

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
First Session—Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 5, 2002

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Censure/Apology Request

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, the authorities tell us that a question of privilege should rarely come up in the Legislature and, should the question arise, that the matter should be raised at its earliest opportunity.

In raising this matter of privilege today, I do so at the earliest opportunity accorded to me, for in order to ensure that the veracity of the statements made by the First Minister (Mr. Doer) in answers to questions provided during Question Period, I was only able to undertake this review upon receiving Hansard.

It is a fundamental basic rule of this place that information which is placed on the record of the House and before the people of Manitoba must be accurate, factual and be presented in such a manner in order to facilitate the work of this House. The answers provided by the Premier in questions placed before this House earlier this week show a complete contempt for this House and a deliberate misleading of the people of Manitoba as to the truth of his statements.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a dispute over the facts. This is a deliberate attempt on the part of the First Minister to be loose with the facts in order to mislead political points, to provide inaccurate information to this Assembly and to the people of Manitoba. What is even more troublesome with the attitude of the First Minister is that he is willing to play loose with the facts and not provide a source of his information, even though he knows the

information which I will present to this House is based upon budgets tabled in this House.

He comes to this House barren of factual information, barren of the integrity to ensure proper information is placed before the people of Manitoba and this House and barren of any documentation which will back up his statement. This type of action is contemptuous of this House and it is not worthy of a premier.

All members in this House are duty bound to ascertain the accuracy of their information before they place it on the record. To allow the First Minister (Mr. Doer) to continue to place false information on the floor of this House offends the integrity of this place and if allowed to continue results in a contemptuous action being allowed to go unchecked and morally wounds the integrity of the Legislature of Manitoba.

* (13:35)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring forward a quote from Hansard of December 2, where the Premier of Manitoba indicated, and I quote: "When we came into office the middle-income individuals of Manitoba were the highest west of Québec and east of Québec under the Tory years."

I would like to table a document that indicates the provincial income tax comparisons for a family of four at \$40,000 and \$60,000 levels from 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998. These documents indicate that middle-income Manitobans at that \$40,000 level were very competitive with our other provinces in Canada at that time.

I would also like to table in this House another document showing the 1999 provincial income tax comparisons from the year in which this Government took power in the province of Manitoba. This document indicates that for a family of four with \$40,000 of income,

Saskatchewan taxpayers paid \$485 more than Manitoba, New Brunswick taxpayers paid \$351 more, Nova Scotia paid \$218, Prince Edward Island \$271 and Newfoundland \$833 more than their counterparts in these provinces than Manitobans did. For \$60,000, it is \$253 higher in Saskatchewan, more in Québec and \$674 higher in the province of Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, on November 28, the Premier (Mr. Doer) in this House also stated, and I quote: "We had a situation where the income taxes in Manitoba were the highest east and west of Québec before we came into office." I would state the evidence I have placed before this House today contradicts that statement by the Premier, both statements by the Premier.

I would also like to table at this time documents showing the tax competitiveness of Manitobans under the years of the Doer government in the province of Manitoba today. This has happened at a time when this Government has had a billion worth of additional revenue in the province of Manitoba. I would remind all of us of the words of Joseph Maingot on page 225 of his second edition, where he states: Contempt is more aptly described as an offence against the authority or dignity of the House.

As well, I would also direct your attention, Mr. Speaker, to Marleau and Montpetit, on page 52, where it states: Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of this House, even though no breach of any specific privilege may have been committed, is referred to as a contempt of the House. Contempt may be an act or an omission. It does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a member. It merely has to have the tendency to produce such results.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker, a new contempt has been found in this House which is an affront to the dignity of the House, playing loose with figures, expecting the House to accept these figures even though budget documents have been tabled in this House by his own Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) showing that the First Minister did not ensure the accuracy of his comments prior to answering the question. This arrogant attitude

displayed by the First Minister in this regard is clearly a contempt of this House and needs to be dealt with by this House.

Therefore I would move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson),

THAT this House censure the Premier for his contemptuous actions in knowingly placing misleading information before this House which was not accurate, based upon information already tabled in this Assembly by his own Finance Minister; and

THAT the Premier be directed to apologize to the Legislative Assembly and the people of Manitoba for bringing such false information before this House and undermining the integrity and respect of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that contributions at this time by honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I will strongly suggest, clearly this certainly is not a matter of privilege and would not even constitute a point of order.

The first question is with regard to whether it was raised at the first available opportunity. My understanding is that this is with regard to statements made on December 2, so with the delivery schedule of Hansard this last week it does not appear to have met the first test of being raised at the first available opportunity, which would appear to be either on December 2 or yesterday.

On the main point though as to whether there is a prima facie case, I again just note page 11 of *Beauchesne*: "The distinctive mark of a privilege is its ancillary character. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are 'absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers'. They are enjoyed by individual Members, because the House cannot perform its functions

without unimpeded use of the services of its Members".

There has been a long line of rulings in this House where matters of privilege have been used to raise political points or arguments and even matters where there are allegations that a member deliberately misled the House. The clear line of authority in this Chamber is that there has to be essentially an acknowledgment by the person targeted that he or she deliberately misled the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here, in any event, is a simple dispute. It is a question of political debate and dialogue. *Beauchesne* 31(1) says, it has been quoted so many times in this House: "A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege." So this just does not come near a privilege whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker: A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I am going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and I will return to the House with a ruling.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Second Quarter Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the six months ended September 30, 2002.

* (13:45)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 201—The Criminal Organizations Deterrence Act (Local Government Acts Amended)

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot hear the honourable member.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith), that leave be given to introduce Bill 201,

The Criminal Organizations Deterrence Act (Local Government Acts Amended), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, this bill gives municipalities the power to pass by-laws that prohibit or regulate businesses carried on by members or associates of a criminal organization, if the business is used to advance the interests of the criminal organization. The bill also allows municipalities to pass zoning by-laws to deal with places used as residences or meeting places for members or associates of a criminal organization.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from the Applied Linguistics Centre 5 English as a Second Language students under the direction of Mrs. Ruth Klippenstein. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk).

Also in the public gallery we have from Dufferin Christian School 13 Grade 11 students under the direction of Miss Jessica Hordyk. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

Also in the public gallery we have from Woodlawn School 50 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Merlin Braun. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Jim Penner).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Private/Public Agreements

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a recent poll by the

Council for Canadian Unity found that Manitobans' support for additional involvement of the private sector to provide health care services has grown by more than 50 percent over the last year. In fact, local support for such a move was the strongest here in western Canada. Could the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) tell this House if she will listen to the growing number of Manitobans who support an increased collaboration with private clinics by giving them the choice of going to publicly funded, private facilities for treatment?

Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Minister of Health):

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the Leader of the Opposition who is quoted in the paper as saying something like: If you look in the national newspapers, I think they have been doing something about this poll. He could not quote the poll when he was asked, and he apparently still does not know that the grand total of Manitobans in that poll was 120 people, 120 people. Now, there is a reliable sample for you.

I think it is very clear that Manitobans and Ipsos-Reid polls, and polls that have enough numbers to actually be valid overwhelmingly support this Government's approach to the Pan Am Clinic, which has lowered costs, increased volumes and kept critically needed surgeon specialists in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have decided that health care is a priority and that it should be universal and accessible. They did not decide to abandon quality and choice. I would ask the minister, once again, to reduce waiting lists and offer choice to Manitoba patients. Would he allow his Government to increase the number of contracts it has with publicly funded private facilities if that is what the majority of Manitobans support?

* (13:50)

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, I would just tell the Leader of the Opposition, through you, that in an Ipsos-Reid poll of November 22, two-thirds of Canadians agree with Commissioner Roy Romanow that we do not need user fees, we do not need more private money in the health care system, 67 percent of those in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

More importantly, in the Pan Am Clinic, the Leader of the Opposition might have read the paper this morning and noted that the waiting list for pain management has been dramatically shortened by virtue of being able to use that clinic's skills and resources appropriately, allowing the critical care facilities we have to do their job more appropriately. We have increased volumes, saved money, improved patient care by using the Pan Am Clinic as a centre of excellence for community-based surgery and community-based treatment. It works. He does not like that.

Mr. Murray: What I think Manitobans do not like is that this NDP government has to buy the bricks and mortar. We on this side of the House do not care who owns it if it provides timely access to care under a publicly funded system.

It is not fair to patients and their families for ideology to be allowed to cripple our health care system and prevent it from offering choice and timely care for patients in Manitoba. It just makes sense that if the private sector can help reduce waiting lists by providing services within the publicly funded system and if Manitobans support such a move, then government should not stand in the way.

I would ask this minister again, if a significant majority of Manitobans supported going to a government-regulated, privately-managed clinic for care, would he allow this to happen or would he continue to put their own ideology in front of patient care in Manitoba?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very helpful for Manitobans to know that American-style medicine is the preference of the Opposition, with private sector care, private capital. It may also be helpful for Manitobans to know that when they were in government, they talk about paying for bricks and mortar—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. I need to hear the answer and I need to hear the question. We have just started into Question Period. Question Period is 40 minutes. The members on that side that are hurling questions over, the members on this side are trying to hurl answers over, you will

all have a chance. We still have lots of time left in Question Period. Just be patient, please.

Mr. Sale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, it is clear that the Leader of the Opposition supports American-style health care, and it is clear that Manitobans do not. When they are talking about bricks and mortar, as the Leader of the Opposition did, they should acknowledge that when they were in government, they did not put any money in the budget for bricks and mortar in their last year. None of the spending for capital in the Brandon hospital, for example, was included in their budget. They did not provide the kind of support for the rebuilding of the health care system which we have had to do because they were not prepared to fund it appropriately, because they were not prepared to spend the money on bricks and mortar so that MRI machines, so that surgery, so that the biggest capital project in Manitoba's history at Health Sciences Centre could go forward properly budgeted for inside the budget, able to be repaid over time as health care expenditures should be. That was not their approach.

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

Mr. Murray: On a new question, Mr. Speaker. Health care should matter enough for the NDP Doer government to check their ideology at the door and to find new and innovative ways to provide care that Manitobans want and deserve.

In an October poll conducted by Western Opinion Research, 80 percent of Manitobans supported being provided the option to go to government regulated, private clinics that are fully covered by medicare. Eighty percent. Will the minister today commit to abiding by the will of the very people who elected the NDP government? Will they allow those to increase the number of contracts Government has with private health care facilities in the province of Manitoba?

* (13:55)

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Leader of the Opposition wants a health care system where you leave your Visa card at the door. That is the health care system they want.

I would say to the member opposite that health care should matter enough that he would have the preparation and the time priority to appear before the Romanow Commission, the only significant Opposition in the country that did not bother to do so.

Health care should matter enough that you have in your health care plan, as Leader of the Opposition, something about nurses. Nurses are not even mentioned in the plan. So I think that health care does matter enough to this Government. It matters enough that we have increased support for nursing, increased support for the number of doctors in our system. We have more specialists today. We have drastically more tests being done today. We have shorter waiting lists in many areas, but we have work to do in many areas and every day we get up to do that work.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, faced with the evidence that an overwhelming majority of Manitobans support increased collaboration with the private sector health care to reduce waiting lists and improve access to care, I am disappointed to hear that on that side of the House the best they can offer is fearmongering. The exact question asked in the recent poll stated, and I quote, and I hope they listen: To help shorten waiting lists, Manitobans should have the option of visiting government regulated private clinics that are fully covered by medicare.

Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of Manitobans totally agree to this. To break it down, there was 78% support of this among urban residents and 83% support amongst rural residents. Will this minister, will the NDP Doer government, will they listen to the people who elected them and work together with the private sector by contracting out those services in Manitoba?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, in the most recent polls regarding satisfaction, eight out of ten Manitobans say their health care is either excellent or very good. Let me tell the House the kind of question, the kind of loaded question that was asked, that 120 Manitobans were asked and supposedly that represents this 80 percent, 120 Manitobans: Which would you prefer, private health for those who can afford it—*[interjection]* They do not want to hear the answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sale: They were asked three choices, Mr. Speaker. Which do you prefer, private health for those who can afford it, significantly increased taxes or limiting access? That is kind of do you want to be hung or drawn or electrocuted. So they chose which they thought would be the least painful form of death.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to once again remind all honourable members when the Speaker stands, all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the minister may be a little wind-blown but perhaps he could listen to my comments. I am not talking about 120 people. I am talking about a Western Opinion Research poll that was conducted where 80 percent of those people felt there should be a joint responsibility of the collaboration between privately run within the publicly funded system. This issue, unfortunately, the Doer government is struggling, but it should not be about politics. It should be about doing what is right for patients.

* (14:00)

We believe in listening to Manitobans and I do not think Manitobans should have to wait until there is a change in government to get what they want.

I have said on several occasions in this House that we would work with this Government immediately to develop a policy framework that the WRHAs could use as a guide to contracting out health care services.

I will ask this minister again: Will he take us up on our offer to develop this framework so Manitobans can start getting the choice and the access to quality care they want and, more importantly, that they are entitled to? Will you take us up on the offer?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, it is dismaying to those of us who have been working in health care policy for more than 25 years. The former government over there at least made a passing commitment to evidence-based decision making. So when we cite studies that show that cataract surgery waiting times significantly increased when there was private and public provision, when you look at the study, for example, in Ontario that a former member of the Auditor-General's staff in Canada says that an independent auditor has told Ontario that their plan to build two privately owned hospitals will likely cost taxpayers more in the long run, evidence-based decision making shows that private-public mixes cost more.

All you have to do is go to the United States to see that the American government puts about 5 percent into their health care system and private payers put about another 9 percent, so you have 14 percent of GDP in the United States in a public-private system, with 45 million Americans with no—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Next question.

Health Care System Private/Public Agreements

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, no less an authority than Mr. Roy Romanow has told the editorial board of the *National Post* that even he realizes there may be a role for the private sector to assist in solving the problems facing our health care system.

He says, and I quote: The private people, if they can compete without user fees or without a special situation, then fair enough, but there should not be an unlevel playing field.

I would ask the Deputy Premier if she or the Premier (Mr. Doer) has instructed the Health Minister at the national meetings he has attended to attend with an open mind, with an open ear to listen to how other provinces are collaborating with the private sector to provide quicker access to diagnostic services and day surgeries so that Manitobans can benefit from some of this innovative thinking as well.

Hon. Jean Friesen (Deputy Premier): I am very proud of our Health Minister. He is at the moment at a conference. He has spoken to many Manitobans. He has taken health conferences and health consultations every year across this province. That is what our Health Minister does. He has an open mind about the attitudes and principles of Manitobans. He is aware, as every member on this side of the House is, that the principles of medicare are the ones that we support and are the basis of the equitable and equal society that Manitoba and Canadians enjoy.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Deputy Premier if the minister, as she believes, has an open mind in this situation, will he follow the recommendations that are being made by a number of premiers, a number of Health ministers across this country? Will he listen closely at these meetings and hear how private clinics in other parts of Canada are providing MRIs, providing CT scans, providing ultrasounds and providing joint replacement surgeries which are helping to reduce waiting lists, improve access to care, improve the quality of life for those people and help to fix the health care problems in Manitoba? Will he have that kind of open mind?

Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the Opposition will know that today we released *Health CHOICES: What Manitobans Said*. Very interesting. They talk about a survey that had 120 people in it as being important. Fifteen thousand Manitobans went to the Web site, eight thousand of them responded in writing with questionnaire responses.

What is our attitude towards the use of facilities? What we do is we try to use the facilities Manitobans have bought and paid for more efficiently so we have moved 350 dental surgeries to Thompson. We moved 350 orthopedic and general surgeries to Ste. Anne and Steinbach. This Opposition wants us to build and pay for more facilities when what we are doing is using wisely the public sector facilities across Manitoba. We are redistributing work to the North, to the south. We are building new facilities in Brandon so that people in Westman will have excellent care. That is the kind of system Manitobans want.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, we have all seen that the Government has published a booklet that is pure propaganda with no solutions. It is ridiculous. I would ask the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) if she will ensure that the Health Minister attends these meetings with an open mind and is prepared to look at how they can collaborate with the private sector to reduce the problems that have been identified by all those Manitobans that the minister just spoke of. In other words, Madam Minister, when are you going to stop playing politics and start providing solutions?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, former Premier Roy Romanow spent 18 months touring across Canada hearing from an enormous number of people. Unfortunately, he did not hear from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray), but he heard from opposition and government. He heard from private sector and public sector. He examined all of the evidence. It is in his report. The evidence is clear. Mixed, private-public systems do not provide better times for waiting times. They do provide extra costs.

The biggest experiment in this in the world is 100 kilometres south of us where 45 million Americans have no health insurance, where waiting times for the poor are enormous and where 14 percent of GDP is spent on health care making the American economy less competitive than our economy is. Medicare is not just an advantage from a care point of view. It is an advantage economically to our well being as a country.

Nicholls Report Class Size and Composition

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, the Premier recently told Manitobans that, and I quote, we are a can-do Government. We want to not just sit on reports and have them gather dust and have them be part of a one-day press conference and go onto some kind of shelf later on. After spending over \$80,000 of taxpayer money to solicit the views of Manitobans on class size and composition, the Nicholls report and all of its recommendations sit on a government shelf.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education why this Government allowed the six-month

deadline to pass, allowing this issue to be determined by arbitration when, in his conclusions Doctor Nicholls stated, and I quote: that discussions surrounding class size and composition were viewed as an educational issue rather than a labour issue.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I just want to congratulate the member opposite for being appointed critic for Education and Youth.

If the member wants to take a look at any reports that sat on the shelf, it was the Norrie report that sat on the shelf from their government that let it sit on the shelf. Just a comment with regard to class size. The Nicholls report took a look at a number of different issues. One was class size and composition. In Manitoba, we fare very well with regard to class size. The composition is another question, but we are one of the top provinces in the country with regard to student-teacher ratios and we are very proud of that fact.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the minister, unfortunately, has not answered the question. I would ask him whether, in fact, the real reason this has been allowed to go to an arbitration process, in direct contradiction to the \$80,000 Nicholls report, is because his Premier made a backroom promise to the teachers union that he would allow this to become an arbitration issue.

Mr. Lemieux: The short answer is no, but this Government on this side, through the previous Minister of Education, made a commitment to education and the youth of this province to provide funding, an unbelievable amount of funding to the education system that was previously run down by the previous government. This Government continues to look at all options that are of benefit to all children in this province.

*(14:10)

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, this minister has said this issue should be an arbitration issue. I want to ask this minister why, as Minister of Education and Youth, he is allowing the quality of the education of our students to be determined by arbitration boards rather than sound policy based on the findings that come out of the

consultation process that Doctor Nicholls went through.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, once again with regard to the Nicholls report, the Nicholls report was a very important report with regard to education and again took a look at where we placed with regard to teacher and student ratio, which we fared very, very well.

