity to deliver 500 a year. Why is that not happening? The Manitoba eating disorder program is in crisis, and they've gone to the minister and said do something and she won't meet with them, she won't respond to the need, and that need is not going away. Personal care home wait times are out of control. As of this morning, I checked, we're over 560 seniors awaiting placement in a personal care home—and that's just in the WRHA, why, we don't have statistics that the government will post for the rest of the province. That's unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, in our personal lives it takes courage to do what is right and what is necessary even when it is not popular but when it is required. It

takes courage to summon the strength to do the right thing

Governing this great province should be more than obfuscation. It should be about purpose, not platitudes. It should be about solutions, not semantics. It should be about innovation, not inaction. It should be about ideas, not rigid ideology. It should be about results, not rhetoric.

I believe that our province will not get the leadership that they require at this time, out of this government. And until the next election, we will work hard to bring those virtues into this place, set the tone, hold this government to account and the people of Manitoba expect no less of us.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I speak in favour of the amendment. Thank you.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's my great privilege to stand in the House today to provide some comments on the Speech from the Throne. Prior to beginning my remarks, I do want to take this opportunity thank the people of Seine River for again providing me with this great honour of representing them. I take the job very seriously. I appreciate their advice and good wishes, and I do commit to them to work very hard every day to ensure that we're working to build a better Manitoba.

I also want to pay tribute to my family, Mr. Speaker. This can be a very challenging job, and the support of members of our family is of the greatest value. My husband, Sam, my son, Jack—world's greatest cheerleaders, I may say; I'm a little biased—but they are treasures, both, and I know that I could not do this job without them.

I also want to pay tribute to my team, my staff working in the constituency of Seine River. Mr. Speaker, I also believe they are second to none, working with compassion and expediency in dealing with the issues and concerns of the citizens of Seine River. I commend them.

I also want to say how grateful I am to the staff that work here at the Legislature: Linda, Chris, Vivian and Alice, who work in the front office, take such special care with those Manitobans who come to us with their very intimate concerns, and I'm so very honoured and proud of the work that they do every day.

The rest of my Health staff also are very, very passionate and compassionate individuals. They

work so diligently, seemingly calm, as a mallard might swim across the water, but underneath we know they're paddling like crazy every day. And I do indeed thank them for the work that they do on behalf of all Manitobans.

I pay tribute to our table officers, Mr. Speaker, who are exemplary in nature, mind-boggling in their knowledge of the detailed rules, and I do indeed thank them for the good counsel they provide to us each day.

I also want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the pages who work in our Chamber. Each and every year, we are privileged to witness a bumper crop of excellent students who do wonderful, wonderful work on our behalf. I admit there's one page in particular whom I hold with great fondness. This year I will not embarrass this person by mentioning who it is, although I imagine you could look around the room today and sense who might be blushing.

I do want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that on the day of the reading of the Throne Speech, when the pages and their families gathered in your office, particular mention was made by this individual's family, who were proud beyond measure, one can imagine, at the special care that you took with those parents and those families, speaking to each one individually and how special and honoured you made them feel. And for that, and behalf of all—on behalf of all members, I thank you for the kindness that you extended to those families.

Mr. Speaker, I have only a few moments today to put some words on the record concerning the Speech from the Throne. It will come as no great surprise that I will focus many of my remarks on the issue of health care, but I know, of course, that while health care is the No. 1 concern of every—the good health of their families is the No. 1 concern of every Manitoban, the people of Seine River have much passion about a number of other issues, certainly about education.

*(11:30)

I know the families in my constituency are so pleased to see us continuing to move forward with even better communications between the school system and the family unit by improving report cards, standardizing them; by ensuring that families have even better access to information about what their young ones ought to be learning and are

learning, and about the opportunities that are available to them.

I know that the families in my community are delighted about our commitment to ensure that class sizes are reduced from kindergarten to grade 3, to provide the best opportunity possible for our young students to get the best start.

I know, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I must hasten to add that those families are very appreciative of the many initiatives that have come forward as a result of the healthy child of committee Cabinet and their thinking, because the research is undeniable: that when we make investments in early child education, even before school, that our young ones have the best possible opportunity to get a good start.

And if, indeed, they don't get a good start and we're able to pick that up through our valuations at the kindergarten level, that there are opportunities to turn that around for a very, very positive outcome for young people.

So, I'm proud to be a member of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. I'm very proud and feel passionate about everything that we can do in Manitoba to enhance early learning, including providing more quality, affordable daycare. And I will always continue to advocate and support such things.

I would also add, Mr. Speaker, that I'm very, very pleased about the announcement in the Throne Speech, and made yesterday, about the New Home Warranty Program. I live in a—yes, indeed, it is worthy of applause. I live and represent—live in and represent a community where individuals in the situation of constructing a new home have from time to time encountered some serious difficulties in where these warranties were not in place—it became an extremely challenging road.

And when I was able to speak to many of those individuals about this New Home Warranty Program, it was welcome news indeed. And so I thank my colleagues for the work that they did in developing this program, because it's going to be good for all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I was delighted in the Throne Speech that the focus that is once again being placed on health care, because we know it remains the top priority for Manitobans and, therefore, is the top priority for our government. We've going to continue, even during these uncertain economic times, to focus on what matters most to Manitoba

families. We know that over the next year we're going to make significant progress in several key areas. We're going to support a growing number of seniors by beginning the planning and design of 200 additional personal care home beds in the city of Winnipeg, in addition to launching two hospital home teams to support seniors with fragile health who are at risk for hospitalization, who, indeed, could be treated more comfortably, more conveniently, in their own homes.

