



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS No. 7

THIRD SESSION, THIRTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

PRAYER

10:00 O'CLOCK A.M.

On motion of Hon. Mr. GERRARD, Bill (No. 204) – The Social Inclusion and Anti-Poverty Act/Loi sur l'inclusion sociale et la lutte contre la pauvreté, was read a First Time and had its purposes outlined.

The following petitions were presented and read:

Mr. MAGUIRE – Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to request the Minister of Health to consider creating a health care environment in which doctors want to work and build their careers in Manitoba and to consider making it a priority to recruit doctors to southwestern Manitoba so emergency rooms do not have to be closed when they are needed most. (G. Slater, B. Brydon, C. Forsyth and others)

Mr. BOROTSIK – Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to request the Minister of Education Citizenship and Youth to consider removing education funding by school tax or education levies from all property in Manitoba and to consider finding a more equitable method of funding education such as general revenue following the Constitutional funding of education by the Province of Manitoba. (J. Smith, J. Rindall, A. Denchuk and others)

Mr. DYCK – Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to request the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth to consider providing the necessary facilities to Garden Valley School Division and to consider providing Garden Valley School Division an immediate date as to when to expect the necessary school facilities. (S. Funk, J. Rempel, K. Wiebe and others)

Mrs. ROWAT – Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to encourage the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider establishing “Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day” in Manitoba in order to increase awareness, support and understanding of the difficulties faced by families who have lost an infant. (M. Snell, T. Meade, K. Zielinski and others)

Mr. GRAYDON – Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to request the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act to consider working with MLCC to find alternate means of addressing rising administrative costs; and to consider working with MLCC to revise the decision to implement a significant annual license fee increase; and to consider ensuring that the unique challenges faced by small businesses are better taken into account in the future. (S. Samatle, K. Whitford, L. Malcolm and others)

Mr. LAMOUREUX – Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to urge the Provincial Government to consider establishing a 90 day guarantee for processing an application for a minimum of 90% of applicants that have family living in Manitoba. (H. Samonte, N. Gonzales, C. Eborra and others)

Pursuant to Rule 26(1), Hon. Ms. MELNICK, Mrs. TAILLIEU, Ms. BRICK, Mr. EICHLER and Ms. BLADY made Members' Statements.

The House resumed the Interrupted Debate on the Proposed Motion of Ms. SELBY:

THAT the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor:

We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba thank your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Third Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba.

And the proposed amendment moved by Mr. MCFADYEN as follows:

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

But this House regrets:

- (a) That the Government's Throne Speech fails to acknowledge that provinces, nations and civilizations rise and fall on the strength or weakness of their economies; and
- (b) That the Speech fails to recognize that a strong economy is a pre-requisite for a united province that offers safe communities, effective healthcare, first class education systems, leading-edge environmental protection, healthy families and communities and the safety net programs that protect our seniors, the poor and the vulnerable; and
- (c) That the Speech fails to take into account that for the past nine years, and particularly since the brief downturn that followed the 9/11 terror attacks, the government has failed to do enough to build Manitoba's economy and protect its finances; and
- (d) That those failures and missed opportunities include the catastrophically wasteful directive to Manitoba Hydro to waste a minimum of \$640 million (or \$535 for every man, woman and child in Manitoba) on the longer, less reliable, less green west side transmission corridor and the self-serving Bill 37 "vote tax", which will take \$1 million from taxpayers over four years and put it in the pocket of the New Democratic Party;

(e) That as a result of the Government's failure to apply the record revenue increases it has enjoyed over the past nine years to more aggressively pay down debt, Manitoba's total debt has gone up when it should have gone down, and our total debt, including crown corporations, is now approaching \$20 billion, or \$16,600 for every man, woman and child in Manitoba; and

(f) That as a further consequence of the Government's failure to fix our financial roof while the sun was shining, the fiscal stabilization fund, our savings account, has only \$670,215,000 available for general purposes, which is a mere \$559 for every man, woman and child in Manitoba. By contrast, Saskatchewan now has almost \$2 billion in deposits, triple the protection that is available to Manitobans; and

(g) That as a result of the Government's failures and missed opportunities, the total debt is now 30 times higher than the balance in our savings account ; and

(h) That as a result of the Government's failure to build our economic engine during good times, Manitoba now relies on transfer and equalization to the tune of 37% of our income, which has increased from the 1999 level of dependency of 28%. This has created an unacceptable level of risk and vulnerability for Manitoba's finances as the sources of those transfers – provinces like Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan, Ontario and Newfoundland - experience their own economic challenges; and

(i) That as a result of the cumulative effect of nine years of failure, drift and poor to mediocre results, Manitoba enters this new and uncertain phase in our history with a balanced and diverse economy that is burdened by provincial finances that are limited by new debt and new dependency; and

(j) That Manitobans expected, and deserve, a Throne Speech that would set out a vision for the economy of the future, building on traditional areas of strength such as agriculture, food sciences, aerospace, mining and transportation and also daring to envision new opportunities in manufacturing, clean energy research and development and modern transportation built on clean electricity, all of which could flourish around a new, state-of-the-art Inland Port, which has been tepidly endorsed and reluctantly advanced by the Government; and

(k) That Manitobans expected, and deserve, a Throne Speech that strongly addressed their current fears and anxieties about the security of their pensions in this post-Crocus environment and the security of their jobs in the context of a global downturn, but instead received vague and unconvincing assurances that everything will be fine; and

(l) That Manitobans expected, and deserved, a Throne Speech that painted a clear picture of the economy of 2012 and beyond, and an energetic plan to get us to the new Manitoba, but instead received a reheated serving of old and as yet unfulfilled promises; and

(m) That the Official Opposition asked for a plan, with clear priorities and a commitment to better results, but instead received a spending list with no sense as whether the spending promises - advertised as a bridge over troubled economic waters – was bridge to somewhere, or a bridge to nowhere; and

(n) The Speech failed to set out a vision for growth that would ensure that current spending would be paid for by new growth, as opposed to what the Government is offering, which is more debt, lower savings and diminished hope;

(o) The Speech contains many positive steps unrelated to the economy, such as protecting children from second-hand smoke and more promises related to the environment, which are commendable goals that, are shared by the Official Opposition. However, the failure to address the overarching issue of our time - our economic security - means that the Official Opposition will support many of the specific initiatives in the Speech while not endorsing the Speech itself; and

(p) The ongoing failure on the part of the Premier and Government Ministers to accept responsibility for systemic failures and broken promises in Healthcare, Child and Family Services, Public Safety and the Economy leaves Manitobans with little confidence that the newest round of promises and announcements will be fulfilled with any better results than promises of the past such as hallway medicine, fixing Child and Family Services, the collapsed Maple Leaf Distillers and Ainsworth Lumber deals and the others in the growing litany of failures; and

(q) The Speech failed to paint a picture of a better future based on the shared commitment and energy of our diverse population of First Nations and Metis peoples and the succeeding waves of immigrants who have built our province together. Furthermore, the Speech failed to address the specific issues and concerns of new immigrants, as well as our First Nations and Metis people. They, and all Manitobans, have been let down by a Government who has again announced hundreds of millions in new spending in order to get short-term headlines, rather than summon our people to a higher purpose, a stronger province and a more hopeful future.

AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS THEREBY lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

And the debate continuing on the amendment,

And Mr. BRIESE, Hon. Mr. ASHTON and Mrs. MITCHELSON having spoken,

And Hon. Mr. SWAN speaking at 12:30 p.m. The debate was allowed to remain in his name.

The House then adjourned at 12:30 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. Monday, December 1, 2008.

Hon. George HICKES,
Speaker.