The composition side creates a number of different questions and challenges for us, but I must say with regard to our commitment as a Government on this side through the previous minister and this Government, just the fact that we provided, for example, not just 100, not 200, not 300, but a 400% increase over funding compared to 1995, the year 1995 to 1999, compared to that previous government. Without a doubt the people of Manitoba, the parents in Manitoba and those involved in the school system know whose side we are on. We are on the side of children and improving education in Manitoba and will continue to do so.

Nicholls Report Recommendations

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): The Nicholls report was a very thorough and well-researched document that was received I think by the education community and all of the stakeholders in the education community as a job well done. Of the seven recommendations, the key recommendation was that there be a three-year moratorium on the issue of arbitration. Why have you not followed that key recommendation?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth): Mr. Speaker, just with regard to the question of the member opposite, I thank him for the question. The Nicholls report, again, I commented about how it was an important report. In general terms we agree with the Nicholls report, but with regard to class size and composition this is an issue where, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) commented on it briefly with regard to labour issues, with regard to those issues overall, there was a good and I think a satisfactory process with regard to negotiations where all parties, whether it be teachers or school boards, were satisfied with the

process that took place for over 40 years until the members opposite decided to make a change in '96, which completely turned many things into turmoil. The process worked well for 40 years until they decided to start dabbling and changing the system that was, I believe, received very well by not only trustees but by teachers overall.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The minister did not accept the recommendation on the moratorium. Can he indicate which of the seven recommendations he has accepted?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, there is ongoing work on many of the different recommendations in the Nicholls report. I can tell you that, overall, not only Mr. Nicholls himself is respected by many individuals in the province, but we have taken a look at the report and many of the issues that he addressed are ongoing issues.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would ask the minister to read the report and look at the seven recommendations. I would ask him again which of the seven recommendations he has accepted. Is he aware of them?

Mr. Lemieux: Again, Mr. Speaker, I said with regard to the Nicholls report and some of the recommendations that were made there, in general terms we accept a number of the recommendations that Mr. Nicholls has put forward. But with regard to the one on class size and composition, the Premier (Mr. Doer) made a comment a number of years ago that should we become government and government of the day, we would be taking a serious look at that particular issue with regard to class size and composition.

Again, with regard to the class size, we fare very, very well country-wide. We are looking at the size of class and we are looking at also the composition of class. In talking to many of the people I have met in the last few weeks since becoming minister, they have made comments on the fact that our class size, overall, is very, very good in Manitoba. The composition side, Mr. Speaker, creates a challenge for us all when we take a look at autistic children, children with FAS and those kinds of learning disabilities.

Highway Construction/Maintenance Fuel Taxes

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

I understand from reading the provincial briefing material on Manitoba's Transport Vision 2020, that from 1995 to 1996, up until 2001-2002 fiscal years, that the Province collected \$1.385 million in road fuel taxes and spent only \$1.358 million on Manitoba road infrastructure, a difference of some \$27 million in what was reported to be raised and what was reported to be spent. Why was this \$27 million collected not also spent on building highways in this province?

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, the highway system in Manitoba has improved over the last three years through a commitment by this Government to invest in our highways. I can tell you that the increase in capital of 16 percent done by the previous Minister of Highways was a well-gained addition to the province of Manitoba.

I can tell you that the taxes collected and dollars collected from this province go absolutely back into our road systems in this province for the safety of Manitobans.

Equalization Transfer Payments

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My supplementary to the Minister of Transportation. According to the same report, I would ask why the Government did not spend even a single penny of the \$1.3 billion received in federal equalization payments to build road infrastructure in this province?

Is road infrastructure not an important component of being able to provide equal service in Manitoba compared to other provinces? It is exactly what equalization transfers are meant for.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to again mention to the member that the dollars that are taken in, he goes back to '75. When we formed government in '99, or he said '95 and we formed government in '99, the dollars we take in do go back into the road systems in Manitoba.

I think the real question Manitobans might be asking, Mr. Speaker, is why do they take \$155 million in federal excise taxes out of this province and put \$7 million back in? That is the real question.

Equalization Transfer Payments Accountability

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My second supplementary to the Minister of Finance.

I ask the Minister of Finance when the Government will provide a full accounting of how the equalization transfers are spent in these dollars. When will we have an accountable government in this province?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the money we receive through transfer payments from Ottawa is fully accounted for in every budget, but what the member opposite should remember is that when he was in government, they put a cap on equalization which has cost the Government of Manitoba hundreds of millions of dollars of lost revenue because of their desire to make sure that they balance their budget on the backs of Manitobans by cuts in health care, cuts in post-secondary education, an abandonment of social services, an abandonment of public housing and an abandonment of infrastructure.

That is the legacy we are dealing with in this province from your time in government.

Agricultural Policy Framework Update

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Yesterday, the Minister of Agriculture stood up for Manitoba farmers at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting, stood up for Manitoba producers at that meeting in a discussion regarding the Agricultural Policy Framework. One of the pillars of the APF is renewal, and I will ask the minister to provide an update on Manitoba's efforts in this very important area for Manitoba farmers.

* (14:20)

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this important issue because although the members of the Opposition do not think it is important that a Minister of Agriculture should be at the table when we are having discussions on the Agriculture Policy Framework—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, let this minister not put words in our mouth. We do think it is very important that a Minister of Agriculture stand up for the Manitoba farmers and be at these meetings in Ottawa, but what we do not believe is that it should be this minister, who walks out on meetings when she is in Ottawa and throws her little temper tantrums and gets nothing for Manitoba farmers.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food, on the same point of order?

Ms. Wowchuk: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite raises the fact about supporting the minister's being at the meeting, but yesterday I was referring to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) was critical of me being at Agriculture ministers meetings in Ottawa, and the member does not have a point of order on this.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before making my ruling, I would just like to remind all honourable members that points of order are to point out to the Speaker a departure of the rules or practices of the House and not to be used for debate.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I indeed was at a ministers' meeting in Ottawa yesterday, where we talked about the Agricultural Policy Framework. One of the important pillars of the Agricultural Policy Framework is renewal of the next generation. I am very proud of the steps that our Government has taken to renew the next generation of farmers through our Project 2000, which was an election commitment on this Government's part.

We first brought in the mentorship program. Then we introduced Bridging Generations. Although the other side of the House did not think it was a good program, I can tell you that 78 loans have been made, and a total of over \$9.6 million has been put into the hands of young farmers through the program we introduced.

Agricultural Policy Framework Manitoba Participation

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): We all know the minister was in Ottawa yesterday. We all know that she has had significant discussions on farm policy and farm programming. Yet we have all seen, in the last couple of weeks, the census report of the decline in the farm population in this province, which is simply not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, 13.5 percent of our young people under 35 have left this province in the last number of years. I think it is an indication of how inactive and how inept our Government has been in supporting that farm community.

I want to ask this minister today. She made a big to-do about signing on to the APF agreement in Swan River, in her own community. She

indicated they would participate, and yet, a few weeks later, she got up in this province, in a news conference, and said we will not participate in the 60-40 program that would support the farmers of Canada to do the transition program. When will this minister commit to her 40% commitment that would see our farmers treated equally in this province of Manitoba?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, the member raised the 13.5% decrease in farmers in this province, and it is a really serious issue. I have to tell the member that, if he looks at the dates of those stats, it is half in their administration and half in our administration. They also had some responsibility, but they took no action. We are taking action. We are putting funding in place to help young people get back into agriculture. He should know that the program we have put in place is recognized across the country. Other provinces are looking at how they can put in place programs that will help young farmers get back into agriculture.

With respect to the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement, I want to tell the member that he is wrong. We did sign on to the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement. We did not sign on to the trade injury money. Everyone knows that. If he would really read the press release that came out of Swan River, that was not—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jack Penner: A very simple question: When will this Government pay the \$40 million it owes to the farmers of this province of Manitoba, that they will be treated as other farmers in other parts of this country are supported by their government?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to reflect on history a little bit and remember the discussions, the all-party agreements, the all-party resolution that we had here in this House. I would ask the member to remember some of the comments that they made, that trade injury was 100% federal responsibility. If you look at the process as how we got to this trade injury money, this is fully a federal responsibility, and I am very surprised

that the members opposite would expect a provincial government to fill the gap left by a federal government. Of course, these are members across the way that supported the elimination of the Crow, that literally took money out of farmers' pockets, and they supported it. Now they want a provincial government to fill a gap that they were responsible for creating. No. That is not a provincial government's responsibility.

Mr. Jack Penner: It is very obvious that this minister is willing to throw the young farmers of this province to the crows, and I think her reflection is deplorable. She has made a commitment. She signed, she put her name on the dotted line and signed onto the APF—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is a supplementary question, and clearly in this House it is a rule that a supplementary question should need no preamble: 409(2). Would you please ask the member to put his question?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Emerson, on the same point of order?

On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I kindly ask the honourable Member for Emerson to please put his question.

Mr. Jack Penner: When will this Government, when will this Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) insist that their Minister of Agriculture meet the commitments that she made in signing on to the APF agreement and pay the young farmers of this province the \$40 million that this Government owes them?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I wonder which way this government wants it. Yesterday they

were being critical of me for being at an Agriculture ministers' meeting where in fact we were working out the details of the Agricultural Policy Framework which will be completed very soon. I can tell you that the members are talking about trade injury money and the \$600 million that the federal government has put in place. I do not believe it is the responsibility of provincial governments to pick up where the federal government reneges on their responsibility, and that is where the majority of the provinces are. The majority of the provinces do not support the trade injury package, but I can tell you that Manitoba is at the table with 40 percent of the program where the provincial governments do have a responsibility.

Kyoto Protocol East-West Power Grid

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): In the past month the minister responsible for the Kyoto accord has mentioned the construction of a south-east-west power grid as essential to Manitoba's ability to meet its Kyoto commitments. Can the minister tell this House where the negotiations are on the south-east-west power grid and when is the Government prepared to release the estimated costs of Manitoba's portion of constructing the power grid?

*(14:30)

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): It is actually east-west. We have a very strong grid going south at this point already in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, officials of the Hydro corporations of the two provinces are working very intently on the issue of both the east-west grid in terms of Ontario and Manitoba and looking at the 1988 Conawapa agreement, which unfortunately was not proceeded with at the time. I think it was very unfortunate that the previous government did not go ahead and complete the environmental impact studies that might have been done at that time. Had they been done, we would be a lot further ahead on this issue today. It is too bad they did not have the foresight to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

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

During Oral Questions on December 2, 2002, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Laurendeau) raised a point of order regarding comments allegedly spoken by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk) from her seat. The honourable Official Opposition House Leader stated that the honourable minister had said from her seat the words "liar, liar" that were directed towards the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach). I took the matter under advisement in order to peruse Hansard.

I thank the honourable Official Opposition House Leader for his contribution. I have read the exchange on page 103 of Hansard where the words were allegedly spoken, and Hansard does not contain a record of the words "liar, liar" being spoken.

I must therefore rule that there is no point of order. I would like to note for the House, when the point of order was raised there was much disorder and that perhaps this was not our finest display of decorum.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Poplarfield Development Corporation

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to tell the Assembly of a very special event which occurred in my home community of Poplarfield this past weekend. I am referring to the annual King Buck dance which takes place on the last day of the whitetail rifle season and showcases a display of some of the trophies taken during the hunt.

The event is put on by the Poplarfield Development Corporation, which has been in existence now for a period approaching 20 years. This committee has played a vital role in the past and should be commended for its efforts. It was constituted originally to organize the community to lobby for the construction of subsidized

seniors housing and it was successful in this objective in that the Poplarvilla is now a reality.

The corporation then undertook a second major project which was the construction of the King Buck statue, a monument which is second to none in the Interlake. The King Buck dance was the vehicle through which the funds were raised. Hunters came from across the province to enter their trophies, as the Poplarfield region is recognized as one of the finest deer hunting areas in all of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the new Poplarfield Development Corporation board has recently let it be known that it will not rest on the laurels of the past but will be reaching out to the community with new initiatives and ideas and will be asking for the full support of the people in this regard.

I want to close by acknowledging and thanking previous board members for their contributions to their community, and I want to wish the present board future success in their endeavors. Volunteerism, co-operation and community participation are critical if our small rural towns are to not only survive but to thrive as well.

Mental Health Care Facilities

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take issue with an NDP spokesperson, who in the *Winnipeg Free Press* last month accused the Tories of fearmongering about the safety of hospital psychiatric patients.

When we raised concerns about sexual assaults in psychiatric wards in the Legislature last spring, the minister told us that the status quo was fine. Three investigations into the assault were conducted several months ago and the minister did not release the results of any of them until only this week when the WRHA released the results of their internal and external reviews. It was not until we pursued the issue last month that the minister's office even bothered to inform Manitobans that new security measures have been instituted at two hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, I question why the Health Minister does not think it is important to take the safety of psychiatric patients seriously. If our caucus had not pushed for answers, the public

still would not know that security had been enhanced. Perhaps the Health Minister should speak to women who, while trying to battle very serious illnesses, were sexually assaulted in hospitals. I have spoken to a couple of women who have been assaulted in the past and they fear for their safety should they have a relapse.

Why did the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) not think it was important enough to inform Winnipeg, in a proactive and timely manner, that new safety measures were put in place? We have said all along that the minister's main concern should be safety. It is shameful that his staff chose to deflect from their own inaction by throwing out baseless accusations about fearmongering.

Manitoba psychiatric patients deserve safety and security on their road to recovery, and I will not apologize for asking about the status of security measures in our hospitals. I urge the Minister of Health to move quickly to address the recommendations which have been put forward. Although the Minister of Health made fun of our recommendation to examine the feasibility of segregated wards, I would note that it is a major recommendation in the review. I encourage the Minister of Health to act swiftly to review these recommendations in order to ensure safety for patients in our psychiatric wards.

Summit on Early Childhood Development

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an impressive event I attended recently. I was a participant at the Summit on Early Childhood Development: Investing in Today's Children, Tomorrow's Leaders. The summit took place on November 20, 2002, National Child Day, at the Hotel Fort Garry.

The chair of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, the Minister of Energy (Mr. Sale), extended all MLAs an invitation to the summit. The event was hosted by the Manitoba Children's Agenda, a partnership of the federal and provincial governments.

The summit was utilized to bring together business and community leaders to participate in

a dialogue on early childhood development issues in urban and rural Manitoba. This event arose due to the recent explosion of research that states the critical importance of the early years, which has demonstrated that ensuring the best possible start for our children is not only the right thing to do, but it is an economic imperative.

This summit fostered all segments of society to work together to establish a climate and culture that supports and promotes the well-being of all our children.

The keynote speakers included Charles Coffey, executive vice-president, government and community affairs from RBC Financial Group, Dr. Dan Offord, director of Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk, from McMaster University, and lastly, Dr. Satya Brink, director, Child, Youth and Social Development Studies, from the applied research branch, Human Resources Development Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba the spirit of cooperation and commitment built around children is going a step further. Unique in Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the federal government have made a local commitment to combine energies to make the goal of the National Children's Agenda a provincial reality.

In conclusion, I would like to commend those who attended the summit and participated in promoting the well-being of children and families, which goes well beyond government and is greatly influenced by community involvement.

CBC Radio Christmas Presentation

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to, first of all, thank Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson for coming to southern Manitoba, specifically to the town of Altona last night, to help present A Christmas Celebration in Words and Music.

* (14:40)

Eric Friesen, from CBC and CBC Radio Two's crew were there to film a two-hour

presentation, and my colleague Peter George Dyck and I were fortunate enough to be invited to this presentation.

The presentation was directed by Henry Engbrecht, who is the artistic director and conductor of Canzona performance group in the city of Winnipeg, largely made up of volunteers. It also features Susan Platts, a mezzo soprano out of Toronto, a young lady that is touted to be one of the best mezzo sopranos in North America today.

The presentation included Lottie Enns-Braun on the organ, Shannon Hiebert on the harpsichord, Paul Marleyn on cello, David Moroz on piano, Douglas Perry on viola, Richard Turner on harp and Willie Wiebe, a local guitarist from Steinbach, did an absolutely exemplary job of performing.

I would recommend to all people in this Legislature that they should take time on December 24 to listen to CBC Radio and listen to the Christmas presentation that was made. They would hear Her Excellency Mrs. Clarkson and Mr. Friesen do a number of readings that I thought were just absolutely wonderful and truly presented the message of Christmas.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Member for Riel, I really hate interrupting members when they are in the middle of their members' statements but I would like to give a kindly reminder to all honourable members, when making reference to a colleague, please do so by constituency or ministers by their titles, not by their names. I ask the cooperation of all honourable members, please.

Fédération des caisses populaires du Manitoba

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Je suis très heureuse aujourd'hui de souligner le cinquantième anniversaire de la Fédération des caisses populaires du Manitoba qui a été créée en 1952. Le mouvement des caisses populaires du Manitoba a joué un rôle très important dans le développement économique des communautés francophones rurales et urbaines.

Translation

I am pleased today to draw your attention to the 50th anniversary of the Fédération des caisses populaires du Manitoba which was founded in 1952. The caisses populaires movement played a very important role in the economic development of urban and rural Francophone communities.

English

The Manitoba caisse populaire movement is a dynamic movement with \$500 million in assets owned by approximately 33 000 members. We are celebrating its 50th anniversary in our province. The nine Manitoba caisses populaires operate 31 points of service in 28 Manitoba communities, including Winnipeg. The movement employs more than 200 employees and is assisted by numerous volunteers who generously give their time.

La Fédération est une coopérative et les propriétaires sont les neuf caisses populaires du Manitoba. Son rôle principal est de fournir une variété de services aux caisses. La Fédération appuie les caisses populaires pour qu'elles puissent offrir des services financiers de qualité à leurs membres en français et en anglais.

Le 28 novembre 2002, la Fédération a célébré son cinquantième anniversaire. De nombreux invités se sont joints à la Fédération pour souligner ses réalisations, à la Maison du bourgeois au Fort Gibraltar. À la célébration, il y avait des employés et des bénévoles, des représentants de la Société d'assurance-dépôts, du mouvement des credit unions, du mouvement Desjardins et du gouvernement.

J'aimerais féliciter la Fédération des caisses populaires à cette occasion et leur souhaiter longue vie.

Translation

The Fédération is a co-operative owned by the nine caisses populaires of Manitoba. Its primary role is to offer a variety of services to the caisses. The Fédération assists the caisses populaires in providing quality financial services in both French and English.

On November 28, 2002, the Fédération celebrated its 50th anniversary. Numerous guests joined the Fédération to mark its accomplishments at the Maison du bourgeois at Fort Gibraltar. The celebration was attended by employees and volunteers as well as representatives of the Société d'assurance-dépôts, the credit union movement, the Desjardins movement and the government.