You'll see in the Throne Speech, also, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to continue on our journey to further reduce wait times for life-saving cancer treatment. We are continuing to work on our investment to implement the most comprehensive and aggressive strategy in Canada, including more pathologists to speed up testing, and the launching of more rural cancer care hubs.

Mr. Speaker, we came to this conclusion about investing in the Cancer Patient Journey Initiative—try to say that five times fast—Cancer Patient Journey Initiative, because of what we learned from Manitobans about how important it is to get the care that you need as swiftly as possible. When this government began its journey in 1999, we know that radiation therapy wait times were dangerously long at six weeks and over, and the then-minister of Health, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), whom I hold in the highest esteem, set about working on a program. Beginning, of course, by making the very uncomfortable decision to send radiation therapy patients to the United States. It wasn't a politically popular decision, but it was necessary for the good health of those patients. Members across the way had that opportunity, called it not pragmatic and refused to do it. But the former minister, the member for Kildonan, had the courage of his convictions and the compassion to see that happen.

And I'm happy to report today that Manitoba has the lowest wait times for radiation therapy in Canada. And, indeed, this is very good news for patients, but we also realize that that radiation therapy segment of the cancer patient journey was just that: a segment of the journey. And what we experience as Manitobans with our, heaven forbid, loved ones who should encounter the possibility or the suspicion that they may indeed have cancer, from the moment that they are worried in their family doctor's office to the moment that they are getting the treatment that they need, these are sleepless nights, Mr. Speaker.

And so while we celebrate having the best and shortest wait time for radiation therapy, for that section of the journey we must redouble our efforts to ensure that Manitoba has the lowest, shortest, swiftest wait-time journey from suspicion to treatment. We are the only jurisdiction in Canada committing to tackle that entire journey. It's difficult to measure, but we're going to do it. We're going to do it in partnership with the gentleman, the physician from the UK who was knighted for his work with the National Health Service in transforming their cancer patient journey. He is our partner, and he's going to help us transform this journey and make that most difficult of times for Manitoba families be as swift, as smooth and compassionate as possible.

Indeed, helping with this and with any ailment that should befall us is creating access to a family doctor for all Manitobans. We've made an aggressive commitment, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that all Manitobans have access to a family doctor, all Manitobans who want one, and we're going to be very persuasive ensuring that they all indeed want one. We're going to have this happen by 2015. We have indeed seen a net increase in the number of doctors coming to Manitoba and working in Manitoba every single year since being in office.

I noted my colleague across the way made mention of doctors leaving Manitoba earlier. It's regrettable that he's following the same primrose path of the former critic for Health in mentioning doctors who leave the province, but neglecting to complete the equation concerning doctors who come to Manitoba. And what Manitobans care about is the actual full equation, the actual net number, Mr. Speaker.

Every single year since being in office we've seen a net increase of doctors working in Manitoba who are now over 500 strong. I contrast this to the dark last years of the Tories—well, last years, six, seven of them; it's all a blur, really—where there were net decreases including a record net decrease. I think it was 1996, a net loss of 75 doctors who could barely find room on the highway to match the nurses that were leaving en masse—a thousand of them fired, 573 more out of the system.

And I wonder, Mr. Speaker, when I hear the member opposite using such language as the right way to do things, does he mean the right-wing way to do things? I hear him talking about, you know, you've got to have an intelligent plan—totally absent of any ideas. I don't want to suggest for a moment

that I am in any way paranoid, but it sounds a little to me like the good old days of Connie Curran, who came into town—I think her condo in San Francisco was being remodelled at the time, the \$4-million condo we all got to have a view of from CBS morning television, oh, few short months ago—and she breezed into town, and she said the best way that you can save on health-care costs is to not have to pay for all those pesky professionals. Let's not have to pay for the nurses; let's not have to pay for the doctors and, in fact, let's not even pay for educating the doctors. Let's slash and hack at the medical school and drive the seats in the medical school down to an abysmal low of 70 seats.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we restored that. We restored that and we brought that back to 85 where they once were. We raised the number of seats in the medical school to 100, and today I'm very proud to report that we're seeing yet another class of first-year medical students 110 strong, who are staying in Manitoba in family residencies in record numbers.

*(11:40)

Now, I get excited. I admit that, about these issues. But I also acknowledge that we are living in a time of great challenge. We are living in a time where there are uncertainties in the world economy. We're living in a time where we know that the number of older Manitobans is growing; this is true in a number of provinces and we have to bear that in mind. We are living in a time where the number of Manitobans living with chronic conditions increases. We need to stem this tide without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, but it is a fact. And we live in a time, it must be acknowledged by all members of this House, that the federal government have announced that they are transforming how it is that they will approach health care.

You remember, Mr. Speaker, I know this because you've read your history books, that the great promise of medicare, the great promise of a publicly funded system, was a partnership. It was a 50-50 agreement between the federal government and the provinces.

Now, what we've seen today, Mr. Speaker, is that the federal contribution to health care hovers somewhere today around 20 per cent, and we hear from them that that's more than enough. And they have plans, you know, according to those that are analyzing the work in Ottawa, that in the days and years ahead we are destined to see that number decline to 11 per cent.

These are very serious issues. This is happening at the same time that unilateral decisions are being made about some of the most vulnerable people in our society—refugees coming to Canada hoping for protection, hoping for a better life, Mr. Speaker, only to be told by our federal government that, indeed, you know, we don't really care about your health care. Not only is it heartless—not only is it heartless—and I could spend a good deal of time on that—but it doesn't make any economic sense. These people across the way purport to be the great economic geniuses of our time, but do you not realize if you do not treat basic primary issues early on, then you have to deal with much more expensive acute-care issues down the road. This is simple. Now, you could be compassionate and you could be economically intelligent and your cousins in Ottawa have chosen neither, and it boggles the mind.

So I think that what we could do, Mr. Speaker, is have a constructive dialogue on this together. We could have a constructive dialogue about how we could work on those challenges ahead. These are not small challenges. Nothing matters more to Manitobans than the health of their loved ones. We could work together on ensuring that all Manitobans are as healthy as they can be. We could work together on ensuring that even better health services come to every corner of Manitoba and we could work together.

If they have such great expertise to offer, I welcome it. They seem bereft of ideas, but have plenty of time for catcalling and personal attacks, Mr. Speaker. I welcome some ideas to face the challenges that we have in the days ahead because I know that nothing matters to Manitobans more and they deserve no less.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I'm glad—and I'm glad to have a few to—an opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to the Throne Speech and, particularly, the amendments of the member—Fort Whyte.

I would particularly like to welcome the new pages and the interns as they play a vital role in the work that we do here on behalf of Manitobans.

I would also like to welcome the new Leader of the Opposition and the member from Fort Whyte and congratulate him on winning his election. He has brought us new energy and we look forward to

forming the next government with him as the Premier of the province.

It's clear that the NDP can't be trusted. They can't be trusted with finances of this province. We know that. Mistake after mistake mismanagement heaped on top of more mismanagement has led this province into a very, very dark era. The highest tax increase in 25 years, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), Mr. Speaker, feels that that's an accomplishment. He feels that that's something that really will go down in history and make him look wonderful. Well, it doesn't do that.

First, though, a little history is in order. Our debt was doubled since 1999 when this government took over. Our Crown corporations have been used in ways that they were not meant to be used, and the money has been siphoned out of Crown coffers to offset the huge deficit this government has.

The NDP government has off-loaded responsibilities on Crown corporations, such as the vehicle registration and licensing to MPI. And now they're proposing that MPI employees should be coming to work with a pail of asphalt in the back of their car that they can fill potholes on their way in. Mr. Speaker, MPI was not made to be fixing roads. MPI has a vehicle for the—to supply low-cost insurance to the hard-working Manitobans.

They use the monopoly of MLCC as a cash cow for the government. All the while, responsibilities such as adequate funding for Addictions Foundation are lowered.

Manitoba Lotteries has used the fund—has used their money to fund the Human Rights Museum, the MTS and the Winnipeg Jets. This was certainly not the intention when legalized gambling was introduced to Manitoba. They've also decided to hike the fees on registrations, putting organizations like legions, that depend on these services to stay afloat, in a very dangerous position.

Manitoba Hydro, another Crown corporation, the gem of Manitoba, the oil of Manitoba, has been used and directed to construct foolish projects. These projects are built on smoke-and-mirrors contracts to the United States. These contracts have not been signed. They are not now available at all. Our spot market is much below what our production costs are, and yet this NDP government continue on their foolish train wreck to try and build these when Manitobans can't afford them. We're mortgaging our

grandchildren to build something that we have no market for the product.

The government directed Manitoba Hydro to run a bipole line down the west side of the province as opposed to the cheaper east side. Many groups supported the cheaper east side. The west side has never been consulted. The line has changed direction over there two or three times, but we have to keep in mind the one constant to that west-side line. This is an extra cost of a billion dollars and a continuously—a continuous line loss of 40 megawatts versus the east side. That's as much as the wind farm produces in southern Manitoba every year.

Mismanagement is the legacy of the NDP government. They've enjoyed some of the most robust economic years that Manitoba's ever had. This government requires half of their budget to be handed to them on a silver paddle-platter from the federal government by way of transfer payments and have successfully squandered that money while amassing a huge debt for all residents of Manitoba, their children and their grandchildren.

Our health-care system has sorely deteriorated under the NDP government, with about 20 rural ERs closed or on a part-time schedule. While the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) trumpets her work in attracting doctors, she fees-fails to see that southern and rural Manitoba desperately needs them and they're not being supplied. The results of that, Mr. Speaker, are that we're going to see hospital closures in rural Manitoba.

What happens now when the ERs are closed? In many cases, there is an ambulance in that particular community, but that ambulance, we know, are stacked up in Winnipeg.

So, if the ambulance from Steinbach is held up in Winnipeg for 10 hours because of the unload time, the ambulance from Vita is called to Steinbach. With the ER closed in Vita, where do the people go from Sprague, Caliento, Sundown, Woodmore, Tolstoi? Where do they go? What do the people do then? Do they call Cropro funeral home? They have no place to go. They can't get there. They need an ambulance and there are no ambulances left. We've got highway medicine. We've got hallway medicine. That's what we've got left from this NDP mismanagement of the health-care system.