I wish to congratulate the Fédération des caisses populaires on this occasion and wish it continued success.

English

I wish to congratulate the Manitoba caisse populaire movement for its contribution to Manitoba in its 50 years and the services it offers. May it continue to prosper.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House for the motion to remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Conservation, who has four minutes remaining?

Is there unanimous consent of the House for the honourable Minister of Conservation? He has four minutes remaining.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. It has been denied.

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): I welcome the opportunity to speak to the House today in response to the Speech from the Throne.

I would first like to indicate that we welcome back all the pages who are here with us for this session of the Legislature. Our hope is that you, as pages, will have a great experience to carry with you for the rest of your lives and that maybe, perhaps, one day you will take a seat in this House as an MLA in the Legislature based on the experience you have had here during this time. We wish you well in your studies at school, your graduation and any kind of post-secondary training you are seeking. It is really nice to have you back. We always look forward to having the pages with us here each and every year.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to be brief in my comments and just say that in terms of alerting the government side who is going to be putting up the speaker, not to go too far away.

It was interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I listened with great interest, the last day we were debating the Throne Speech from the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in the fact that in their presentations and in their speeches, they paid a great deal of interest and time to the alternate throne speech that the Progressive Conservative Party and our Leader from Kirkfield Park presented to this House and to the people of Manitoba. It makes me even confirm it in my own mind that the Speech from the Throne that was presented by the Government had nothing in that Speech from the Throne. It had no substance because they had to spend a lot of time talking about our alternate speech from the throne and the things that we would have done. So I appreciate the comments that were made by the Minister of Conservation, the Member for Thompson.

He made a remark about how this side of the House was talking about rhetoric. Without word of a—I do not know if I could use the words "word of a lie," but the member from Thompson is probably the king of rhetoric, and his Leader. So I think that he is not one to be talking about and espousing how much rhetoric is coming from this side as to listen to himself. He should read some of his own speeches and see how much rhetoric comes from himself.

I just want to spend a little bit of time, since this could be, I guess, my last official speech in the House. We are not sure. Nobody is able to tell me whether it is or not. I have to speculate on the fact that it might only be a few months, or it may be a year, or it may be a year and a half. If I have to go on the basis of hearsay from the Premier (Mr. Doer) when I chatted with him briefly at the Lieutenant-Governor's reception, he indicated that he preferred the four-and-a-half-year time frame. So I am thinking that maybe it is going to be a year and a half. I may have another chance to even make another speech in response to the Throne Speech.

I would have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the time I have been in the House has been a very interesting learning experience. It has been an experience that I will cherish forever, and some of the things that occurred during my time—of course, when I came in in 1995, we were part of the government, and I was taking part and assisting in the rural task force and had the privilege of travelling around the province listening to Manitobans talk about rural issues, whether it be agriculture, whether it be rural development. I think that overall, when we came back from that task force and developed our report and presented it to the government, many of the recommendations that we put forward to our government of the day were accepted and put into place. That was a very rewarding experience for me, and I had the honour of sharing that experience with my colleague from Turtle Mountain and my colleague from Emerson who chaired the committee as we went around the province, and we were able to spend many, many hours discussing rural issues.

I would also mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that probably one of the highlights of my career in this Legislature was when I had the honour and the privilege of becoming the Minister of Government Services and the Minister responsible for the Emergency Management Organization. Of course, at that time when I was sworn in, many of my colleagues had indicated to me that the portfolio was one that certainly required a lot of time and energy, but, basically, in terms of the public exposure because Government Services really did not have all that much, and Emergency Management, they did have the

flooding issues but, generally speaking, they have not been that great.

That was January of 1997, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and then in March of 1997, that same year, we experienced a flood like we have never seen before in this province. That flood occurred in a great portion of my constituency, as well, so, firstly, it affected my constituents. It affected people that I have known for years. It affected my friends and it affected my family. As such, it was a difficult time to go through this in terms of trying to act responsibly as a government responding, first off, to the flood and the measures that had to be taken with regard to evacuation of persons for their own safety, and, secondly, for the recovery process in getting people back into their homes, getting people back onto their farms and getting things back to, I would say, in parentheses, "normal," although everybody realized that getting back to normal was something that really was not going to happen. There were changes and life was not going to be the same because of all the things that had to happen.

*(14:50)

But I was happy to see our ability to work with the federal government and to come to an agreement, and we came to an agreement on May 1, 1997, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a memorandum of understanding that would commit the federal and provincial governments to a fairly sizeable amount of money to be spent in terms of recovery from the flood, as well as investing money in the future in terms of flood protection. So some of the programs that we brought into place, which I am proud to be a part of, especially within the Department of Government Services and Emergency Management, was the physical anomalies program, where we were able to take to constituents and people living in the valley whose homes were flooded, whose homes could not be repaired or replaced on that site because the site did not allow them to be protected from the Red River and the ravages of flood waters in the future, either due to the fact that the size of the property was too small, or the riverbanks were too fragile and could not be built up with dikes. It allowed the program to purchase those properties from those individuals at fair market value prior to the flood and allow them to pick up, carry to another place

and to rebuild and, hopefully, rebuild their lives at the same time, as a result of the flood.

That, to me, was an accomplishment that we were able to work out with the federal government as partners in this program. Now, the federal government also came along and partnered with us in what we called the economic anomalies program which this Government, when they took office, actually brought to fruition because we were in discussion. The economic anomalies were that the property that was being protected by the floodproofing did not have enough value to it to warrant spending all the money on floodproofing. I give you an example, where a home and farm buildings might only be worth \$40,000, maybe \$50,000, and to have and ask for an investment of taxpayers' dollars to the tune of \$100,000 or \$114,000 which was available to most farms; it did not make sense.

So it was a case of do not bother floodproofing; here is money for your buildings. Go and establish somewhere else. Many people took the opportunity of that program and built new residences within the ring dike communities through the valley, whether it be Morris, St. Jean, Emerson, Letellier, St. Pierre and so on. That was part of the experience I had as being a Minister of Government Services.

There were also some very high moments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even during the flood. I know that meeting members of the Royal family is something that, as part of this position, we have the privilege to do, where others do not. For that, I am eternally grateful because of the fact of having met the Royals in person, and I had the privilege of quickly meeting Prince Charles, but more so, on a more personal basis, I had a chance to spend quite a bit of time with Prince Phillip when he actually came out to the community of Ste. Agathe to have a look at, first-hand, the flood damage that occurred to the residents of Ste. Agathe. This occurred in the late summer of 1997. So we spent a great deal of time walking around the community of Ste. Agathe visiting with people out there who were in the process of recovery, and, of course, just recently having the opportunity to visit with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in the celebration of her jubilee year. I can remember as a child in

school the coronation day of the Queen, and so it brought back a lot of memories of that time in school.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few words about the constituency of Morris, and some of it I have already spoken about with respect to the flood and what happened during that period of time. The constituency, when I first took office, was a constituency that ran east and west, took in the communities of Morris and St. Pierre and, of course, the municipality of Macdonald, the municipality of Morris, and it also encompassed the communities of Carman, the municipality of Dufferin, Miami, Roland and the municipalities of Thompson and Roland, and so it was running east-west.

* (15:00)

When the boundaries were reshuffled, I was really not expecting too much of a change to take place because we had had the average growth of a constituency. I was not expecting that the changes to the boundaries in the western constituencies would have a major impact on Morris. For the 1999 election, the Morris constituency changed from an east-west constituency to a north-south.

The municipalities of Dufferin and Roland and Thompson were dropped with the communities of Roland and Miami and Carman, and picked up the R.M. of Headingley, picked up the R.M. of St. François Xavier, picked up the R.M. of Cartier and all of the R.M. of De Salaberry, which included St. Malo now, as well as St. Pierre. So the constituency took on a north-south approach.

It made it quite different, but, in essence, for me, it was a great experience to have met and developed many friendships east and west across the original constituency and then to develop the same kind of relationships on the north-south axis. So it was really, as much as it was, in a way, an extra burden at the time of the election, it really turned out to be a great experience for me in having the opportunity to meet all these new folks in the new constituency and to develop friendships with them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that, when you are a sitting MLA, there are often issues in your

own constituency that you have, that a lot of them can be resolved, but there are some that will not be resolved. I would just like to spend a little bit of time talking about some of the outstanding issues that are going to be affecting the Morris constituency and which I would like to elaborate on.

The first issue, outstanding issue, of course, is the issue with respect to the Morris-Macdonald School Division and what happened over the last year and a half with the school division, and the actions that were taken by this Government with respect to that school division. I am positive, and I am very strong of the opinion that everything that did happen with the Morris-Macdonald School Division was not as a fact the fault of the school division as it was of the minister and the Department of Education at the time not having rules, guidelines or any kind of legislation in place with regard to adult education centres.

I believe that when this group, the taxpayers' group, the coalition group that is in the old Morris-Macdonald School Division of the R.M. of Morris and the R.M. of Macdonald, when they are able to take this into a courtroom and go through the total in terms of being able to cross-examine and bring information from witnesses, it will be known then that what happened in the Morris-Macdonald School Division was really a travesty of justice, that they were mistreated and they were treated harshly by a government that had no feeling at all for what they were doing and made no attempt at negotiation or discussion, that took very unilateral action and damning action to the school division. I think that that, after it comes through in court, will show that the Government was in error on this.

There is also another outstanding issue I would like to elaborate on a bit, and it is something that has come up as a result of this past summer's flooding along the Rat River in the community of St. Malo. As I mentioned earlier, there was a program within the Emergency Management Organization when I was minister that we had that was called the physical anomalies program, where properties could be purchased if they could not be protected from flood waters. This time around, in the community of St. Malo, as a result of the June rains—

also, they were flooded in 1997. So in 1997, they protected their properties to 1997 plus two feet. They were supposed to be protected. However, in June of this year, with the heavy rains that occurred in southeastern Manitoba and the rapid movement of water off the eastern escarpment into the Rat River system, 1997 plus two feet was inadequate protection.

So the question has to be asked as to how high will they have to build their diking system in order to protect themselves from any kind of future flooding. There is not anybody that will give them a firm prediction as to what future levels the Rat River could be. It is, therefore, my argument, and I have taken it up with the Premier (Mr. Doer), that these properties—and there is only about a handful of properties, maybe half a dozen properties that are subjected to levels of water that, in fact, these people do not know what level of dike they should have until the actual water hits, as it did this summer.

Therefore, I beg to ask the question as to why the provincial government cannot negotiate some sort of an agreement with the federal government or even on their own to purchase those properties, to allow those people to move out of that area and convert it to green space, because St. Malo is a beautiful provincial park and it could have more green space within the community that is along the Rat River. It would be a great place, maybe, for canoeists to canoe down the river from the provincial park and have a campout or have a picnic site.

A lot of things could happen there, but it requires the will of the provincial government to step forward to say, yes, we believe that these properties cannot be protected to the point where people who live there will live there safely and have that safety feeling, that feeling that they are safe. As long as they do not, I wonder why the Government is not moving ahead to purchase those properties.

There is also another issue that is across the entire Morris constituency, and that deals with drainage and water management. Water management, of course, is part of the issue with the Rat River going through St. Malo and St. Pierre. So water management, I think, has got to be a program that is strongly emphasized and

strongly supported throughout the entire valley region and the escarpments on either side of the valley.

We cannot continue to increase the size of drains to allow more water to pass through to the Red River creating undue, very erratic flows in the summertime when we should be managing water to the ends of the tributaries on both sides of the Red River and, in fact, the entire Red River watershed which even encompasses the Assiniboine River, and having the whole structure of water management as a priority for this Government and what I think will be our Government in the next election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to indicate that I have been here for a little bit over seven years. It might be seven and a half, maybe eight years, maybe eight and a half. I do not know. I asked the question that, if I am going to plan for retirement, that I have a year and a half, I do not know when it is going to kick in. So I am just wondering when that time will come, but I certainly have enjoyed my time while I have been here.

In fact, I have enjoyed the member from Elmwood and his enquiry each year into the Estimates process when we were in government. He always asked questions that were different. I had to always be on my toes with his questioning. I was kind of hoping that he would be part of the Cabinet structure with the NDP government and to ask him questions, as well. Will I have the opportunity? I do not know, but it certainly would be nice if I did have the opportunity before this House when the writ was dropped that I could ask him a few questions along the same nature that he asked of me. I have enjoyed my time with the member from Elmwood. We always had a sort of a light attitude, I think, towards things. So that had always been a lot of fun.

Anyway, it has been a thrill and a privilege for me to serve in this House, and I thank the people of my constituency for their support over the last seven-plus years. Without their support, my job here would have been much more difficult, and they are a people that will tackle problems themselves. They are very inde-

pendent, and they do not always look to government for support. They are very independent minded, and they are saying mostly to us, as part of government or as the government side, not to bring in regulations that will affect them, but just stay out of the way and allow them to develop.

I also thank all my caucus colleagues for all of their support over the last seven-plus years, and I would like to give my best to the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) as she ventures into the retirement mode, spending more time with—not knowing for sure, but she probably will know before I do—her grandchildren.

Also, I would like to wish my colleague from Lakeside the very best in his retirement. He and I go back a long way. In fact, when I first was employed with the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, he was my boss. I worked for the honourable minister at that time. *[interjection]* It was a grand association, you bet. It was most enjoyable working for him and then, in turn, coming into the Legislature and working with him. So it has always been a real blast working with the member from Lakeside.

As well, I would like to wish my colleague from Minnedosa all the best in his retirement.

* (15:10)

An Honourable Member: Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

Mr. Pitura: No. The Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), all the best in his retirement, as well.

I would just like to say, in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it has certainly been a privilege. I consider it a privilege to be here and an honour to have served. So, thank you very much.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): It is, indeed, an honour to be able to put a few words on record on this the Fourth Session of the Thirty-Seventh Legislature of the Province of Manitoba. I thank the Speaker for his smooth and impartial and fair way of keeping order in this House. I also want to thank the Clerk, the

table officers, Sergeant-at-Arms, and I want to thank the new pages. I also particularly want to thank the new interns. I know that I worked with three of them. They are all very good people, and they help us a lot. So I want to pay particular attention to Patrick Sarginson, Monica Dominguez and Rachel Whiddon, and thank them for their hard work.

I also want to thank the staff that makes this building function properly. These are the people in the background. We do not see them very often, but they certainly make things happen for us here.

I would also like to pay tribute to those members in this Legislature who are no longer seeking re-election. I want to thank them on behalf of all Manitobans. That includes the Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), who has just concluded his remarks. He is a graduate—I am not sure if the word is "graduate," but he is a member of the class of '95, as my honourable colleague beside me is, and I am also. I want to thank him very much for the work he has done on behalf of all Manitobans. He is a person with great integrity. We all know that.

I also want to pay tribute to the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), who is not seeking re-election, a former teacher and principal, hard worker, very respected colleague, and, of course, pay tribute to the dean of this institution, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who has been here for 36 years and on whose wisdom we have all come to rely.

As well, I want to thank and pay tribute to the Member for Inkster (Ms. Barrett), who is not seeking re-election. She is the Labour Minister. I want to thank her on a personal note for the numerous times that I drag her up north to talk to the labour liaison groups there. In fact, I think I see her more often than the northern members, and I see them quite often, but I think I see the Labour Minister even more often. So I thank her very much, not only because she meets with labour liaison over there, but she also meets with individual constituents. She always has a ready smile and good advice and keeps me in check on occasion. I really appreciate that.

This Throne Speech, and I know I am going to disappoint the Member for Morris, because I

am going to have to mention the alternative throne speech, as well, as many of you have done, mainly because I want some darkness in order to show off, to contrast against this diamond that is our Throne Speech. The alternative throne speech is really, in many senses, a fake document. It is not as balanced as the real Throne Speech. It makes a lot of promises. I think the real Throne Speech is much more moderate in tone, believe it or not. It is balanced. It is pragmatic, and it builds on the other three throne speeches. If you would like to take a look at the alternative throne speech, there is no costing of those great promises or great suggestions that are there—some of them are great; some of them are not—no idea of what this is going to cost. It is pretty vague, and it is pretty right wing.

As the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has stated before, not only is the alternative throne speech inconsistent, as I pointed out, it has some spectacular omissions. For example, it omits the entire northern two-thirds of the province. It does not talk about northern Manitoba once. So I guess, from the perspective of that particular alternative Tory throne speech, any area north of a Tory riding does not exist. So that was the way it went for 11 years, and we are not happy with that. At least in former Tory throne speeches, the North got a bit of a sop, like one or two sentences. This alternative throne speech, they get nothing.

I should add that, for the first time in a long time, when we put out the road map of this province, it consists of all of Manitoba. Some of those Tory road maps, the northern portion of this province, apparently, did not exist.

On page 2 of the alternative throne speech, there is the phrase: common-sense approach to governing. I thought that was what we had been doing for three years, but, apparently, the common sense that it is talking about is a different type of common sense. It is the Mike Harris common sense from Mike Harris' common-sense revolution. We know that those really are recycled right-wing nostrums that have not worked. They did not work on the larger scale for Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan. They did not work for Mike Harris, and despite the oil wealth, they are not working for Ralph

Klein. So I am surprised that the members are going in that direction. By the way, I could add they did not work for Stockwell Day either. So the Tory common sense that is being preached is really, in many ways, right-wing dogma. They are preaching more of the same ideology that basically lost them the last election, and I think they really do need to get in tune with the people of this province.

I could point out to the province to the east of us. Notice that Premier Ernie Eves is backpedalling furiously to get away from that common-sense stuff from Mike Harris because it does not work. His common-sense revolution was ruthless, and there has been a tremendous backlash, not only among teachers and working class people, among the entire province, and he realizes that. I suppose, if you want to get really crass about it, when you look at the Walkerton tragedy, I wonder what role the privatization of testing water had to do with that tragedy. You wonder when the Tories under Mike Harris were going the privatization direction with Ontario Hydro, you wonder why they did not realize that it was going to end up in smoke. That is why Ernie Eves has to back off privatizing Ontario Hydro, because it will be a monstrous failure if he continues.

There has been failure elsewhere. When you privatize public utilities like electricity, you see what happens in California or in Alberta or in Ontario. We do not need more of that same type of medicine. We saw it with our own MTS. Again, right-wing dogma and right-wing thinking. Selling MTS, which is like selling your house to pay for your car, does not solve the problem. I can tell you that rate shock did set in after we privatized MTS. As a matter of fact, up North, my own telephone in Cranberry Portage went from \$12.80 before privatization of MTS to well over \$50 now for the monthly bill for basic services.