* (11:50)

Our education system is designed in such a way that all students in the province today cannot fail.

They cannot fail. That's how it's designed. The students of this province are handed a no-fail policy while this government's education policy and this government as a whole is failing day in and day out. They don't understand that they are failing. They don't understand there is a problem, and until you at least realize and accept the fact that you do have a problem you won't address it. You won't address a challenge that's going to take the feet of this government's mismanagement off the backs of hard-working Manitobans.

The infrastructure in this province has been neglected with the deterioration of highways, the collapsing and closing of bridges and now the appointment of the East Side Road Authority. The inability to complete projects on time and on budget is definitely a hallmark of today's NDP government. Southern Manitoba has one of the biggest infrastructure deficits in the country and this NDP government is content to see all the roads fall into a state of disrepair.

Mr. Speaker, this summer was one of the driest summers on record. You would at least think, then, that our gravel roads, our gravel highways, our PR highways would be in decent shape. Not so—not so at all. Highway 201 west from the little village of Osterwick is a gravel highway. We had a half an inch of rain and an inch of snow and they closed the road. This is a provincial highway.

The milk truck has to go every day to a dairy that's paying huge taxes to this Province. This is a dairy that has spent millions of dollars to comply with the regulations brought to them and pushed on them by this government. They have one of the few biodigesters in the province, and their product wasn't able to get out down the road. That's a shame. That's a shame, on a provincial highway with so little moisture and the highway is impassable and road closed signs on it. This is only one example.

I know that every member has this same thing happening in rural Manitoba. The RM of Stanley has been asking for a meeting with the minister and for the minister to come out and tour the site; yet, he refuses. And the reason he refuses, I'm sure, is that the highway leading down to 201 is almost impassable, and that's an international highway, Mr. Speaker.

It's horrible. It's patched everywhere. Increased moisture has made the roads unsafe on 201 Highway and not putting enough gravel on. No maintenance, that's why the road was closed. The NDP, rather than

paving the road and fixing it right, has decided to continually fill the holes with gravel.

A prime example of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, a prime example of mismanagement in the infrastructure portfolio: there is a proposal on the books to close 23 Highway for some upgrading and some repair work on the bridge at Morris across the Red River. So, in preparation for this project and shutting the bridge down for a month, and it's on an RTAC road or on a class A road, they went to the next bridge down—or upstream, which was St. Jean, and they did quite a bit of work on that bridge preparing it to take these large loads that were going to be rerouted to the 75 Highway over the Red River at St. Jean Baptiste. I'm not sure how many thousand dollars at this point they have spent on it, but there was many thousand dollars to refurbish the bridge to carry these kinds of loads, and within two weeks they closed the bridge saying it was unsafe.

Mr. Speaker, this is complete, total mismanagement. Are they telling me that they did all of this work, they spent thousands and thousands of dollars on this bridge without doing a previous inspection? They knew the loads that were going to go down that road. They were directing them there. They expected it. Would they not have inspected the bridge? The answer is, no, they didn't inspect the bridge. The left hand on that side doesn't know what the centre hand is doing. They don't have a right hand on that side; I'm afraid they don't. What we are also finding out is that they don't have, and haven't been able to provide us with, what they're going to do with the bridge. Are they going to repair it? Could we have that closed to—just to light traffic? Because there's 200 people cross that bridge daily to go to work. There's a number of school children that it's added two hours to their bus trip—two hours in the morning and two hours at night. These are grade 1 to grade 12 students. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you and none of your constituents would like to add a four-hour bus trip to any of their children in a day and five days a week.

Mr. Speaker, only 51 per cent of business owners in this province believe that starting a business in this province is a good thing. That's a horrible, horrible statistic. When we try to promote Manitoba, when we try to attract businesses, and the businesses that we have here say, I wouldn't start a business here again. I wouldn't recommend it. I wouldn't recommend it at all. But we have other provinces like BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan all above 71 per cent, and as high as 89 per cent, of

small business owners saying that yes, we would start the business here. Our provincial government said we don't want to be a part of New West Partnership. We don't want to be a part of prosperity. We don't want to look like we're moving forward. No, we want to do it here ourselves, chase the businesses out with high taxes, broken promises and mismanagement. The government has demoralized small business owners, and large business owners, for that matter.

The NDP doesn't know what it takes to run a business in this province. They just want to raise taxes on everyone so the government can continue feeding its spending addiction that they're not willing to curb, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) believes that the only way to feed an addiction is to give away more of what the addict is addicted to. They don't learn from their mistakes. It's hard to believe, then, that this province has some of the highest addiction rates in the country and no supports to bring them down. And that was quite clear in the last budget; there was no extra money for the Addictions Foundation at all either.

There was an interesting story in the Winnipeg Free Press on Saturday. It mentioned that the top 25 employers in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, more than half of them were either Crown corporations or there were companies that received large amounts of government funding. Why is this interesting, I asked. Because small and large businesses are being forced out of the economy. The only employers left are those that are run by the government, funded by tax dollars. I don't think we want to have Manitoba businesses all run by this government. It's only just a matter of time before the government steps in and starts running more businesses. We'll be moaned as the Crown corporation of Canada. No one on either side of us, in the other provinces, will want to speak to us. The federal government will have to step in at that point.