I do think that the Opposition has to realize that there is merit to some small tax cuts, but you have to be careful. Because you make a small tax cut that helps people, puts money in their pocket and they spend more, it does not necessarily mean that a huge tax cut is better, because if you follow that absurd argument and go on and on and on, you can then come to the conclusion, get

rid of all taxes. Then you are back in a position where how are you going to pay for roads and for teachers and for nurses and for doctors and for services for people. You cannot do it. So you have to be very, very careful. It may be very tempting in the short term to cut taxes massively because nobody wants a tax increase. We all understand that, but we also have to be aware, at the same time, that taxes buy us services. They keep this society humming. If you are going to reduce them drastically, be prepared for a drastic cut in services. That part of the equation the Tories do not often talk about.

I want to point out that there is nothing wrong with reasonable and moderate profits, as there is nothing wrong with reasonable and moderate taxes or, for that matter, reasonable and moderate tax cuts. It is when we are going the route of massive tax cuts, and then when we are hemorrhaging the entire social system, that is when we run into problems. That is a direction that the Opposition appears to be advocating, and it worries me greatly.

Besides, I do not have that blind faith that members opposite have in the virtues of the marketplace that they blindly follow, almost sometimes, I think, like children, the adulation of the American system as if this was the perfect system. There are some weaknesses in the marketplace. Marketplaces can be heartless. We saw the Enron spectacle, and we know how many people that hurt. We have to be aware of that. To go that route blindly is extremist thinking, and I do believe Manitobans do not like that kind of extremism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1999, we placed before the people of Manitoba our vision of rebuilding Manitoba, and the Tories put before the people of Manitoba their vision, and the Liberals put forth their vision. The people of Manitoba chose a direction. I think it is a direction which most Manitobans are comfortable with. I know that throne speeches are general documents. They are painted in broad strokes, but the same motif holds true for all our throne speeches. This is the fourth one. We are building on the other three.

* (15:20)

The people of Manitoba told us then, as they are telling us now and they are telling us as

politicians all across this country, that one of the No. 1 issues, probably the No. 1 issue, is health care. We took that into consideration in 1995 and in 1999. Certainly, in 1999, we made it a central part of our platform. I think the people agreed this was the direction to go. Did we deliver? The argument is did we deliver, and I think the answer is: we did deliver.

In fact, I would like to mention a few things that we have done, how we have moved ahead on health care. I will not go through all of these. Five hundred additional training spaces for technicians, therapists, health care aides, nurses and doctors. Almost three times as many nurses will graduate this year as in 1999, and 90 percent of those are intending to stay in Manitoba. There are 15 new medical school places. We increased places for doctors. We did not decrease them as the Tories did. The number of doctors in Manitoba has grown every year since we have taken office.

Over 50 health care facilities have expanded and modernized. The Telehealth system allows doctors and patients in northern and rural Manitoba to link with clinical specialists in Winnipeg through live video and audio feed. I know it has helped patients in Flin Flon because their families talk about it. Their loved one who is very ill, gravely ill does not need to go and see an expert in Winnipeg very often. They can do it via Telehealth, and this is extremely important. It is a lot less stress on sick people.

The waiting time for cancer treatment has been cut in half, from 10 to 5 weeks. There is streamlined access to home care and long-term care plus focus management of emergency patients. All of this helps make Manitoba a model for dealing with hallway medicine. There is better use of rural and northern hospitals by moving dental surgeries for northern children to Thompson and 350 general orthopedic surgeries to Steinbach and Ste. Anne, and so on and so on.

There has been no attempt at smoke and mirrors. I think we have painted a realistic picture. I know we know where we are going; I think the people of Manitoba are with us. Notice there are no quick fixes. There is no attempt at fixing, or if you like, improving our medicare system, our medical system by using people

such as Connie Curran, as the Opposition did when they were in power, spending \$4 million foolishly for someone from the United States to come in and tell us just cut back, folks. I mean, that is a silly waste of money.

If we really do need American consultants, well, maybe we do. Maybe we should send them some of our consultants. I am sure that a Manitoba Agriculture consultant could tell them a little bit about what the American subsidies to farmers are doing to our farmers, or some consultant from The Pas could tell the Americans what their duties on softwood lumber are doing to the Canadian forestry industry. And yes, I should add as well, that there are 40 million or 50 million Americans who do not have medicare coverage. I think this is shameful in one of the most powerful nations in the world, that their people do not all have the services that we have in Canada, the medical services, that they are not covered. Yes, we support the Roy Romanow blueprint. We do support Roy Romanow's view of ensuring that there is a future for medicare in this province and in this country. I think if the federal government agrees, that \$15 billion over the next four or so years will go a long way in improving our health care delivery.

I also know that money is not the only issue. It is more than just money and it does take creative and innovative thinking. I heard the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) the other day giving some suggestions. Some of them made sense, but a lot of them were suggestions that suggested, you know, we can cut the waiting lines if we simply do some outsourcing, if we contract out, if we privatize. I mean, it was the thin edge of the wedge. I do not think that is the right direction to go. Now he did suggest, and I think it was a sensible suggestion, we should use CAT scans and MRI machines much more on a daily basis, use them 24 hours a day, if possible. That is a sensible suggestion, but, again, the problem there, I think, is staffing. It is not that we would not like to do that, but we have to have available staff to do that.

I think privatized health care, as the members of the Opposition seem to be hinting at fairly strongly, is not the best way to go. I notice that it is only in the most Americanized and richest province in Canada, Alberta, that they

even toy with the idea. The one place where they could really afford to pay for health care is the one place they do not want to do it. That is not because they cannot, that is because their right-wing ideology permits that. Anywhere else, we cannot afford those kinds of, I think, dangerous experiments.

I would like to focus a little bit on the economy. Our focus has been on future growth. There was a 2000 Century Summit, which included leaders from business and labour, and community leaders from all across Manitoba, north and south. I think we have a solid economic strategy. In fact, I would like to list a few things that relate to that strategy, incidentally guided by the Premier's Economic Advisory Council, who have recommended a set of seven sector targets. I could actually list those for you. Education comes first; research and innovation; raising and retaining investment; affordable government; immigration; community building; building on our energy advantage, which is particularly significant not only because of the importance of Hydro, but in light of the Kyoto Protocol.

Some of the great things we have done, for example, is we have balanced budgets for the third year in a row. I should point out we also have the lowest youth unemployment in the country. Manitoba followed through on promised tax relief despite an economic slowdown. We have cut personal income taxes by 11.5 percent, or will have cut them by 11.5 percent by 2003. We have decreased small business and corporate income taxes.

This does not sound like a radical socialist horde. This sounds like something that the Tories should be proud of. Property taxes are lowered through a \$150 increase in education, and property tax credits for both renters and owners, and the phase-out of the Education Support Levy has begun. We continue to pay down the debt by \$96 million each year, making Manitoba one of only three jurisdictions in all of North America to balance their books and pay down debt this year.

Our spending is responsible. Overall spending increases over the last three budgets are only half of those in the last three Tory

budgets. We are spending only half as fast as the Tories were, and they accuse us of spending like drunken sailors. Well, I think we are pretty sober on this side. Expenditures for 2001 came in \$20 million under budget due to strong financial management.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

So I think we have done well on the economic front. The irony is that when I look at page 11 of the alternative speech from the throne, the Tories are saying, quote: We are the only ones with the political will to lower your taxes. Is that not incredible? They had 11 years to do it, did not do it, surprise, surprise. But we did it. It is the alleged socialists that you condemn who actually did it. Is that not kind of interesting. So the Tories obviously talk the talk, but they do not necessarily walk the walk.

I think we have a real common-sense government. I think there is economic progress. I think we have all types of success in this province. We have improved education and hope for young people, and I could go on in great detail about that, how we have frozen tuition fees and so on, but I know others wish to speak as well.

We have equalized hydro rates which is another very important point, but I would like to focus, instead, a little bit on northern Manitoba, which is the region I obviously represent, that is, the Flin Flon constituency, and talk a little bit about the Northern Development Strategy. This Throne Speech, that is, the real Throne Speech, does not ignore northern Manitoba like the alternative throne speech did. We, instead, do not take northern Manitoba for granted. We know it is an important part of Manitoba.

I would like to go back into a little bit of the history of the Northern Development Strategy. In 1999, the northern MLAs met, consulted among each other and said, you know, we were really badly treated in the last 11 years by the Tory government. How do we change this around? We came up with five directions on which we had to focus, things we needed to look at: health, housing, transportation, employment and training and economic development. The strategy we came up with was a strategy

designed to improve quality of life, to expand education and employment opportunities, to increase economic opportunities and to co-ordinate services and investment in northern Manitoba.

Things are changing in northern Manitoba in a positive direction despite some real challenges, particularly in the mining sector and in the forestry sector, but the face of northern Manitoba has changed, and it has changed greatly. The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) the other day said, and he was right, and I quote: Name a major project or dam the Tories were involved with in northern Manitoba since 1969. The answer is none. They talked when we built Limestone. They called it lemonstone, and yet we are building dams in northern Manitoba once again and notice the New Democrats are in power once again.

We are building Wuskwatim. I hope all goes well. We are building Wuskwatim with Aboriginal partners, and, in the future, there is a good likelihood that Gull will be built. There is even a likelihood that in the far future, we will take a good look at Conawapa one more time. So the changes are positive.

*(15:30)

I could give you an example of what we have done in transportation in northern Manitoba because transportation is so absolutely vital. Sometimes there is only one road as the only link out. Sometimes there is only a winter road or an airport. Let me tell you what we have done with northern airports and some other transportation areas. We have increased our share of capital expenditures for northern airports by over 150 percent. That is from 2002 to 2003 over 1998 to 1999, gone from \$1.6 million to \$4.1 million, over 150 percent. This year the Province will spend over \$4 million on capital improvements for northern airports.

The Province currently spends over \$9 million annually to operate, maintain and improve the 22 community airports, which is up from \$6 million in '99. Transportation concerns in the North include winter roads. We have more than doubled the spending on winter roads over 1999. So those are some very positive changes.

When the Tories were in power, roads in northern Manitoba were neglected. Sometimes they spent as little as 6 percent of the capital budget in northern Manitoba. Now, I know the population is low down there, and I remember the Tory Transportation Minister arguing we should only spend as much as there are people there. So, if there is 4 percent of the population, then 4 percent of the budget. Well, that is ridiculous. You have to go by need.

Let me tell you what we have done in northern Manitoba. We have increased things dramatically. We have had some great results. With the federal government and working with the federal government, not against them, we got funding to improve the winter road system to Brochet, Lac Brochet and Tadoule Lake. Formerly, the people in those communities, particularly Tadoule Lake and Lac Brochet, would buy groceries. Those groceries travelled over the winter road, and the winter road had a heavy toll on it. It was a private road, basically. So there was a toll on everything coming into the community.

So those people who could least afford food were paying excessive prices. Those tolls are no longer there. Those winter roads are new roads. They are roads we have built, and we have built them largely not on ice, but around the lakes wherever possible, because we are very mindful of the future when they are going to become all-weather roads and not only linking those communities to the rest of the province, but also linking Nunavut in the North. That is our hope.

If we take a look at specific communities, and I mentioned Brochet, Lac Brochet and Tadoule Lake already, in Granville Lake, we now have a winter road or are building one, and we had one last year. We put in a winter road to Granville Lake. For years, Granville Lake did not have a winter road. It is one of the few communities that did not have one. Occasionally, there would be a hydro project that would go into Granville Lake. They would build a winter road. Then there would not be one. But we are building a winter road in Granville Lake every year.

South Indian Lake, we have been spending \$13 million on a road that is almost completed, a

road that was mandated under the Northern Flood Agreement. In 1991, the Tories promised to take it seriously, but when they left office in '99, they had not done anything. We had to build this road because we were under a 10-year time restriction.

If I take a look at Leaf Rapids, not a success story in the sense that the Rattan Mine closed down. It has created great hardship for the people there, but they are a strong people. They rallied. They did the best they could. The Government kicked in \$2 million, \$1.25 million to help stabilize the housing stocks, so people would not panic and just leave the homes. We are dealing with that, and three-quarters of a million to help relocation. We did not desert the people in northern Manitoba.

Flin Flon, if you take a good look at Flin Flon, we have improved bridges. We fixed 10A in a wonderful fashion, so when you drive into Flin Flon, you are on a decent road for once for a couple of kilometres, and, in fact, when you drive into 10A on the left, you will find a big shopping mall that was not there under the Tory regime.

Snow Lake, we are finally building the personal care home portion in the hospital. We have waited a long time, and we were getting a little impatient, but it is happening. It is being renovated, being built. We also have a new ambulance. Lynn Lake, we have upgraded the water plant. Cranberry Portage, we have supported the sewage lift station, a Community Places grant for upgrading park amenities. They have a new ambulance, which is great because this summer will be the 75th anniversary of the village of Cranberry Portage, and it will be a real wingding of a party, I assure you. So I invite all honourable members to show up the first long weekend in August. *[interjection]* I think, as my honourable colleague says, the best party in 2001 was also in Cranberry. Apparently, he was involved.

In Sherridon, we have renovated the water plant. There is dust control for the road. Lac Brochet, as I said before, there has been an airport extension, plus there is a new modern terminal building, which is three times the size of the old one. In Brochet, we have a runway

extension. We bought airport equipment, a grader, a loader and a dump truck. There is a new community hall. I happened to be there the other day and celebrated that opening with Mayor Merasty and other dignitaries.

In fact, we have spent a lot of money on the equipment in the five northern airports. In Pukatawagan, the Province has taken over, or at least supports, pays for the maintenance for about three miles, or roughly five kilometres, of road from the railway line to the reserve boundary. It was the right thing to do. Under the Tories, well, they would not touch that section of the road.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the Throne Speech is an excellent document. I heartily recommend its support to members opposite. I think it is the Throne Speech with a real common sense. It outlines a direction, a blueprint that is sensible and sustainable. It does not ignore the new realities, the new realities that are rapidly enlarging on our collective radar screen, and I am talking particularly about the realities of Kyoto and the Romanow Commission report.

I can tell you that, regarding Kyoto, issues such as global warming are, indeed, very real for northerners because we have had some serious problems in the last few years with winter roads. So global warming has a direct impact upon us. In fact, I could mention that one of my friends out of Snow Lake, who keeps track of when the ice breaks up in front of his house, I guess, because there is a lake there, has kept track of this situation for 30 years and puts the exact date that the ice breaks up, has noticed that over the last 30 years, there are wild swings. At first it was pretty even. There would be maybe a week from one year to the next, but lately, the last 10 or 15 years, those swings have become more erratic and, sometimes, there is a month or six weeks' difference between when the ice breaks up one year compared to the other year.

So we know there are some radical changes out there, and we know that greenhouse gas emission has something to do with it, and we cannot ignore it. We can study it to death or, like Alberta and Ralph Klein and his clones say, you

know, there are not enough signs. Well, there are enough signs to prove things are happening. If he does not believe it, come to northern Manitoba when there are no winter roads because of warming. So we have to take those issues very seriously, and I think collectively we are.

I think this Government will continue to deal with realities like that honestly and has already moved in a proactive fashion in many ways. We are also not going to snipe at the Romanow as the Tories seem to do because of their hidden privatization on health care agenda. We are not going to pooh-pooh, as I said, or reject Kyoto just because that is part of the right-wing agenda.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that I have limited time and others would like to speak, but before I end, I would like to thank my constituents for the faith they have placed in me to be their representative in this Chamber. I will continue to work on their behalf, and I am proud to be a northerner working for northerners. I wish I could give each one of my northern people a Queen's Jubilee Medal, but I cannot do that, unfortunately. I was restricted to four. I would like to point out that, together with M.P. Bev Desjarlais, we are going to be handing out those Queen's Jubilee Medals to a number of deserving constituents in my constituency.

In fact, we overlapped on one constituent that we are giving a medal to. That is Mr. Roger Carriere, Sr., who is a legendary northerner who has won more King Trapper awards than any other person in history.

The four people that I have nominated for the Queen's Jubilee Medal are Jack Forsyth from Forsyth Agency in Snow Lake, three-time mayor who served on many boards and is a ceaseless crusader for tourism in northern Manitoba. He is also the chairperson for the Grass River Corridor Tourist Association, Inc. I congratulate Jack and his wife, Mona. Another recipient of the medal will be Mrs. Margaret Head from Cranberry Portage, but she actually now lives in Winnipeg. She is a well-respected elder, has done a lot of work in the past in Native communications and northern media. She was very instrumental, along with her husband, known as Curly Head,

in building the MMF. She has had a tremendous impact on many people. She is a gracious and wise elder. She had a powerful impact on the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) as well as on myself, and I am very delighted to call her my friend. I should point out she is a grandmother of Irving Head, the sculptor, whose sculptures were such wonderful sculptures handed out at the Indigenous Games last summer. She also, I could add, is the great-grandmother of my godson, Jeremy Head, and I should point out, Jeremy, if you ever get to read this, keep doing your homework and keep those marks up.

* (15:40)

Graham Craig, who is a retired optometrist in Flin Flon, is also a recipient of the medal. He is a former mayor, a wonderful gentleman. He was my optometrist, by the way, so I can see clearly now. Graham Craig, well-known, well-liked, very active on the cultural scene and particularly active at being the spark plug behind the Flinty project, the boardwalk project, and so on. I want to congratulate him and thank him, and also his wife, Grace.

Lastly, the fourth recipient is Mark Kolt from Flin Flon. Mark is a city solicitor, but is probably more widely known with his wife, Crystal, as the people who sparked revival and creative energy in the cultural sphere in Flin Flon. They are involved with anything musical or dramatic. They are just wonderful people, and it is just too bad I could not be involved in getting Crystal a medal, as well. Mark is instrumental in the creation of such top-notch musicals as Bomber Town and Titanic.

There is a huge choir in Flin Flon that draws in people from the surrounding communities as well, and Crystal and Mark are integral parts of that choir. In fact, that choir has worked together with Bramwell Tovey and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. They have done stuff with other symphony orchestras, I believe, in Saskatoon, and members of that choir actually were in Carnegie Hall last summer. So it shows you the level of expertise and ability that we have in Flin Flon, and Mark and Crystal Kolt are

certainly very instrumental in that. I want to thank Mark and thank his wife, Crystal.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying that I am proud to be a northerner, and I salute this Throne Speech which focuses much of its attention on northern Manitoba. It does not ignore large sections of this province. This Throne Speech deals with all Manitobans.

Despite our current woes in the mining and forestry sector, we will continue to see progress in northern Manitoba, and I mentioned some of the areas in which there was progress. I will talk about northern Manitoba as an area that remains the most beautiful part of the province, but I am also keenly aware that it is that part of the province which has the greatest potential for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I rise fully cognizant of the fact that this may or may not be my last contribution to a Throne Speech in this Chamber.

I listen to the First Minister (Mr. Doer) very carefully when he talks about what is a suitable time, an appropriate time for an election. Of course, he has talked on numerous occasions about four years being an appropriate time, which would, perhaps, mean that we are looking at an election this fall. He has also more laterally talked about four-and-a-half years being an appropriate time, and that is, of course, an appropriate time.