The taxpayers of this province are some of the highest taxed in Canada, and they're quickly learning that they can't trust this NDP government, who promised not to raise taxes in the last budget and immediately did—or, in the last election, and in the first budget after that election, they promptly raised taxes. Some of them were clear; some of the taxes were very clear. You can see them. The tax—the gasoline tax was supposed to be directed to infrastructure, highway infrastructure, solely for that purpose, and when they brought in their budget, they had trimmed—they had trimmed—the Infrastructure

budget from the year before by exactly the same amount as what the gas tax was going to bring in. There was no more money for infrastructure in the end, just a higher tax, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I want to thank you for the opportunity to stand up today and speak to the amendment of the Throne Speech.

* (12:00)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very pleased today to speak to another great Throne Speech on the part of this government. We're developing quite a long stretch here of throne speeches and I see no reason to be looking far into the future for many, many more to come, Mr. Speaker.

By the way, this Throne Speech actually—I—you know, I can see the Conservatives not being very happy about the Throne Speech, because it does a lot of the things that they, if they were the government, would actually be wanting to do on their own. For example, the amalgamation of the municipalities—they have really little to say about that. Elimination of red tape—that seems to be really their only major policy over here that they have developed.

We promised to reduce the size of the civil service through attrition. We had in the last budget a reduction in the health authorities from 11 to five, something that they would've liked. So I can see why they're very irritable—irritated because, in fact, this government is taking the best practices and adopting some of the things that they would have done themselves, and that certainly gets them really riled up. We saw that this morning with their orchestrated attack on the government, and the—matter of fact, my good friend here, the member—I forget his riding, but—

An Honourable Member: Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Maloway: —was saying—for Arthur-Virden, said that when he was told by the House leader that the Conservative Party had actually accepted a million dollars in the last election in—more than the NDP had, he said, it's not enough. That was his response.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of the local infrastructure issues that we're dealing with in the Throne Speech. The Province is committed to assisting with the renewal of Winnipeg's transportation infrastructure by contributing significant funds to major projects like the expansion of the Chief Peguis Trail, the Osborne Street Bridge, and the Disraeli Bridge that's in my constituency.

Moreover, we've made an additional contribution for the new Plessis Road underpass, and we look forward to continued partnerships with the City and the federal government, to make such projects feasible.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

On the issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the Plessis Road underpass, I wanted to take this opportunity to quote an excerpt from a letter from the MLA for Transcona, dated March 23rd, 2011, to the residents of his riding of Transcona. And also, by the way, at this time—at that time, the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) was distributing a similar letter to his constituents. And the intent of the letter was to show once and for all that the Province of Manitoba, the NDP government of Manitoba, was advocating for the Plessis Road underpass project since way back, July 23rd, 2010. A year—a year before the city councillor for the area was prancing around misrepresenting the situation and saying that somehow the government of Manitoba was not on side.

The provincial NDP government was the first level, not second or third—we were the first level of government to commit to this project followed by the federal government and the City. As a matter of fact, I think the City was the last on board. They did not put this project on the five-year capital projects list until months and months after the provincial government had already made the commitment and the project was under way. On July 23rd, 2010, the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) wrote to Mayor Katz to make an offer to the City, a provincial commitment to funding up to one third of the project's funding. And at that time, as I said, the City had yet to commit and it wasn't even on their five-year capital project list.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for a few minutes I'd like to turn—I know that sometime before the end of my speech I do want to get around to writing some of my holiday Christmas cards to some people, but I would like to just spend a few minutes talking about a—important issue, I think, that's a—perhaps a sleeper issue, but it's certainly one that could develop into something very substantial.

In the 19—in 2002, a few years ago, I attended a Public Accounts conference in Australia with Ed Helwer, who, by the way, is the uncle of the current member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), and he was the Conservative caucus whip at the time. And, by the way, Mr. Helwer's skills as a whip were second

only to our own sainted whip, who I pay homage to every day, the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). And, by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Australia, that's when I first came in contact with the idea of compulsory voting and there it was viewed as something very positive by all parties, by the Labor Party, by the conservative party. And considering that industries and professionals do their best to follow best practices—we all know that dealing with public accounts—that we should be following democratic best practices, and this, clearly, is one of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm really referring to the health of our democratic system, the system we've inherited from Britain in the form of our parliamentary democracy, and, indeed, I'm also referring to most of the western democracies. The health of our democracies is failing. The body politic is showing symptoms of acute stress. And what are the symptoms? Let's make no mistake about it, there are a few of these. Firstly, the western democracies are experiencing lower voter turnouts and lower participation rates. Our declining voter turnout in Manitoba is but a small illustration of the problem, and I'm assuming that all members here, all members of the Legislature, consider this a problem.

Let's look at the Manitoba experience. Back in the 1950s, we actually had voter turnouts of—1958 we had 61 per cent, '59 was 65 per cent. And during the '60s, we were in that range—in the 61 per cent, 65 per cent. And it wasn't until 1973—a lot of us remember 1973 election—we had the highest turnout ever. We had 78 per cent. That's when the Ed Schreyer NDP government was re-elected. But the very next election, we had the second highest turnout ever, just two points lower, 76 per cent, when the Conservatives, under Sterling Lyon, were elected to this House. But ever since those two elections, 1977, we've had a drop of voter turnout to the point now where, with all the efforts we've made to make it easier for people to vote, our turnout is only 55 per cent in the 2011 election. So this is a drop, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of 23 points just in our lifetime, and that certainly, I would think, should be unacceptable to us.

Now, all—there's 30 countries who don't experience this, who have a system where they have voter turnouts of 90 per cent, starting with Australia. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in England, their most recent election results showed a 65 per cent turnout. This is down 10 points on average for the elections of the 1990s. In 2001, the British turnout was

59 per cent. So what we have since 2010, it was 65 per cent, 2005, 61, and 2001, 59 per cent—that's one third of all the voters of England not voting in election. That's clearly unacceptable.

The next symptom of an ailing democratic system is the decreasing civility of election campaigns in all the western democracies. And the third symptom is a decline of the increasing incidents of voter suppression. In the United States, voter suppression is a blood sport, engaged openly by partisan legislatures over an enthusiastic county official based entirely on partisan considerations. And here in Canada, we're awaiting rulings in the courts and we hear reports through the media of varying types of voter suppression tactics—the end result reducing the turnout of non-supporters. Recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Virginia, I believe it was, calls surfaced on election day, November 6th, telling people they could vote by phone until the next day, November 7th.

The studies I read show improvements in the mechanics of elections such as a permanent voters list will add to an increase of no higher than 2 per cent. So bear that in mind that people think that, you know, having a permanent voters list is going to drive up your participation; we're looking at probably two—a 2 per cent increase.

So in Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we pride ourselves in a professional and impartial elections machinery. We have all kinds of mechanisms in place to ensure equality of participation: we've got absentee ballots; we've got mobile polls; we've got advanced polls; we have enough polling stations and a ballot system that has amenable error rates; and we have checks to ensure free and fair election—all pointing to optimizing the legitimacy of the result. And with all that—with all that—we're managing to get 55.77 per cent turnout. So, clearly, that's not—

An Honourable Member: What's your answer?

* (12:10)

Mr. Maloway: Well, the answer—the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) asked what's the answer. With a congenial system, with a system that allows—that makes it very easy to vote, then the next logical step is just simply a compulsory system so that you drive your turn up right back up to 90 per cent. You have—people have no reason to not vote. There are many studies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, out on this issue and I've mentioned that Canada has a congenial electoral system and that, in fact, that it's voter friendly and

yet here we have declining turnouts, less and less participation in our political life of our communities. And we only have to look at the—our last campaigns or with any of the parties to see how the volunteers are dropping in our campaigns.

So what do we do about it? Studies show clearly that compulsory voting is an effective mechanism for increasing turnout by between 7 and 16 per cent, and some say as high as 26 percentage points depending on the depth of the nonparticipation. Studies also observed that it's often overlooked that fines and sanctions are just one aspect of compulsory voting. States like Australia, in employing compulsory voting, reciprocate via weekend voting, simple registration procedures, the creation of a centralized professional bureaucracy and all the aspects of an election administration. And, no doubt, compulsory voting raises important questions in the heart of democratic theory and, of course, the question always is is it democratic to compel citizens to vote via the threat of social or financial sanction? What legitimacy attaches, however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to elected representatives and their policies when large proportions of the electorate abstain? You don't—we don't feel good recognizing that only 54 per cent of the people are out there actually participating.

Countries like Australia were compelled to act in 1924. Now get this, in 1924 the Australians had a 64.2 per cent turnout, 10 points higher than us today, and they thought that was too low and they brought in a law that drove up their numbers to the 90 per cent range, over 90 per cent range in the elections. Belgium, Greece, Italy instituted compulsory voting in the last century, shortly after the expansion of voter suffrage and political organization of labour movements in the late 1900s and early 20th century. And I want to ask if any of you are aware that in North Dakota, US, in 1889, and in Massachusetts, 1918, they actually amended their constitutions to permit compulsory voting, although they never actually implemented them through their legislatures.

I believe compulsory voting will minimize the effects and occurrence of voter suppression activities and fraudulent calls, and this is very topical now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all this voter suppression talk that is going on at the federal level, provincial level and in the United States. If we develop a system of compulsory voting, we're going to make political debate more civil, parties will have to appeal to the voters it needs to persuade rather than expensive get-out-to-vote campaigns. I would argue the less civil

the debate, the more disaffected voters become and the more likely they are to be disconnected from the process. And, moreover, the declining rates of voter turnouts have a potential to radicalize some marginalized elements of our society to use violence as a means of expression. In a compulsory voting system, political parties will have to focus more on positive messages to voters rather than devote huge resources and suspect tactics to getting their vote out.

I know we have a society that values the right to vote. The right was fought for. I don't have to remind anyone here in the Legislature about that. Gender, race, people with disabilities, never mind, Mr. Speaker, fighting on the beaches of Normandy and elsewhere, but rights come with responsibilities, and I dare say that we've lost sight of this.

There's an associated duty that goes along with this right and that's the inherent responsibility of citizens to vote. It's like paying taxes. It's like reporting for jury duty. It's like wearing a seatbelt. It's like attending school to the age of 16. The duty to vote is required to maintain our system and the benefits that go with it.