Certainly, other governments, mine included, have taken four-and-a-half years, which would make it the spring of 2004 when the election time would call and which could mean another Throne Speech. I just say that, that it is a distinct possibility, but in the event that that does not take place, all members will forgive me if a bit of nostalgia creeps into my comments, as this may well be the last opportunity to address it.

An Honourable Member: Tell us about the cold war, Harry.

Mr. Enns: Yes, I will get into that, as a matter of fact.

I do want to talk about one of the fundamental changes that I have experienced in my lifetime, going on 36 years in politics here in

Manitoba, and, generally speaking, it has impacted our country and the world.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I must confess and acknowledge that for a good part of the time, I was a pessimist about the future of the principles that I and my party stood for. I believed to some extent about the inevitability of socialism winning the day. I say this, I think, with some good reason because, during these years, I witnessed Prairie Provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario falling to New Democratic Party governments. I saw the kind of reckless spending that a true socialist by the name of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who paraded himself as a Liberal, brought upon the people of Manitoba when any concept of fiscal responsibility just went out of the window.

I can recall the advice that I used to get from a good colleague of mine, Sid Green, when he was an active senior New Democrat. He told me, Harry, you know, it is inevitable. I mean, sure, we are all democrats and you guys will be in power for some time. We will come back into power, but you have to remember when we are in power, socialism moves two steps forward, and when you come into power, you do not have quite the guts; you only take one step backward. So, inevitably, we go further and further down the road of socialism, and I believed it for the better part of my life in this Legislature. It seemed to me to be inevitable. But then I can tell you—and I come to my favourite subject, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) will appreciate—I can name a time and a name to when things changed. *[interjection]*

No. They changed; they quite frankly changed. I know my friends from the left like to ridicule American presidents, but President Ronald Reagan, when he called the state-imposed socialism that so much of the world lived under an evil empire, and expressed faith and hope that our free and open system of governments would prevail, he was ridiculed by the left, but to the surprise of the world, and certainly to me, to the surprise of everybody, it happened in an amazingly few short years.

I am not going to go into the details. The simple fact is, it happened. Who would have predicted that that colossus, the Soviet empire,

would implode on itself? Who would have predicted that the Berlin Wall would have been torn down as fast as it was? Country after country, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Hungary, all of them shed state-imposed socialism.

Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden, that advice that my friend Sid Green gave me many years ago, about the inevitability of socialism, no longer was there. It impacts on you and on this Government. I suppose one of the greatest compliments that a person can get, or a government can get, is when it is copied. We are seeing that around the world. The left has left its bastion that was there when that whole socialist empire thrived, supported by our left-leaning CBC corporation, supported by the professors, the leftist professors on the campuses. That all gave a kind of substance to this inevitable move towards socialism.

But, Mr. Speaker, something has changed, and that has made my last 10 years much more optimistic about where I stand in world politics. It has changed remarkably, and this group has changed remarkably. I want to demonstrate that by simply reminding them, on such a basic issue like fiscal responsibility, balanced budget legislation, this is what honourable members had to say. This is all out of your records, the word of Hansard, Sir.

The Premier called it: I know it is a cynical election ploy, when it was introduced. The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said: This is very much a public relations exercise on the part of the Government. The member from Lord Roberts said: Balanced budget legislation is trendy. The honourable Minister of Energy (Mr. Sale) says: Balanced budget every year cannot be defended on any economic grounds. The Minister of Conservation says: The bill will not work. The Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) said: This legislation does not correspond with any economic theory known to personkind—very politically correct—either historical theory or current economic theory.

* (15:50)

Mr. Speaker, you said: An election gimmick. The honourable member from Flin

Flon, who just a few moments ago extolled the virtues of the three balanced budgets that his government brought in, you just said that. He said: It was created for election purposes. This bill is not based on common sense. When was he speaking honestly and truthfully, and what is he defending now? The honourable member from Dauphin: It is good window dressing, but when you look right into the bill it becomes a sham. This bill is nothing more than a gimmick. Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk): No government needs balanced budget legislation.

Mr. Speaker, what have they been doing for the last three years? Some of our former ministers know when the Minister of Finance puts down the hammer and will bring in another balanced budget, as we know he will. What did the Minister of Agriculture say to me just a few years ago? She says no government needs balanced-budget legislation. What I am demonstrating is this was a belief, honestly expressed by my socialist friends. I believe they were telling the truth when they made these comments. I believe that when the Deputy Premier said it was a sheer sham, she honestly believed it when she said that. That is a quote: a sheer sham. It has a nice ring to it.

The Premier, again, on the balanced budget, you have a silly balanced budget legislation that does not deal with the people working. This is what the First Minister said about balanced budget legislation. The honourable member from Elmwood, again, one of my favorite colleagues in the House: The first myth of Tory fiscal management is that it exists, because it does not. Very insightful. The honourable member from Radisson goes on record as saying this legislation takes away the ability of democratically elected governments to plan investments for our province and to have a role in planning and directing the economy. She was speaking as a true socialist. That is what she believed in, and that is what she said. That is what she put on the record, as did all her colleagues. The honourable Minister of Energy (Mr. Sale): This legislation is simply chimera—definition, an illusion or fabrication of the mind, an unrealizable dream. It is the simply the appearance of something which is not real, and they know it is not real, but they are caught up in

an election promise they would rather not have to fulfill.

The difference is that we believed in that. The Conservative Party believed in it. We had the political will to carry it out. I believe fully that what you put on record a few years ago, you believed in. The question is: What do you believe in now? That is the question. What do you believe in now? Is it possible that all of you could have crowded that road to Damascus and found that conversion to fiscal responsibility, to conservatism? Is that possible? One just about believes that.

The honourable Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) says it does not mean that the province will be more economically viable. It will have a deadening impact. It will not be helpful in trying to keep the engine of the economy and the people of the province on an even keel. These are thoughtful thoughts being expressed, except they were expressed by people that now have, for three successive budgets, as the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) did just a moment ago in this Chamber, talked about one of the great accomplishments of achieving a balanced budget. This is what I meant by saying, in my retiring days, I take some courage in that original pessimism that I felt and I experienced for so many of my years when I saw what seemed to be the inevitable march of socialism, that slide down that slippery ladder as prevailing that, in fact, it has halted and it has changed.

Good socialists like Tony Blair I have respect for, Mr. Speaker, I want you to know, and perhaps you can pass it on to the First Minister, I do have his picture hanging underneath Maggie Thatcher's picture in my office, because, in essence, Tony Blair represents the new democrat, the new realism among socialism. Having lost that bastion of that big empire that was there, that was planning the economies of so many countries of the world and of Europe, that central planning that the member from Radisson likes to speak of, has proven so dismally in failure. They now find themselves in the uncomfortable role of having to defend, essentially, conservative beliefs.

There are some real dandy ones here from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) that I

should also give here, another one from the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen). Its real purpose, talking about balanced budget, of course, is an abdication of responsibility.

So, Mr. Speaker, if they bring in a balanced budget, can I charge them with abdication of responsibility? Of course not. I believe in balanced budgets. That is why we brought it in. You see, the left, not just in Manitoba, but in Great Britain and around the world and in virtually every province, has moved, has crowded to the centre, in fact, at times, has crossed the line to centre right, like when they said now, come on side fully and wholly in calling to an end for that nonsensical gun registration boondoggle that is going on in this country. I want to congratulate them, and I want to encourage them to have this come to an end.

My good friend brought me that quote that I wanted from the Minister of Justice. This is what the Minister of Justice had to say about balanced budget legislation: I think, quite frankly they are embarrassed by this legislation. This Government really does not believe in this bill. Well, as I said a little while ago, Mr. Speaker, we believed in this bill. We brought it in, and it was not all that pleasant an experience for many ministers who had to tighten the belts in their department, as it is not a pleasant experience for any of your ministers who were running their departments with 7%, 8%, 9% and 10% vacancies. I am looking at the former Minister of Conservation, because that is what he acknowledged during the Estimates debate. It is not a pleasant experience for all of the departments that are maintaining the line, to do what? To come in with a balanced budget.

It was not just the Premier. It was not just an individual member. Universally, I can read you a quote from virtually every member currently sitting on the opposite benches that called balanced budget legislation sham, irresponsible. The member from Flin Flon, again, said I am convinced that the Government is not even serious about Bill 2, as it was called at that time.

That is what I mean by saying that there has been a shift, a fairly remarkable shift in the politics of the world and the politics of the

country and in the politics of this province. I take some encouragement by that. The only problem is, and I do not like to impugn you, Mr. Speaker, because I know that you are doing your job as custodian magistrate of this Chamber, but you, too, climbed on the bandwagon and called it gimmicky and not serious. I am just asking: When do we believe these people here now? Because I believe they are doing it for the crass political motives that they are called. I do not believe that you believe in it. The best proof that I have is they are now caught in the politics of balanced budget, straitjacket, some of them call it, so they had to do an end run and pillage and plunder Hydro. They had to go and pillage. To some extent, they are not coming to terms or they are dishonest about their belief, and their likeness of balanced budget legislation is being played out at the expense of Manitoba Hydro and its ratepayers in the future. That is not fair.

* (16:00)

Those, Mr. Speaker, are my comments about how I have seen this Chamber change. I briefly touched on the topical subject of the day. I do honestly believe, and I do congratulate the Justice Minister, I congratulate the First Minister on speaking out on what simply has to be an outrage, a program that was brought in under very questionable, a knee-jerk reaction, understandable as it was because of a very horrendous event that took place in Montréal that took the lives of all too many young women. But the answer, the bureaucratic answer, the bureaucratic nightmare that has been created of what was supposed to be a \$2-million program is now running up to a billion dollars, and I have to inform you, that of the 16 million firearms that are to be registered, only 2 or 3 million to date are registered. We are not even approaching half. So if Roy Romanow wants \$4 billion or \$5 billion extra, it is there. Just stop spending it on something foolish like gun registration.

Mr. Speaker, come on, let us do something courageous for a change. Let us really get serious about this. Australia introduced exactly the identical gun registration laws that we are in the process of trying to implement right now. After seven years, the Australian Legislature simply threw up their hands and said, hey, we

simply cannot justify spending taxpayers' money on a program that simply does not work. We have far too many other places to spend that money.

So I want to encourage all members opposite to join more vociferously in their support. I appreciate that they did not oppose our position at that time all that much. Some of them did, but at least come and join us more wholesomely than just abandoning this course. My hope is that this afternoon some of the Liberal backbenchers including those from Manitoba will have some courage and say, look, faced with the immediate prospect of substantial dollars that have to be infused into our health care system, surely there are better places to put money than in this ill-begotten scheme.

That is so much about gun control. Now, Mr. Speaker, let me speak just briefly about Kyoto. I have absolutely no concern at all about the fact that all of us have to do something about the state of our environment on our planet earth. I am totally committed to cleaning up the environment through reducing emissions, through better management of our water resources, through better management of all our natural resources, but this accord that is being foisted upon us by a questionable Prime Minister—when I say questionable it is with respect to his ongoing mandate—it is really one of those silly things that we should put a stop to right now. We should get on with cleaning up our environment.

I took particular note of the fact that in the Throne Speech there was attention paid to geothermal heat, and the honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) knows that I am a very strong supporter of that source of energy. For instance, I would like for us to see a far more aggressive approach to really doing something about emissions by promoting geothermal heat. The honourable Member for Dauphin has put it in his home. I put it into my new farm home. It happens to be the right thing to do. *[interjection]* The honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) has done the same. We should be promoting that in a much more aggressive manner—it is there; it is available—instead of looking at such questionable things, and trendy, I

will call it. This is absolute nonsense that we are talking about, Kyoto.

I will tell you what Kyoto is. Kyoto is kind of a left-wing, intellectual backlash of anti-Americanism, and the Americans, of course, recognize it for what it is. They recognize it for what it is and will have nothing to do with it. I will tell you something. America will be one of the cleanest of the industrial nations. It already is. America will lead the world in terms of gas emissions. A state like California will all of a sudden decide five years from now, ten years from now, no more combustible engines in our state, just as they did when the state passed legislation that called for catalytic converters on all cars. The Americans have cleaned up. Twenty years ago when acid rain was the issue of the day, Americans took that seriously, and they have done a better job than we have done in cleaning up acid rain in their environment.

This Kyoto is so flawed. I am a rancher from Woodlands and I do not pretend to be in that intellectual field and capacity, but I read, and I know that right where we sit, 12 000, 15 000, 20 000 years ago, there was a mile and a half of ice. They called it the Wisconsin Glacier because it went all the way to the state of Wisconsin. Long before there were SUVs on this earth, before Jesus had to decide whether he should drive one of them or not, what global warming took place that warmed that massive sheet of ice? I am told that that happened not once, but 16, 17 times in the lifetime of the planet Earth.

I am looking to people like the former principal of education to see whether I am staying reasonably close to facts, because I would not take political license and begin to gild the lily to the extent where my credibility would be questioned. The point that I am making is, I have no issue with whether or not the globe is warming or not. It may well be. Certainly, there are signs that would indicate that is the case. Whether that is because we are tilting in a different direction at the sun or looping closer to the sun and will once again loop out further from the sun that will bring on yet another ice age that will bury our Golden Boy—I am not that arrogant to think that we humans are totally responsible for it. What we are responsible for is the mess that we make on this planet. Let us clean that up.

That is what Alberta is saying. That is what Americans are saying and that is what Canada should be saying.

There are 6 billion people on this earth. Five billion are totally exempt from the Kyoto accord. In fact, governments representing a good portion, governments of India and China, met a month and a half ago in New Delhi, in India, and totally washed their hands of any future consideration of Kyoto. We are being fed the story line that these countries that are currently exempt will, by the year 2010, 2012, start to come on board. That is not true. China, India. They will have nothing to do with Kyoto. What are we talking about? It is like there are six people in a rowboat. It is taking on water so one person is given a dipper to dip the water out. The other five are given dippers to dip water in. That is going to resolve the problem? That is going to endanger the economic well-being of this country of this province? That is going to endanger future jobs? That is absolute nonsense. What we should be doing is taking it very seriously, the fact that global warming may be upon us.

*(16:10)

We should be looking at one of the major opportunities for better water management in this province. I will likely be somewhat out of step with some of the positions taken by my party, although I hope not. We are, generally speaking, committed to spending very substantial sums of money for our province, upwards of \$700 million, to do what? So that we can discharge some of our fresh water supplies faster into the salty waters of Hudson Bay. That is what we are going to spend \$700 million on. I am very disturbed about that. I am talking about a large Winnipeg Floodway to provide safety for the city of Winnipeg.

The question of the safety of the city of Winnipeg should not be left in any doubt. We just look at the Floodway and say, how can we move more water through that Floodway faster? Have we really examined what we could be doing with that \$700 million in building catchment reservoirs throughout the system that would provide us with the same protection, if it

is 2 percent here, 3 percent there? I am told that the Pembina River system, in flood stage, can contribute up to 7 percent of the high water flows on the Red River. I am told that if we built another major dam at Holland on the Assiniboine, we could further regulate the flows of the Assiniboine so as not to coincide with high waters of the Red River. A major reservoir at Holland could do marvelous things for the area. It could just explode in terms of the processing industry, of additional potatoes and crops and things like that, not to speak of the tourist industry; for the city of Winnipeg that, in the future, needs a second pipeline of water, have it made for a fraction of the cost that would be involved in going to another jurisdiction where we have questionable access. Witness the monies that we have had to pay to maintain the security of our current water system supply.

I will be exploring this more fully, but I know that my colleague from Portage la Prairie and other members feel very strongly about the fact that water management is critical to the future well-being of this province. Some of our most progressive areas of our province, the Winkler, Morden, Altona areas, are virtually at the level. Their future expansion is dependent on the supply availability of potable water.

So these are some of the things that we should be doing in terms of if we are concerned about global warming. If the southern prairies is to become a more arid plain, which could well be the case, then let us now take the steps to ensure that we have the adequate water supplies to carry us through those times. We can do it here in Manitoba. You know, Manitoba is so fortunately geographically situated. See, we are the bottom of the whole plains. Our waters come from the higher reaches of the Rockies, through Alberta, Saskatchewan. They come to us from the south through the Red River. They come to us all the way from Ontario, northern Ontario and the great Winnipeg River system, the great Lake of the Woods system. All of that comes through, eventually, into Lake Winnipeg, and we have the opportunity of different stages, different places.

Years ago, our forefathers, in their wisdom, captured the energy of the Winnipeg River system to provide the first real ongoing boom for

the city of Winnipeg and make it the capital of the west. We are capturing the northern flows for the entire province, and we will share them with other provinces if a proper deal can be struck, but for agriculture and for just the nature of living in the province of Manitoba, where we do not all have to stream out east, Falcon Lake or to Clearwater Bay—where is your cottage?

An Honourable Member: Lake of the Woods.

Mr. Enns: Lake of the Woods. You know, let some of us come to Killarney. Let us come to just west of Portage.

Mr. Speaker, it need not be the massive structures. It can be 110 or 101 small, 10-, 15-, 20-acre storage, the dams on little creeks and streams that all end up flowing into the Red River, that all cause us fear or concern about that possible one-in-500-year-type flood. If we did those things, could those \$700 million not be spent in a more constructive way? So that would be my kind of approach to seriously addressing the concerns that Kyoto raises. Kyoto raises these concerns.

I do not quarrel to the David Suzukis about the need for looking after our environment. I do not quarrel with anybody that says that we have to accept our responsibility in ensuring that we pass on an environment to our children, to our grandchildren that is as good as and preferably better than it is today. There is no quarrel about that, and let us not make petty politics about it, but Kyoto, even its most enthusiastic supporters have trouble explaining it. I mean, this business of trading credits, trading in pollution, somehow that is offensive to me. Why should we be putting out millions of dollars to some country somewhere in the Ukraine or east Europe or elsewhere to allow them to keep polluting this world? I mean, that is utter nonsense. That is utter nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied, and I paid attention. Recently, our talk show hosts around the nation, they had a better part of a week on the Kyoto subject. It kind of concluded with our old friend Peter Warren on Sunday or Saturday, Sunday, I think. I will tell you, as people get to know more and more about what is involved in Kyoto, they are not buying it. What they are not

buying is just this blind signing on to a deal that we do not know the consequences of. Everybody buys. I buy, my party buys the need to do something about our environment. Everybody buys the responsibility we have of ensuring and then leading the world. Favoured as we are in terms of wealth and technology, we have a responsibility. The fact that we consume the amount of energy that we do, we have an additional responsibility of showing leadership to the rest of the world in these matters, but we are under no obligations to be suckers, you know, to be picking up a tab for a very questionable undertaking that nobody has completely, and nobody can satisfactorily explain what the consequences will be.

Mr. Speaker, those are my comments as we move forward. I would hope that we will have a vigorous debate on Kyoto, but I would caution the Government to be extremely wary of the position that they have currently taken and so wholesomely embrace it. They may find themselves very lonely in a very few short years.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to make some comments about the Throne Speech and the amendment to the Throne Speech for this year. It is always a pleasure to follow the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). I did not actually hear much in the way of complaint about the Throne Speech. I actually assumed that he may, in fact, support the Throne Speech at the end of the speech here.

I do want to say that when he was talking about the balanced-budget legislation and how their governments were big supporters of the balanced budget approach, I got the impression, somehow, that they had sort of campaigned on it back in 1988, that they, in fact, had moved towards that particular measure after being elected, but that is not what happened. That is not what happened at all. They came about the realization that they had to balance the budget after they had run up year after year deficits, to the extent where after six and a half years, the total of their accumulated deficits was almost as big as the deficits run up the six and a half years previous. Those were run up when we were in a recession, back in 1981.

* (16:20)

So they came around to the realization that they had to balance the budget only after those numbers of years of being in government, six years or so, running on one deficit of around \$700 million back in 1993 or 1994, which was a record at the time. How did they come to the realization that they had to do this? Well, in Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow had assumed the government after Grant Devine had run up huge deficits in Saskatchewan, and when they were on the verge of declaring bankruptcy in the province, they took drastic steps and they, in fact, led the country in the move to balancing budgets. They were first in Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do not say they were wrong in doing it. I applaud them for doing it, but to stand here in 2002 and say that somehow we invented the concept, we invented the approach and we were the first to do it, the fact of the matter is, it is not entirely true. They did it out of necessity. They did it after being in power for six years plus, and they did it after Saskatchewan showed them the way. They have not seen fit to give the Saskatchewan NDP the credit that it rightly deserved in being leaders, but we will not quibble about that.

Let us get down to the real reason that the member is so upset about the balanced budget legislation, and, in fact, the whole caucus over there, because we adopted, we stole one of the crown jewels of their success, and they do not like that. I mean, you know that is the irritant.

Now, you know, the Leader of the Opposition, in his amendment, makes the observation that the Government had failed to make a commitment to further provincial income tax reductions. That kind of shows you the conundrum he is in because you have a government with a three-year record, here, of having balanced budgets. The public likes them, and he has found that he does not have a lot of maneuvering room. I mean, what could he do? Say, me too. Well, the voters said: May as well vote for the real thing. So he has got to move on more treacherous ground. He has to demand tax cuts and he has to demand more spending. So you get back to the old days.

I remember when Abe Kovnats was here back in 1986. Abe used to stand up, and when he would defend the Opposition who demanded big spending one day and then tax cuts the next, Abe always said: When you are in opposition, you can have it both ways. It was totally irresponsible, but that is the approach that they took in opposition. So now what you have is an opposition that is promising to spend. We have just done a preliminary tally. They, in fact, should be responsible enough to come up with their own tallies.

When we were in opposition, we never came out with any recommended spending proposals without costing them first. We were always told, the leader of the party at the time, the current Premier would demand a costing of any proposal that we were making before we announced it, because he knew, he understood that the press would be knocking on his door real soon wanting to know what this spending measure was going to cost. So what we have, here, is an opposition leader who has introduced \$400 million, actually, that is a very conservative figure. It is far more than \$400 million in spending commitments without costing them, and, for some reason, the media, at this point, have not taken up the task. We can only hope that the media are listening and that the media, in fact, will be a little more attentive to these promises that he is making in terms of spending in the future.

So now let us deal with the other side of the equation. We have dealt with the spending. Let us deal with the tax cuts. He does not actually spell out how much of tax cuts he is going to promise. This Government is proceeding to carry on with tax cuts. We have corporation tax cuts, which were the first since the Second World War, in Manitoba. So what we have done is essentially stolen the Tory agenda, hijacked the agenda, the whole thing, and left the Tories very little maneuvering room, and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is very happy with that. Well, I am very pleased that he is finally happy after all these years. It has taken him 36 years, but he leaves on a happy note and there is nothing better than that.

Mr. Speaker, where does that leave the Leader of the Opposition? He is in control of a

party. He is shifting the vehicle in gear, but the wheels are spinning. He is not going anywhere because the wheels are sitting on sand, moving sand. Every once in a while he has a critic, say, like the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), who makes a statement, and another wheel falls off the car. I can understand his frustration. I can imagine the conversations that must have gone on when this member was convinced to run for leader. Talk about the probabilities of success. He gets approached by the backroom boys who tell him that you do not have to run. We are going to give you the leadership. Things must have been looking pretty good, right? They got rid of the opposition, just designed the system so that only this one candidate could actually run. He gets the coronation and he takes control of the party and he finds out that nothing is going right. Things were supposed to fall into place for this leader. So far we see nothing is falling into place. I think his own members have written him off.

They recognize that this Government is going to be here for at least another term so they have seen the exit signs. They are taking those exit signs and I do not blame them. The Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), one of my favourite members over there, has seen the exit sign. He is going off. The Member for Lakeside, the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) and perhaps there will be a few more. You can see it. It is just not there and it is all because the Tory party is not grounded on a solid base any more. It has been stolen. They will recover. The Member for Lakeside is right. Given a little bit of time, maybe a leadership change or two or three, they may be able to tweak this thing. They may be able to find some mechanic somewhere who can fix this car, prevent any more wheels from falling off and put the ship back together.

I do not think that we can be complacent on this side. We have to be aware that more than one government has gone into an election thinking it was way ahead. David Peterson in Ontario, Allan Blakeney in Saskatchewan found out. They called the election 15 points ahead and turned back and found out that the troops were not exactly in the order that they should have been, right? I am not prepared at this point to write them off yet. Mind you, we are not

supposed to be betting on elections anyway, but the whole picture does not look very good right now. It looks like a very sad overall picture here. *[interjection]*

So, Mr. Speaker, nothing discourages these guys, nothing irritates the members opposite more than having this balanced budget legislation rubbed in their noses. They do not like that at all. You could see when the Member for Lakeside rose to the challenge. That was his centrepiece of his speech, and it was very well done.

Nevertheless, people are happy with what the Government is doing. They are not prepared to put up with the irresponsible spending habits of previous governments of all stripes in this country. You only have to look at the federal government to see the most recent incarnation of irresponsible governance in this country.

* (16:30)

Here we have an MLA, former Cabinet minister in the federal Liberal government, and what is he doing? He is running around doing report cards on the Manitoba government, a government that is boondoggle free, scandal free, running surplus budgets, running one of the better governments in the entire country, a Premier (Mr. Doer) that polls highest in the country, and what is he doing? He is drawing little graphs here, showing the economy is going down. He is giving the Government a D.

He should be spending some time looking at his colleagues in Ottawa and maybe grading them. I do not even think you could grade them. It would certainly not be an F. It would be far worse than an F. How a government, any government, but this federal government could announce a program that is supposed to cost \$2 million and end up with a billion dollar disaster on its hands—*[interjection]* No, we did not support it. I can tell you that in my constituency in 1995—*[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see how you could have some trouble at times hearing what these guys have to say because I am shouting and I am having trouble.

In 1995, in the election, we sent out leaflets in our constituency opposing the gun registration

laws. *[interjection]* We did. I had people actually vote for me on that issue, which was a bit of an irony, I thought anyway, but we did not like the way it came about. The record was there. The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) pointed this out. The record was very clear. It had been tried in other jurisdictions, I believe in Australia. It had not worked there. It targeted the wrong people.

This is just another big example of the messes of this Government, and it is about time the opposition parties across this country got their act together and showed some clear alternatives to the current Government, because we cannot afford another term or two of the current performance at the federal level. This is just the latest in the scandals—*[interjection]* In a series, exactly, and how many more boondoggles and scandals do we not know about at this point?

But out of crises oftentimes good measures are made. I see some efforts now on the part of the federal government to perhaps look at banning union and corporate donations. It is going to be a bitter pill for some of them to swallow, those who get big money from corporations. I do not imagine Paul Martin will be extremely happy with that development. But we have done it here in Manitoba. It was obviously a very visionary thing to do. It worked in Québec.

I do not think the Tory party opposite is overly thrilled about all this, but the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) is going to have to go out and work for his money. He just cannot sit back and have the dough roll in like the good old days. You go down to the Richardson Building for an afternoon and collect from the lawyers' offices and the accounting offices. That is a pretty easy way, a pretty lazy way, to fundraise for the party. So he is going to have to get out there. We have been encouraging him to buy a shovel and start to do some digging there if he wants that underpass built. That is what we are going to see. We are going to see how good they are at going out and knocking on doors and raising money from real people. That whole measure, banning the union and the corporate donations, is certainly going to make them have a little different approach.

I do want to say this plan that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) has is basically going to be an economy wrecker. All you have to do is look at what happened with Grant Devine in Saskatchewan. When he went into the 1982 election relatively inexperienced, similar to the current Leader of the Opposition, what did he do? He promised all sorts of spending. He promised gasoline tax cuts. He promised all sorts of cuts. Then he went on this binge of spending, totally irresponsible spending, and turned the province into a big mess over time.

That is the inevitability of the member's proposals. They had the 50-50 plan. I thought he had something to do with that. Why is the guy who developed the 50-50 plan leading the party? I do not understand that. You have Newt Gingrich almost and you give him the head job and say, oh, your plan worked so good. We just got creamed in the election. Now, here, you lead this party. What kind of thinking is that? I guess you get what you deserve, but good grief.

So that is their problem. How do you promise all kinds of tax cuts? How do you promise all sorts of spending? How do you get the public to buy it? How do you get them to believe it? It did not work for them last time. Oftentimes a more conservative approach is a better approach, saying we cannot promise the moon here. We have to be realistic. We promised not to spend a lot of money last time around, and it worked out successfully so far.

Anyway, I want to deal with a couple of other points the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) talked about. I did not have a lot of disagreements with his views on the geothermal heat issue. I think it is about time we had people who take the initiative. I remember talking to a good friend of the members opposite, one Brian Pallister, a few years ago—I know that they are extremely good friends—when he was here and not safely ensconced in his seat in Ottawa. I was asking him in Estimates whether he would consider buying some fuel-efficient cars for the government fleet. He, of course, was not interested. He said: You know, it is just dollars and cents; we just buy the cheapest cars and use the cheapest gas. The total cost of operation, that is all we are interested in. We are not interested,

and, you know, do not give me any new ideas. Right? This man was not interested in any new ideas at all. In any event, nothing happened, but you see what is happening in the current Government.

The current minister of highways, the previous minister of highways have adopted a different approach. They have acquired several fuel-efficient models of cars, and I would encourage them to build those numbers up over time. You know, they may have to be a little bold here. They may have to go up to 10 percent in the first couple of years and then 20 percent and show some leadership, and that is what the Government is doing. So when you get into the areas of the geothermal heat, when you get into the wind power, you can make the argument that Manitoba has got hydro, we have got undeveloped hydro, why bother with wind?

Well, the fact of the matter is—the Member for Lakeside probably knows this—that wind is a developing industry in the Dakotas. There are production facilities there. Farmers are setting up their own wind farms. There are successful wind farms in, I think, Québec and certainly in Saskatchewan, Alberta, so why would we ignore that? So I think that this is forward thinking; this is something that we should be doing, looking into it because we have to look to the future. So anything that we can use to further technology, I am sort of in favour of it. That is, I guess, the reason why I would support the Kyoto accord, bearing in mind that there are some considerations that are being voiced here that it is not a provable case either way, sort of like our free trade debates here of the 1980s.

The point is we have to show some leadership. We cannot let things continue the way they are. In terms of it being anti-American, I do not think that that is the case at all. In fact, in the United States, a lot of the states are moving on their own—41, I believe, states of the 50 are actually moving on Kyoto equivalent measures. They are doing it on their own—*[interjection]* The member says and beyond. That is right because Kyoto is not that radical an approach. So it is not an anti-American thing at all. I do not know where the member gets off making that presentation.

Now I understand their caucus had a presentation. I do not know what he was doing in the caucus presentation, but it obviously was not money well spent. I assume you had to pay for the presentation.

* (16:40)

An Honourable Member: What presentation?

Mr. Maloway: The presentation on Kyoto that was at your caucus, was at ours, but, essentially, in Manitoba's case, because our greenhouse gases have been fairly stable for the last 10 years, have not really risen at all; it is not really a big issue for us. I mean, we do not produce huge amounts. Saskatchewan, I think, produces triple what we do, but it is an opportunity for us to be able to take advantage of a developing market and be able to fund research in different areas for alternative energy, plus we are sitting here with this enormous hydro capacity, the ability to sell it into the United States, sell it into Ontario, if we can get this grid set up.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

An Honourable Member: They did not count hydro energy as green.

Mr. Maloway: Well, I am just pointing out to the member that not only are we not going to be hurt by the accord as a province, but we see only blue sky in front of us. We see only opportunities in front of us. You know, I guess the old saying is, when you have got lemons, make lemonade. I mean, Manitoba does not have some of the advantages of southern Ontario and other jurisdictions, but we make do with what we have, and we have this hydro power, and it may be our day. In the next 10, 15 years, it may be our day to shine and we should be developing those hydro plants to their maximum capacity. We should be making efforts to sell. I do not fault the Premier. As a matter of fact, I applaud the Premier for getting out and selling the Manitoba product. I do not care whether it is hydro, or what it is.

I have often said that I was always impressed with the former premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna, in basically taking

his province, and with the limitations that the province had, to go out there and actually make a real effort to sell the province. He never stopped doing it. I think the Premier is following a good example when he does this sort of thing.

We are in a building mode in the province. We are not in retrenchment. I mean, if we elect the Conservatives, if we elect the Leader of the Opposition and he brings in his new version of his 50/50 plan, and he brings in his tax cuts, and he brings in his huge amount of spending with an economy that is already steaming along better than the other provinces, and he does that, then he is basically going to kill the economy. Then we are going to have lots of problems. So, while we are in a robust situation, while the revenues are coming in, while the economy is still doing well, that is the time when we want to start building things.

I am not a big fan of this arena, or any other arena proposal that I have seen, but the fact of the matter is that when the economy is going along the way it is, this is the opportunity to redevelop parts of the downtown, to build the arena, to set up a new Hydro headquarters downtown. We have more activity; we have more construction in the last three years downtown, I think it is 42 buildings being constructed downtown, when in the 10 years prior to that, nothing was happening. The whole area was being shut down. So where was the vision of the previous government?

I mean, I do not even think it really was a Conservative government in a lot of ways, because it just moved—[interjection] Oh, now, the honourable minister tells me about the casinos.

Now let us deal with the gambling issue. I know that it is kind of out of order for where I am in this but, yes, let us deal with that. I mean, the nerve of the members opposite to start lecturing us about how they are going to eliminate advertising for gambling at casinos when they built the whole system the way it is.

I am going to say at the outset, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it all started way back when, with

the NDP and church bingos and stuff like that. So, yes, we are culpable in the sense that we allowed the original kernel to develop, right? The seed was planted, but this government, previous government, became totally addicted to gambling and VLTs back in 1990, 1991, when the province was just overrun with these things. Then to add insult to injury, what do they do?

An Honourable Member: Built casinos.

Mr. Maloway: They built casinos. They did not build one casino; they built two casinos, huge palaces. Not only that, these great paragons of virtue and financial management, they could not run that right. They had no controls over the spending. They spent, I think the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) said something like \$60 million over budget.*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleagues are ironing out my new details here about whether or not it was \$40 million or \$60 million, but let us just say: Who was in charge? You know, who was in control? Then to have them come in here after being soundly whipped and defeated like they were in the election and start turning around and saying that somehow we are responsible, the former minister is responsible for some permit problems at the casino and so on when they built this whole industry, is just beyond me. The fact of the matter is that you have got to sort of see government from the rearview mirror for a few years, as the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) knows, give the public time enough to forget your sins, change the faces a little bit and bring in some new people and, hopefully, they will be able to get this sort of program put together.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not see a lot of criticism here by the member opposite, but I do want to say that he points out that in his constituency of 36 years, there were only two MLAs in 80 years. I was speaking to him earlier today, and we were just talking about in the last 10, 15 years, how many MLAs have there been in Portage la Prairie constituency, in Steinbach. Just since I have been here, we have had, I think, three or four.

The Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) came here the same time I did

and there are—*[interjection]* In '88. The point is that people that have been here only 10 years start to see MLAs come and go in certain constituencies, and you come here as a new person and you are really excited about the place and the whole atmosphere here. Next thing you know, you are an old man. You think every speech may be your last. You are never really sure, and you wonder. You look at all the MLAs that have gone. The Member for Lakeside has seen a lot of people come and go in this House, and there is a huge turnover. I think the average longevity for MLAs is six and a half years since 1870. So to be one of only two MLAs in his constituency in the whole existence of a province is pretty unbelievable.

Of course, to the Member for Minnedosa, I have always enjoyed his contribution and talking to him and having a lot of fun with him on different issues.

The Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), of course, I do remember a couple of very interesting experiences with him, one of which was flying in a helicopter over the flood. That was a pretty scary experience, not being with him, but being in a helicopter.

Of course, the Member for Inkster (Ms. Barrett), who has been a colleague of mine, actually, in the House here since 1990, but I had known her for many years before that, certainly showed a lot of courage in changing seats back in 1999, going into that heavy, what had been a Liberal area for 10, 12 years and taking on probably the best MLA the Liberals had, then and now, and beating him. I hear he is on the comeback trail. He is never going to give up.

I do not know how many other MLAs are contemplating retirement at this time. Some may not go voluntarily. There are a couple that are going to be facing some big challenges, and there always are. In every election we have been there are always surprises. I think that every election that we have seen throughout the years, there has been an unexpected situation where a Cabinet minister has fallen even when they should not have. These things happen. So that is one of the nice things about our electoral system. You never really know for sure how things are going to turn out.

* (16:50)

In 1988 I can tell you, it was a real experience. The only election I think that was more weird than that was Saskatchewan in 1982 when I was out there in the middle of that one. That one was totally unpredictable. I say that one was really weird because the government went in 15 points ahead and after two weeks there was collapsing to a leader who could not even win his own seat nine months earlier. So that was a pretty amazing change there.