And what does Australia get in so far as turnouts with a very soft, no-jail compliance regime? As I'd indicated, in 1924 they went from 64.2 per cent to an average of 94.6 per cent in the next nine elections. And I have the figures for you if anybody's interested in them from all of the Australian elections. Venezuela removed their fines in 1993, and they saw turnout fall by 30 points, and provided, Mr. Speaker, that you have a congenial system, as we do in Canada, compulsory voting is the only institutional mechanism that's able, on its own, to raise the turnout to the 90 per cent range. A permanent voters' list, as I'd indicated before, will get you maybe 2 per cent extra. We do need turnouts of over 90 per cent like Australia.

Now I've been referencing the Australian experience and it's for obvious reasons. It, too, has a congenial system like ours, and we, too, can get these healthy numbers with a similar approach. We already have friendly voter mechanisms to ensure free and fair elections. Now, Mr. Speaker, since 1969, we have 18 elections since 1969 in Australia. I'd like to ask the members if they have any idea how many were won by the conservative party and how many were won from the Labor Party. And, since I don't expect you're going to be able to guess this one—and we have another test in a few minutes on another topic—I will tell you. Since 1969 in Australia,

in the 18 elections since that time, the conservative party won nine and the Labor Party won nine, even seven.

Former Prime Minister Joe Clark is on record as supporting compulsory voting. Jean-Pierre Kingsley, former chief electoral officer, said, quote: "The right to vote is only meaningful if you use it," in response to the criticism that compulsory voting will restrict individuals' freedom and choose—to choose whether or not to vote. That was Jean-Pierre Kingsley, the former chief electoral officer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that this has been somewhat informative. Information is certainly readily available out there, and the more you dig into the issue, the more reasonable the issue sounds. And I kind of leave it open because I know Elections Manitoba has done no work on the subject. So, if you know members want to make representations to Elections Manitoba, I'm sure they're free to do so.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new leader of the Conservative Party made his address the other day, and I listened very intently to his comments. And I would like to congratulate him on his new position, his—and his recent election victory. I know I drove around there on election day, and I was kind of hopeful there for a while that things were going to—kind of looking up for us, that we were going to be able to get some, you know, win that seat, but things did not work out quite as planned.

But it certainly was an experience, and I did listen to his speech, his first speech, and it was a fairly, I guess, good speech for—by his standards and for his party in forwarding his position.

But, you know, I think he is a bit of a contortionist, and I think there's also some indications here of some confusion or certainly a rewriting of some history because I note that on page 56 of Hansard he says, and I quote—and by the way, his website, I notice his website today talks about how in 1997 he moved to federal politics to pursue the creation of a single national Conservative Party. Well, I, you know, I'm wondering if Don Plett is monitoring these websites here because I've always read that Don Plett is the gentleman who, you know—not only is Don Plett his boss, but Don Plett is the gentleman who put these parties together. And so I wouldn't want to call this a nose stretcher really but—and I'm trying to read what he said here and try to draw any possible interpretations other than the obvious fact here. But he says he believes in the

reunion of a conservative faction east and west was desirable and he said it was essential.

And, you know, but my recollection is this. He ran for the leadership of the two-member, by his own admission, the two-member Conservative Party, and he ran against, I believe, Joe Clark and Peter MacKay, and, you know, I could be wrong, but I thought all of those leadership candidates promised that they were going to be true to their party. They were going to restore the party to its greatness. They were not going to sell out and form a joint party with the Reform Party. That wasn't going to happen. And, at the end of the day, it was Peter MacKay who won. I think the leader was No. 6 in the balloting, if I'm not mistaken, but the leader was MacKay. He won and he's the guy that went and backtracked on his principles and joined up with the Reform Party to form a new party.

And, lo and behold, we have the leader now, claims it was him all along. It was he that did it. Somehow he had this—so here he was working like two tracks. He was telling those voters, vote for me. I'm going to take the party back to its greatness. The party of John A. Macdonald, I could just hear all his speeches from those days. But, secretly, now we find out that secretly he had another plan all along. His plan was, had he wanted to, to do exactly—maybe even quicker, maybe not wait six months; maybe only four months, and drop—put in his chips with the new party.

* (12:20)

So, you know, I—I'm going to say that, you know, maybe he can parse this a little differently and come up with a different interpretation. I invite him to do that but, once again, his website's pretty clear. We just—one of our people just notified me that—sent in an email that, you know, his website today says in 1997 he went to the federal government to persuade the creation of a national Conservative party.

So I'm hoping it all ends there, but I know he went on in his speech and discussed different issues. He said, you know, he did—as our Energy minister indicated the other day, it was a travelogue of Manitoba—he said he was blue-collar, he was white-collar, he was no-collar, he was all-collar. He was all in with the plan to unite the right, he said. And, you know, so I'm thinking that it's probably time that I wrote my—

An Honourable Member: Oh, your Christmas card?

Mr. Maloway: Yes, I have to do my cards, exactly, but I like to know because there's certainly a difference of opinion here as to who the true uniter of the right was. And, I think, by a show of hands, we should have some indication of what—like, how many people here think it was the Leader of the Opposition? Can we have a show of hands? Well, he claims he united the right. I don't see a single person—let the record show that nobody has voted for the Leader of the Opposition as the true uniter of the right.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Now, let's have a show of hands for those who think my good friend, Senator Don, was the true uniter of the right. Oh, let the record show that we have four, six, eight people—yes, so that's eight to nothing; eight members of the Legislature believe Senator Don over the Leader of the Opposition.