In 1988, it was a little more predictable in the sense that we knew that things were not looking so good, but I do not think any of us realized that they were as bad as they were because I remember going in, working on one of the leadership campaigns and hearing these stories. Our campaign team kept getting smaller and smaller, and MLAs like the former Member for Inkster, Marty Dolin quit coming to the meetings for a while because he knocked on a few doors, and this is terrible. We have never seen anything like this. Thank God, by the time I got out there, which was after this was over, it was pretty well calmed down a little bit. You would never want to see anything like that happen again. That was pretty mild compared to what you guys went through in 1999. Nothing could be as bad as that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how much time do I have? *[interjection]* I thought we had an agreement here that we were going to limit our speeches to 30 minutes. I broke it already. I think I should quit while I am ahead and go out on a high.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is interesting to listen to the members opposite when they present their views of the Throne Speech and the alternate throne speech that was proposed by this side of the House. Before I get to that, I would like to, as I have in the past, thank the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker for their direction and welcome the new pages and the staff that work with us. With the new rules that are going to be implemented in the future, it is going to be an even more challenging job, I am sure, for the staff to keep us aware of it. I know that their patience will help us get through many of the

changes. I also do want to acknowledge the new interns that we have. I think the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) said it right. We have always had top-quality interns coming into our offices and working with us, and I suspect the members opposite feel the same way about their group of people. I know that they are to be commended, and they have a future in Manitoba politics and in Manitoba.

I also want to acknowledge the Member for Inkster (Ms. Barrett), who announced that she will be retiring before the next election. With the recent change in responsibilities on this side of the House, I kind of like to think that, you know, I was there for about three days, and she announced her resignation, so I have probably done a pretty good job of taking over. Whenever she threatens to return, I just suggest that the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) is ready to come back and take her on again, so we keep things balanced.

I also want to acknowledge the Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), who was a part of the class of '95, which is a group that I came in with. I know that there are members on the other side. It is like school. It is like organizations and groups that you belong to. There is a closeness of the people that you start with and develop with. You create a bond, and I am sorry to see him announce that he will be leaving us, but, in the same breath, I know that he has served Manitobans very well, particularly during the flood of '97 when Manitoba was probably at its, I do not want to say darkest moment, but it was a perilous situation, and the member from Morris did a wonderful job.

I want to make note of the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), a remarkable accomplishment to have the confidence of people. As the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said earlier, people's positions change and thought patterns change, and when you can maintain a seat for that length of time, you obviously have a real understanding of what your communities are about and presenting their issues.

In '95, when I got elected for the first time, my belief from the outside was the fact that maybe members should be looking at limited terms. I thought that might be a way of

encouraging more people to participate. Also, people change as time progresses. My thoughts changed after I had some dealings with the Member for Lakeside because we do need that history on both sides of the House in our caucus rooms to guide us and to tell us why things were done differently 15 years ago, 20 years ago and, in this case, as long as 30 years ago. There is so much important history that I do not know and I do not understand. With the Member for Lakeside, I always felt the advice he was giving us was in our best interests from his experience and his history.

So I do want to thank him personally. I know it is not the last day, but I know he will always be remembered in this House. I regret that he is retiring, but I know he is going to move on to even better things in his life.

The Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), who has announced that he will not run, also became a very good friend of mine in the time I was here. I look at him as a mentor and as a friend. I know he served not only the people of Manitoba, but the people of Minnedosa very well. You just have to move around that constituency to know the respect he has. I, too, wish him and his family well.

In the Speech from the Throne, unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to express my disappointment in the fact that I truly believe there was no vision presented. I think members opposite, in their speeches they have made in regard to the Throne Speech it has been about the past. It is not about looking forward. It is not about taking the issues that are facing us today and projecting how we are going to deal with them and how we are going to resolve them. What we saw was a rehash of old ideas, of old thoughts and some of the Government's accomplishments and some of the things they are still dealing with, but nothing about the future. It was about the past.

I take a look at the statements in the Speech from the Throne in regard to health care. We know waiting lists are increasing. It is not something we are making up. It is not something I think the Government does not acknowledge, but there was nothing in there to suggest how we deal with them. We are going to go into a shell and take a look at the Romanow report and

follow it blindly without any opportunity or any idea of how we can manage it.

We talk about different ideologies of how we deal with things. I believe the public has some great ideas as to how we can help deal with such things as waiting lists. All the people I talk to in the communities I represent, their No. 1 concern is access to health care. When you ask them how do you want it delivered, I do not think they, to a person, will tell you they care. All they want to know is that they can have access to it.

I think there is a tremendous opportunity being missed at this point in time in our history by governments, not just in Manitoba, but by governments across the country that put the blinders on and refuse to look at alternative ways of delivering services. It is not just about the public service can do it better than the private service or vice versa. There is a blend there that I believe will work. I believe we have an opportunity with some encouragement.

*(17:00)

We have as a previous government, and I know this Government has worked very hard to recruit new doctors into the province of Manitoba. I think the combined efforts of the previous government and today's Government have done a good job of it, but we have to give encouragement to these new doctors coming into our communities, many of them from South Africa, many of them with tremendous professional potential.

They are coming here and they are not being encouraged to develop. They are not being encouraged to expand their professional positions in our communities because they are seen purely as caretakers of the communities that they move into. I know of communities of mine that have doctors, in South Africa particularly, who were specialists in many of the fields that we need help in. We have to find a way, as legislators, to assist them to grow, not handicap them by limiting them to what they can and cannot do.

I think that this Throne Speech did not address that. It did not discuss those types of issues about how we plan for the future and how we can make it better for all Manitobans. It is interesting, and there are a couple of articles,

lines that were mentioned in the Throne Speech. It says that Manitoba has earned national recognition for progress on hallway medicine. If that is true, that is still not what the Government said they could and were capable of doing.

It is interesting when the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) talks about costing out the alternate throne speech. Well, that will come, and I guarantee you it will come, but we will not tell the people, we will not mislead the people of Manitoba by telling them we are going to solve hallway medicine in six months for \$15 million. We will not do that. We did not do that in the last election because we knew it was a lie, and we knew the new government could not deliver on that promise. It was an empty promise at the time, and today it still rings hollow, so I do not think the Member for Elmwood should take exception to our alternative throne speech and suggest that we have not put the numbers around. They will come, but we will not intentionally mislead the people of this province in regard to what it is going to cost and how we are going to do it.

One of the other lines I have read in the Throne Speech in regard to health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It says: Your Government has brought health care closer to home for many. Well, if adding ambulances that truck people out of our rural communities into Winnipeg is bringing it closer to them, then I guess they probably have met that commitment. Instead of providing services into those communities and accessing the actual talent and the professional people that we have in those communities, we are demeaning them and diminishing their value to our communities by not utilizing the skills that they present. I think any government that believes that by trucking and shipping people out of our communities for health care service, for general health care services, is not fixing any problem. It is creating a bigger problem, and I suspect that it is going to put a tremendous burden on communities in the future to maintain their health care services because they are not being encouraged to develop those same services within their community, services, I might add, that have been available to our communities for years.

I know that things change, and I am not opposed to change. I am not opposed to looking

at new ideas. Yes, we struggle somewhat in rural Manitoba because, at one time, hospitals and health care facilities, as an older gentleman told me, were built at a distance that a man could travel in a day. At that time, it was 25 to 30 miles. Today, we know that has changed, and we know the thinking and the strategy behind providing health care has to change with it, because man can travel many more miles in a day. Still, there has to be consideration given to the people who live in those communities to provide the services that, not only are they used to, but, I believe, they deserve. They have a right as taxpaying citizens in the province of Manitoba, and any government who wants to talk about fairness, equality and the sharing of wealth—I suggest to this Government that they should look at that and rethink their policy, because I think what they are doing is actually driving smaller communities further and further away from the health care system and, at the same time, diminishing the value of those communities.

It is kind of interesting, the Member for Elmwood, and I do not want to just dwell on his comments, but I suspect the government of the day, in the next general election in the province of Manitoba, will be advertising in the Grafton newspaper so that their Manitoba residents that are down there will be able to read it, and that way they will capture those people just to remind them that they did promise to shut that border down to Grafton.

We talk about the Romanow report. Again, I have great respect for Mr. Romanow. I have great respect for some of the things that he did in the province of Saskatchewan, but I believe that he truly looked at this with a very narrow vision of the future of health care in Canada. I do not think that he looked at it with any other idea than to increase socialized medicine to a rate where eventually, and it has been said here before, I think it has been said by members on both sides, that when we see the cost of health care eating up 40 percent, 45 percent and 50 percent of our budgets, we have hard decisions to make as to what we are going to do. I think if we do not start looking at alternative methods of delivering these services, alternative visions as to what health care means to people, I believe that we are in serious jeopardy of bankrupting not only Manitoba, but every province in Canada trying

to maintain a health care system that cannot sustain itself.

We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government is facing difficult questions in regard to health care. I did not see anything that would give me confidence in this Throne Speech, that would suggest that we are on the right path to solving the problem. What we have seen is more of the Romanow philosophy: If you put more money into it, it will get better.

We saw that from members opposite in the time of government in their last government. They thought they could continually spend and that inflation would carry the values so high that regardless of how much they spent, equity in the profits would continue to grow at a rate that would show that it could sustain it. We soon found out that it could not.

In other areas in the Throne Speech we talk about education, and I do not think it behooves a government that can stand up and say to the people of Manitoba that since we have been elected, we have seen the quality of our education diminish, decrease. We have young children in schools right now who are not succeeding at the rate that they should. They are not succeeding on a national average. The response back from the current Government is, well, average, is okay; it is acceptable to us. I just do not accept that.

* (17:10)

We see our universities crumbling. Yes, it is an economic ploy, and I understand that. The government of the day promised the young students that they would get a 10% cut, but, at the same time, the Government did not have the vision to see what that impact was going to have on the schools themselves. You know, we are talking about new universities being built while the other ones are falling down around them. I think it is incumbent upon this Government to face reality. It is not something that anybody is making up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that every university, we know that the community colleges in the province of Manitoba are suffering physically from the inability of this Government to see that an education is costing people money, costing people in the province

money and that we have to maintain those services and those facilities.

I find it interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we hear rhetoric from members on the other side on a constant basis in agriculture. I mean, people in rural Manitoba really believe that this Government has abandoned them in the agricultural field. We have a minister and we have a government that will stand on the steps of the Legislature with farmers, and arm-to-arm, shoulder-to-shoulder, we are with you; we are fighting for you. But the minute those people go away, the words change, the voices change, and what we actually hear is, you know, boy, we would sure like to do something more for them, but the federal government has done this to us and the federal government has done that to us.

We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) signed an agreement, and in signing that agreement, the only thing that she has done is basically signed the agreement.

There has been no commitment from her Government for the \$40 million. There has been no commitment other than if we were to bring those farmers into this Legislature, they would be right out there standing on the steps pounding their hearts and their chests saying: We are with you, Mr. Farmer. You hang in there. Just as recently as a couple of weeks ago at the AMM convention, the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province: The most progressive farmers in Canada, and we have to keep them protected. Yet he comes back in here and denies them their right, the right of the agreement that was signed and the funding that was promised them. So I suspect we will see more of that in this Throne Speech. You know, it is kind of like as the wind blows, so will this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have seen, I think, in this Government is not a vision. This has been a government that has divided communities in Manitoba from the first day they got elected back in 1999. They started out within the first couple of weeks of their new mandate by promising that they were going to grow the economy and they were going to build casinos. They announced it with all the glitter and all the glamour that they would build five new casinos.

Then what did they do? They handicapped the Aboriginal community by putting such regulations in place, unthought-out regulations. We challenged them every day in this House to provide the regulations. When they did, what did we end up with? We ended up with communities voting for or against something that I do not think they fully understood at the time, and the Government sat on their hands and let it happen.

Instead of a community being able to build up their resources and build within the community and build relations in these communities, they created a dividing line so that, in the instance of Brandon, we even had the chief suggest that Brandon was a racist community. We know that is not true. They know it is not true, but when you put barriers and you put regulations and you put stipulations in place that create that alienation, it is bound to come up, and it is bound to be a part and it is a shame that has to happen. That is not building Manitoba. That is tearing it apart.

We talk about other areas where this Government has divided communities in the province of Manitoba. They talk and they do it so boastfully. They talk about the forced amalgamations of school divisions. Now I do not know about you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but when you talk about forced amalgamations, it is exactly that. Communities that do not want to co-operate with each other are forced together. When we asked the former Minister of Education about that, when we suggested to him if he was going to follow the Norrie report, what were the parameters that he made these decisions? When we asked him about specific school divisions about why he did not force them to amalgamate, his comment was: Well, they did not want to be forced. So what we had was a government that picked, chose winners and losers in the education field, I suspect based on purely political motivation, but we have communities out there that were actually starting to work together in the last 10 years and who are now divided again. Why? Because of a government policy that said: We know better than all of you out there. Well, actually they said that they were going to save some money by doing it.

I think of the one example in southwest Manitoba where they forced the amalgamation

of two school divisions, and we now have two superintendents, two secretary-treasurers, two school division offices and the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) says it was their choice. Yet, in her rhetoric and her Government's rhetoric, these were the cost savings that were going to be generated by these amalgamations. They have not happened. What has happened is you have communities fighting over who is going to get the largesse of this division and this division. What you have is, instead of rural Manitoba putting their shoulders to the wheel together, they are on opposite sides pushing against each other. I think that is a responsibility of this Government.

I challenge the Premier. I believe it is his mindset and his thoughts that are creating this problem and this divisiveness. We have seen it time and time again that he continues to divide Manitobans on their thoughts. Instead of a province that is building together, we are a province that is pulling apart.

Another example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of this very same divisiveness is the thought by this Government that they could sell part of a provincial park. Can you believe that? These environmentalists who stand up and take the side of all that is good and great in this province, and what do they do after becoming government? Again, divide. They take one of our most natural, most pristine parks, probably, in North America, I believe Clearwater has been deemed that, as one of the top five or six wonders of North America, and they are going to subdivide it off. What have they done by doing that? They divided the community again. They have created an animosity between communities again, which only leads to the tearing down of the province of Manitoba as opposed to the growing of Manitoba and the construction of Manitoba.

Manitoba has many beautiful parks, and for a government that always wanted to take the high road on environmental issues, always wanted to say, whatever we do, let us not destroy our beautiful, natural environment. Let us preserve these parks. Let us designate more parks, which they have. Yet they take a chunk of a park, of a provincial park, and subdivide it like its a piece of property and shovel it off the shelf. You know what? That is not the bad thing about

this. The bad thing is that it has divided the communities that surround that park. They have isolated one group against another, and they have created nothing but a turmoil. I suspect that will become one of the major issues in the next provincial election. It is unfortunate that it has to be that way, but it is that divisive grind that this NDP government has inflicted upon Manitobans that is going to create that problem.

Another example. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you do not have to look very far. The opportunities keep coming up again about how the Government is dividing communities. We talk about the fishing problems they have in a couple of our lakes in northern Manitoba. Instead of making a sound, responsible decision, this Government chose to negotiate, get a conciliator, arbitrate, and it has not worked. What it has done again is it has divided another community against each other. It seems to be that it is a continuous process.

I could go on and on. It is unfortunate that they feel that, while they are projecting that image of a thoughtful, caring government that cares about everybody, what they are really doing is basically just setting up roadblocks, obstacles, things that divide these communities. Things that made those communities strong are now the same things that are destroying those communities from within. It is because of a government policy that has not understood the needs and the desires of the people in those communities.

I want to continue. I found it quite interesting that the government of the day and the Premier today stood up and said: We were always against gun control, should get rid of it. What a waste of money. What a waste of time. How could the Canadian taxpayers be duped so badly by a federal government?

* (17:20)

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is ironic that, when you talk about the gun legislation, the Government of today, in the past, had a different position on gun registration.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

In fact, the former Justice critic, now the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), said about

gun legislation: Given what I have seen, I am relatively pleased with the legislation. In regard to other guns in the hands of collectors, he said: I presume that they should, perhaps, be called in and perhaps be confiscated.

Now, I am not sure how that levels off with the Premier's (Mr. Doer) words today, but we have actually another member, the current Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), who said that he was concerned the proposals do not go far enough to clamp down on handguns. Well, it sounds like there is support.

We even go a little further. I have a letter that was written by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett). She says: All Canadians deserve a safe environment. Strict gun control legislation will go a long way towards ensuring that safety. I look forward to it being introduced.

So what does the Government say today? You know what, Mr. Speaker? This is a symptom of a government that under the public spotlight will say whatever it takes to get out of the room unscathed, but when they come back to their dungeons and to their offices, they plan and they manipulate to divide communities. They plan and say, you know, it does not matter what we do; it only matters what we say. We say one thing, do another. As long as we keep saying it, people will believe it.

It is unfortunate because I think the gun control issue that has come to the front pages of the papers in the last couple of days, and just for the information of all here, the federal government withdrew the request for more funding today, but they are going to study it more. I suspect that was political maneuvering just simply to avoid an embarrassment for the federal government.

But it does bring me to the Kyoto accord. We have a provincial government that stands up today after originally supporting gun control and saying it was the worst thing that ever happened. It is a billion-dollar boondoggle. It was a waste of taxpayers' money. We said that when they introduced it. We opposed it. We said we would not administrate it. We would not be participating in it, and the members opposite, in opposition at that time, challenged us, said that

we were backing away from our responsibilities, that we should be supporting the strengthening of gun control.

But where does that get us? That gets us today to a federal government that I believe nobody trusts and a provincial government that is following along on their coattails supporting everything that they say and do. The Romanow report, before it was even published, was approved by this Government. Kyoto, before we have any facts—and we have asked the Minister responsible for Energy about the facts of the Kyoto deal, and he cannot provide one shred of evidence that tells us it is going to cost us money or it is not going to cost us money.

In fact, yesterday, he made a big announcement about wind, and I know Bob Brennan. He is a bright guy. He has been a tremendous manager of Manitoba Hydro, and if he stands up and says publicly that he does not know what it is going to cost, I suspect that is what he is being told to say. I would suggest to the Government, if you want to do the wind sampling and the wind test, you only have to drive 20 kilometres south of where I live into North Dakota and you will see wind towers staining the landscape. The only thing is that they are not operating because they cannot generate enough wind to create the power that they need. I do not think we need to spend a lot of money going out and testing. We can ask professionals all over the world to tell us about the climate in our area, and they will be able to tell us. It is not rocket science anymore.

But I get away from what my intent was, which is here is a provincial government blindly following a disabled federal government in the sense of their ability to make proper decisions for the people of Canada and thus the people of Manitoba. We have no idea what Kyoto will cost, but the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) suggested and I am a firm believer, if we want to clean up our environment and if we want to be part of a bigger picture, we have many opportunities in our communities and in our province to enhance the environment and create economic opportunity.

We have ideas to build dams, to store water. In the past, Manitobans, particularly rural

Manitobans, and I suspect it is across the province, their biggest challenge was how do we get rid of the water as quick as we can in the spring. I believe that there is a plan out there or a plan that could be developed very quickly that would talk about retention of water, would talk about irrigation, would talk about smaller farm operations, but more intensive, would talk about going into vegetables, would talk about going into different varieties, would take the pressure off of our farmers, our rural communities to produce grain. We see the opportunities that have been created in livestock. If we had the management of our water, the retention of our water, we could do so many more things, so many more positive things in the province and get the economic benefit that goes with it.