So now my job, I guess, Mr. Speaker, comes down to writing that card, that Christmas card that I must send in the next two weeks to my good friend, Senator Don.

So I thought that I should indicate, and I know the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) was very helpful this morning in lending me one of her Christmas cards so I could get it in the post in time, but I thought we could say: Dear Don, I hope this card finds you in good health. There are strange things happening in the Manitoba Legislature. The Leader of the Opposition is now claiming that he led to unite the right while he was campaigning for leader of the federal Conservative Party. And the members have just voted, was it six?

An Honourable Member: Eight.

Mr. Maloway: Eight to nothing to support you as the true founder of the Unite the Right. Enjoy your Christmas and happy holidays.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I know we have no time for questions here, but I will be around.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Entertaining to listen to the member from Elmwood. Certainly, he's—gave a forceful vote for compulsory voting. I guess now we're going to have a vote tax, so you're going to tax all Manitobans, then you're going to have compulsory voting, and now you're going to fine the people who don't vote.

So now we have a new revenue source for the Manitoba government. This is interesting indeed.

Mr. Speaker, this is—the Throne Speech was presented—same old, same old again—change a few words here and there and away we went. And it was sort of business as usual: lots of promises and no follow-through on this. But—and I've—certainly will be speaking to the amendment, and we don't have much time left today, but on Monday.

But, first of all, like the member from Elmwood, I would like to welcome the Leader of the Opposition to this House. My acquaintance with the leader goes back many years, and I certainly look forward to working with him in the coming years. And he is man of a lot of action and many words, and so we will look forward to the—as events unfold within this House.

So—and in speaking to this Throne Speech—and actually I—first of all, because we don't have many minutes this morning—or this afternoon, I asked a question in question period yesterday about the municipal amalgamations that the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) has now proposed in the media.

And I guess I can understand why he does it in the media. They have a hundred—the NDP party has 192 communicators and they've forgotten to communicate to the people who are affected most. And they've just forgotten the basic rule, is that you talk to stakeholders. You don't deal in the media. But I guess, you know, maybe there's a miscommunication. It must be hard to keep track of 192 communicators, so I can see why that happened.

But the interesting—in the minister's answers yesterday, he said that they're going to go ahead with amalgamations. It doesn't matter what the municipalities say or think or whatever. And then, later on in the afternoon, the member from the Interlake also chimed in, and quoting from Hansard yesterday, the member from Interlake said: Municipalities with less than a thousand people—clearly dysfunctional.

Now, I guess I would take that as a bit of slight if I was a municipality under a thousand, and I guess, with the AMM convention coming up next week, it is a big deal. There will be a lot of people in there, and I'm assuming—I guess I hope for the AMM's sake that they have more than a thousand people there, because I guess if there's less than a thousand people

at the convention, then the member from the Interlake is calling them all dysfunctional.

So, this—you know, the AMM convention has some rather high-profile speakers coming in; one of them is Peter Mansbridge. And, if at all possible, I'd like to get over to hear his address. It'll certainly be interesting. But certainly it's one thing—the presentations within the convention and then the hallway chatter between the presentations. And I'm sure that, if the member for the Interlake was looking to have his name out there in the hallways, he's certainly done it now by calling any municipality with less than a thousand people dysfunctional. I know my phones ringing already about that comment, so we will certainly—I'm sure we'll hear a lot more about this and about the forced amalgamations that are coming up, whatever the plan

has—whatever the minister has for plans for the municipalities and I—you know, it's just a sign of this government. They forget to consult with stakeholders. They only deal in the media.

And this is very, you know, it's a sign of the times of government. When you've been in the—in government too long, you forget who you're actually there to serve. And this—you know, we'll see how this goes—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) will have 25 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 23, 2012

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Children's Advocate Gerrard; Howard	121
Bill 3—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave Related to the Critical Illness, Death or Disappearance of a Child) Howard	115	Rossbrook House Wight; Chief	122
Bill 6—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Flexible Short-Term Regulation of Vehicle Weights and Dimensions) Ashton	115	Members' Statements	
Petitions		Association for Community Living Beausejour Branch Ewasko	126
Mount Agassiz Ski Area Briese	115	International Year of Co-operatives Wight	127
St. Ambroise Beach Provincial Park Wishart	116	Convey-All Industries Friesen	128
Vita & District Health Centre Smook	116	Craig Street Cats Crothers	128
PR 520 Ewasko	117	Ed Tyrchniewicz Wishart	129
Oral Questions			
Political Parties			
Pallister; Howard	117		
Mitchelson; Howard	118		
Taillieu; Howard	119		
Wishart; Howard	119		
Rowat; Howard	120		
Maguire; Howard	120		
Friesen; Howard	122		
Briese; Howard	123		
Pedersen; Howard	123		
Helwer; Howard	123		
Stefanson; Howard	124		
Smook; Howard	124		
Ewasko; Howard	125		
Graydon; Howard	125		
Schuler; Howard	126		
Goertzen; Howard	126		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Throne Speech (Fourth Day of Debate)	
		Friesen	130
		Oswald	133
		Graydon	136
		Maloway	139
		Pedersen	143

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

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