Why would we run water for miles and miles and miles and not take advantage of what it offers us? Having grown up in southwest Manitoba where the drought hit in the late seventies and stayed almost to the end of the eighties, I can tell you that these ideas are now acceptable. People out there are willing to discuss them and the opportunities they present. That is what I think a Throne Speech should talk about, opportunity.

We talk about the amount of construction. The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) mentioned it, the amount of construction that is going on in downtown Winnipeg. No one on this side is complaining about it. What we are suggesting to you is that most of it is being done at public expense or with public money. There is a balance there. I do not disagree that the public has a role to play in some areas of our communities and some areas in the development of our community, but we need the private sector downtown if it is going to operate and be functional and grow and develop. It cannot be done by governments alone. The downtown development, and we recently read stories about the arena project that has shifted like the sand that the member from Elmwood talked about when he suggested we were on moving sand, that project now has had so many turns into it, I really think that it is time that the Government either presented the plan to the public and let them decide, or at least present it to the public. If they choose to go forward with it with or without the Government's blessing or with the public's

blessing, then so be it, but at least be forthcoming and be honest with the people and tell them what to expect and what they are going to get.

The only other issue. The Member for Lakeside talked about balanced budgets, and he suggested that the government of the day believes in balanced budgets and have done so. I would disagree with him in the one issue. The fact is, you guys did not balance your Budget last year. You did it with Hydro. If you can sell that to people, then fine, but I suggest to you that it is a sleight-of-hand proposal to show people that they are responsible when, in fact, I believe that the comments that they made back in '95, when we were introducing balanced budget legislation, probably still stands today, the comments that were made by the Member for Lakeside.

* (17:30)

I do want to talk just briefly, Mr. Speaker, about some of the issues that I see as things that the Government has said they would or did not do, some would say lies, truths, mistruths, myths. In no particular order, I would just like to review a few of them.

Mistruth: NDP will end frozen food. The Leader says today he will prohibit any expansion of frozen food in Manitoba. No Winnipeg personal care home will receive rethermalized frozen food. The truth. On December 6, '99, the NDP announced a plan to buy the Urban Shared Services contract and serve chilled foods at a cost of over \$2 million more a year to health care facilities. It also includes extending it to personal care homes, such as Misericordia. The NDP promised it would never happen.

Mistruth: Manitoba Hydro will not have to borrow to pay a dividend. The real truth. At a Public Utilities Board, a representative asked: So, in other words, Manitoba Hydro has to make a payment of \$288 million, and to make that payment, they not only have to pay \$288 million, but they have to borrow the money. The cost of borrowing that money is going to be \$276 million. That was asked by Carolyn Wray,

division manager. The answer was, that is correct. So, truth, the real truth, the mistruth.

Another example, the 2002, this is the Government's so called mistruth. The NDP has balanced the Budget. The real truth. They had a \$150-million operating deficit. They covered it from a transfer from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

Mistruth: The Premier stood in this House and said there will be a cap on VLT revenue for the new arena. The real truth. The VLT money is up to a million and a half a year with no cap.

Mistruth: NDP has not touched the fiscal stabilization fund, rainy day fund. The real truth, and it is by their own third-quarter financial statements, they actually transferred \$150 million to the operating fund from the fiscal stabilization fund.

Mistruth: No forced school amalgamations. The Premier said, you know, it is not the Manitoba way. The real truth is, the minute he said it, the day after, he did it.

I think the final one, Mr. Speaker, and I mean this has got to be the biggest mistruth of all. We will end hallway medicine within six months of taking office with only \$15 million. Mr. Premier said: Our commitment is to end hallway medicine. We will do whatever it takes. The real truth is they have not eliminated it. They have invested another \$600 million, and today we still face hallway medicine.

I think the Throne Speech is about building trust in our communities. I think the Throne Speech is about a vision as to how we make our Manitoba community stronger and how we all work together to improve. I happen to be a part of a group of communities that are working together on a project. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Turtle Mountain has certainly put some thoughts on the agenda here that will give me some room to comment on because, certainly, he talks about myths and mistruths, and certainly I would have to say to the member

that there are also some mistruths in his comments.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comment on the Throne Speech, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the pages to this Chamber. I hope that is an enjoyable experience and a good learning experience. I hope that what the pages learn here in the Chamber will help them make their decisions and hopefully come back someday to this Chamber in another form and perhaps be sitting in one of these chairs.

I would also extend a welcome to the interns who are working in each of the caucuses, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, that should be a unique learning experience, one that does not come to very many people, but one that I think most interns that I have come to know over the years have found to be a very educational and rewarding experience.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank you for the guidance that you give us in this Chamber. Certainly, the last few days may have been a bit challenging for you, with the kind of debate that has been taking place. I hope that we do not create too much anxiety for you and that you can guide us through this process over the next few days that we are still here.

As I look at the Throne Speech and I hear the member talk about vision and goals set out, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, as I read this Throne Speech and I look at what we have done as a government, we certainly do have a vision for Manitoba. We certainly are reaching some of the goals, and we are making huge successes despite what the member is saying. The member talked about his concern about people having to travel greater distances to get their health care. Well, that may have been part of his government, but our Government has taken some very progressive steps in helping to alleviate the distances that people have to travel and to help to reduce the waiting lists that were left by the previous administration.

When I look at the steps we have taken to bring better services and make better use of rural and northern hospitals, it is a step forward in comparison to what the previous administration did. I can remember steps taken by the previous

administration, where they really reduced the dental care services to people in rural and northern Manitoba and across the province, but our Government has taken this a different direction. We have moved dental surgeries for northern children to Thompson and orthopedic surgeries to Steinbach and to St. Anne. I wonder how the member can say that is taking services away from people when you think of the thousands of dollars that had to be spent bringing children from the North to Winnipeg to have their dental surgery done. Now these services can be provided in the North in a very good facility, a facility that we invested in and renovated.

There are other steps that we have taken to improve health care in this province, by adding 500 additional training spaces for technicians and therapists, health care aids, nurses and doctors. That is a significant step that has been taken. I want to just commend our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). There is no doubt that there are serious challenges in our health care system, but when we take the steps to increase the number of nurses that are graduating, imagine three times as many nurses to graduate this year as in 1999, and 90 percent of them will stay in Manitoba. We have the Opposition talking about people leaving this province. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are training nurses in Manitoba, and they are staying in Manitoba.

We have increased the number of medical spaces, and the number of doctors continues to grow in this province under this administration. One of the things that I think is really wonderful is the introductions of Telehealth systems allowing doctors and patients in northern and rural Manitoba to link up with clinic specialists. These specialists can be right here in Winnipeg and link up with the facilities in rural Manitoba. I had the opportunity to see that Telehealth medicine in action in the Swan River Hospital. Certainly, it has reduced travel costs and shortened waiting lists for people who are trying to see a specialist.

Of course, one of the very serious concerns when we were in opposition that we raised many times was the serious waiting lists that there were for cancer treatments, and I am very proud that those waiting lists have been cut in half.

There used to be 10 weeks that you were waiting for treatment for cancer, Mr. Speaker. Now, the wait is about five weeks. I know the Opposition does not like to hear that—[interjection] The member opposite is talking about the truth. Well, this is the truth. Our Government has done a tremendous job in reducing waiting lists and improving health care in this province, increasing the number of nurses that are trained and taking services to rural and northern Manitoba. I am surprised that the member opposite would find that humorous because I do not. I think that is excellent, the fact that we have more diagnostic equipment in this province, that we have expanded hours of operation for diagnostic equipment and have replaced diagnostic equipment such as MRIs and CT scanners.

* (17:40)

We have built the hospitals, Mr. Speaker. You know, the previous administration, I think they announced the Brandon Hospital about three times, at least three times, and you know what? We took office, and there was no expansion to Brandon Hospital. Well, it has happened under this administration.

The other thing the previous administration did was they shut down the hospital in Swan River and put in a temporary facility and said there would be a new hospital, but when we took office, there was nothing in the capital planning. There was no plan to build another hospital in Swan River. But our Government took action and as much as members of the Opposition would like to say there will be no new hospital in Swan River, the construction will start very early next year.

That is an NDP government thinking about people, bringing services closer to people because we care about people far more than we ever had caring from the Opposition when it came to providing health care. That is why, Mr. Speaker, people were so frustrated with the previous administration and the way they handled the whole health care situation.

The Opposition would also like to paint a doom and gloom picture about the economy of this province. We hear them talking about people leaving the province. Well, I can tell the

members opposite that they are wrong again. For 2002, the economic growth projected for this province is above the national average, one of only three provinces that will achieve investment growth in each of the past three years. In comparison to the other provinces, we are doing very well.

When you look at our annual job creation since 1999 and under the previous administration, it has doubled the annual rate of the previous 10 years. We have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, including the lowest youth unemployment.

I heard the member opposite talking about our universities and how the universities were falling apart. Well, I have to tell him he is wrong. They may have been falling apart when the Tories were in power, Mr. Speaker, but this Government has made a huge investment into our universities, \$100 million into the University of Manitoba, followed by a tremendous fundraising campaign from the public which has resulted in a further over \$100 million.

Along with rebuilding our universities and colleges, our enrolment is up 19 percent since 1999. We have more people going to university. We have frozen tuition fees and this allows more people to get an education which gives them the tools that they need to participate in society and contribute to society, as we all want to do.

Along with university training, there is also a need for apprenticeship training, Mr. Speaker, because there are many trades and many skills needed in this province. In this area, in the community colleges that we have here, we have seen an 11% increase in apprenticeship training because of new initiatives that we have taken. When you look at the Red River College expansion, when you look at other facilities that have been improved on, all of these give new opportunities for our young people to take the training that they need.

We heard about hallway medicine and the Opposition is really stuck on that, and I can imagine they will always be stuck on it because it was their work that created the serious problems that we had with waiting lists and hallway medicine, but our Minister of Health

(Mr. Chomiak) has been very progressive, and our Government has worked very hard on this issue. We are recognized nationally for the steps and the improvements that we have made to hallway medicine and the reductions that we have made to waiting lists.

Mr. Speaker, immigration is a very important part of Manitoba. Manitoba is built on immigration. We have made serious commitments to increase the number of immigrants, and at this time I want to commend the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) who has indicated that after the next election, she will not be in this House, but I want to commend her for the work she has done on immigration and the work that she has also done on labour legislation in this province. I know that she will be remembered, will go down in history for the work that she has done in her term of office as a Minister of Labour and a Minister of Immigration.

One of the challenges that we do face in the agriculture industry is a declining farm population. We recognize that. It is not something that is unique to Manitoba. It is a challenge governments across the country are facing as farm size becomes larger. There are very serious challenges in some sectors of the farm economy.

I have to say that I am extremely pleased that I have had the support of my colleagues in Cabinet and our members in government when we moved forward with the Bridging Generations Project to attract young people back into agriculture. There is a wonderful opportunity in agriculture. It is changing, but there are opportunities as we diversify into new commodities, as we look at value added, as we look at how we can add energy or add products, some of the products that, in the past, have been considered a waste product. Whether it is the straw that used to be burned before and caused problems, it is now being used, can be used for ethanol or for straw mats. There are many uses for these products. I want to say that I am extremely pleased that our Government has been able to take those proactive steps to encourage more people to stay in agriculture and encourage farmers.

When you look at the number of people who have taken advantage of the Bridging

Generations Program, it is much better than anything we saw under the previous administration, as far as—[interjection] The member says there are fewer farmers. Of course, there are fewer farmers. There were fewer farmers when they were in government. There are fewer farmers now. The decline in farmers has been happening since the 1950s. It happened under their administration, and it is happening under ours, but we have taken steps to—[interjection] The member says we should bring back the farmers.

* (17:50)

I will tell you how agriculture changes. My Dad—there were five of them in the family, and all but one stayed on the farm. They all lived in the same community. I should go back. My grandfather and two brothers came to the area. They settled in the area. They all had children. Most of them stayed. The first generation stayed on the farm, but by the 1950s, people started to go out. People came back from the war and started to look for other things. In my Dad's family, most of them stayed on the farm. One of them chose to go to Winnipeg and work for CN. He had a good life there. I can tell the member that by the time our family came along, there were eight of us. My brother and I were two of the ones that were involved in agriculture. Everybody else went to work because that was their choice. It was their choice, but also, there was not enough land. The changing times, changing equipment, you just needed more land. That is how things changed. Now, of our family of eight, I am the only one left in agriculture. Why? Because my brothers and my sister made different decisions. That is what is happening now. There are people who will choose not to stay in agriculture, and there are people who will stay in it, but we are taking the steps to encourage more young people to come back to the farm because it is a good way to make a living.

As well, I am very proud of the work that we have done on the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement, a plan that will have all provinces participate, a plan that will bring \$425 million in safety net programs in the next five years to this province. Well, I was really surprised yesterday when I was in Ottawa

negotiating this agreement, that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) should stand up in this House and say: Where is the Minister of Agriculture? She should be in this House standing up for farmers, not in Ottawa negotiating an agreement.

The members opposite knew. They signed a pair for me to go. I can tell the member opposite that the previous minister of Agriculture, when he was the minister and had to go to an Ag ministers' meeting to stand up for farmers, we agreed and we encouraged him. In fact, I offered him suggestions of what he should take to that meeting instead of being critical.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Ag Policy Framework agreement is a very important document. *[interjection]* The member across the way is chirping about whether or not we negotiated anything. Well, we are getting closer to an agreement and it is expected that we will be able to finish the final details on the agreement by the end of this fiscal year, which is by March. I want to commend the staffpeople for the amount of work they have been doing since the Agricultural Policy Framework. *[interjection]*

I am quite surprised that the member would not be following this discussion. I can tell him, if he is really interested in the document, it is on the federal government Web site where he can look into details on this document. I would encourage him to put his comments forward, because that is the purpose of having a public document. We do not negotiate in secret. We encourage farmers to look at the document, give their ideas and tell us how this will work.

In fact, one of the things I took to Ottawa yesterday, Mr. Speaker, was asking the federal government to ensure that we had a model that farmers could look at and that, as provinces, we could look at and fit in to see how these new programs are going to work versus the old programs, because, ultimately, we want functional programs. We want programs that are easily accessible and we want programs that are affordable. Those are the important keys.

I also want to see programs that offer farmers the best possible protection they can have as part of their risk management tools.

Manitoba is recognized for the improvements we have made to crop insurance. That is one of the most important tools we have in this province, and we will continue to work on it. We have higher participation in crop insurance than other provinces.

Unfortunately, the member across the way does not seem to—

An Honourable Member: I think you have convinced him, Rosann. I think you have convinced Peter.

Ms. Wowchuk: Maybe I have convinced him that it is a good program.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of other areas that the previous member was speaking about. He talked about the fishing issues and the park issues. He said we had not done anything on the fishing issue. I can tell him he is wrong on that, because we have been able to negotiate an agreement between the fishers and the sports fishers and the Indians. There has been a reduction in the amount of fishing. It is a managed plan and we are working on it. I would hope the Opposition would co-operate.

It is the same thing with the parks. The member is talking about this park, and it is as though if a piece of this land went to First Nations, it would not be a park anymore. They are opposed to somebody else being involved.

It is the same thing I heard on the elk issues the other day. The members from the Opposition are concerned that elk went to the Aboriginal people, to the Indians. I look at these and I see fishing issues, park issues, elk issues, and I really believe the members opposite just like to take these issues and try to divide people. Well, you know what, Mr. Speaker? We are all Manitobans. *[interjection]* The member says I do not care about TB. Well, the member is wrong. The member knows TB is a reportable disease. It falls under the jurisdiction of CFIA, and CFIA has full responsibility in testing the animals.

Now, members opposite are trying to do a little fearmongering here again, like what if these elk are not clear? Heavens. What if they

are not clear and you have moved them somewhere else? That is not the issue at all. The members opposite are upset that we gave these elk to the Indians. They do not want the Indians to be involved in agriculture. That is really what they do not want. This is a fearmongering tactic on their part because they just do not like to see that. Even though they signed the agreement that allowed them to capture the elk, even though they did not get paid, they do not want this issue resolved.

So it is quite interesting that they take issues like fishing, issues like parks and issues like elk and then say, oh, yes, we are standing up for the people, but this Government is trying to divide and conquer.

No, Mr. Speaker. Our Government is working with all sides. It is the Opposition and people like Inky Mark, who is associated with some of the members on the opposite side, I think he is even going to run for them next year, because he is now a Conservative, but he is taking these issues and trying to divide people rather than to work together with them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that as I look at this Throne Speech, I am very proud of the Throne Speech and the steps that we have taken to improve the quality of life. I have to say that I am very proud of the record of our Government and the things we have done to build a better Manitoba.

You know, we have not heard anything—*[interjection]* The member talks about deeper in debt. I want to remind the member what happened in 1998. In 1998, it was his people on that side that built a false deficit. They wrote the books as if we had that deficit. The NDP had a deficit and then they put the money into the rainy day fund that they could use.

So, Mr. Speaker, they talk about what good managers they are. They were the ones who sold Manitoba's telephone system and then blew it in a very short time, and our telephone rates went way up, but I can tell this member that we will not sell Manitoba Hydro. We will not sell Manitoba Hydro like they sold the Manitoba telephone system. We will not privatize our other Crown corporations the way they would because they put out a Throne Speech, their alternate throne speech, that was going to spend some—how many, half a billion dollars

additional, and where were they going to get that money? They did not show the cuts where they were going to get it. The only thing they were going to do was sell off some of our Crown corporations like they did the telephone system that has now forced rural people in particular, rural people who have—I wonder how he can defend the telephone rates that rural people are now paying since they privatized.

This sale of the Manitoba Telephone System was going to be good, good for their friends who made all kinds of money, good for those people who bought shares. It did absolutely nothing for rural and northern people, Mr. Speaker. There are people in my constituency who do not have telephone service, and if it was a Crown corporation, we would be able to give them telephone service. Under a private sector system, they will have no telephone service. So the member sitting across the way can hang that on his head. You can hang on your head what you did for rural Manitobans and northern Manitobans who do not have telephone services. You look at cell phones as a convenience. There are many people who do not even have a telephone in their home and you should feel responsible for that.

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that our Government recognizes all people as being equal, and that is why we reduced hydro rates. That is why we equalized hydro rates across the province.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the record of our Government, there are certainly significant steps that we have taken to improve the economy, steps that we have taken to build research and innovation. I look at the steps that we have taken with the Food Development Centre, which is very important to agriculture, the investment that we have made in the nutraceutical centre at the university, steps that we have taken, investments that we have made at St. Boniface Hospital.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 14 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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