

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

Official Report
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 28, 2012

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 10—The Correctional Services Amendment Act

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 10, The Correctional Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services correctionnels, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: This bill would improve the safety and security within our correctional facilities while also enhancing the safety of victims, witnesses and the general public. The bill clarifies the conditions under which inmate communications, including telephone communications, may be restricted, intercepted and monitored. The bill also includes provisions for more detailed regulations with respect to the control of inmate communications.

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

Any further bills?

Bill 12—The Community Schools Act

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that Bill 12, The Community Schools Act; Loi sur les écoles communautaires, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Allan: This bill recognizes and facilitates the implementation of the community school philosophy and model. The philosophy recognizes that schools are an integral part of the community, and the model serves to develop a comprehensive range of services, programs and activities to support students, their families and the local community.

The bill establishes the community schools program. It also establishes, with the Department of Education, a community schools unit to assist and support community schools. The unit will maintain a community schools network. The network will serve as a resource for sharing best practices in implementing and further developing the community school philosophy and model.

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

Any further bills? Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

PETITIONS

Provincial Trunk Highway 1

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government presently maintains a freeway system for PTH 1 through the province of Manitoba.

(2) The definition but this—by definition this would lead to the elimination of all traffic lights on PTH 1 by building overpasses at every major intersection along the highway.

(3) The Town of Virden and the local planning district have never adopted a 1997 Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation overpass plan for the community at the junctions of PTH 1 with King Street, PTH 83 and PTH 257.

(4) This freeway system overpass plan is impeding business development in Virden. Presently, a Virden businessman is virtually prohibited from relocating his business to his own land because it sits on the footprint of the planned overpass, even though

his relocated business would generate \$700,000 in provincial sales tax annually for Manitoba.

(5) Manitoba's infrastructure deficit has reached a record high. This deficit, paired with the number of existing projects that—still awaiting completion throughout Manitoba, will render the proposed overpass project financially unfeasible for decades to come.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation consider abandoning the Manitoba freeway proposal for the junction of PTH 1 and Virden's three intersections, particularly the 'kring' street junction.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by R.G. Nield, B. Hayward and B. Hayward and many, many others.

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

Further petitions?

St. Ambroise Beach Provincial Park

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

And these are the reasons for the petition:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To 'recess' the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider repairing St. Ambroise provincial park and its access points to

their pre-flood conditions so the park can be reopened for the 2013 season or earlier if possible.

This signed by K. Kolisnyk, D. Meseyton-Neufeld, E. Sharpe and hundreds of more fine Manitobans.

Vita & District Health Centre

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by R. Fallis, K.J. O'Brien, T. Munn and many more fine Manitobans.

* (13:40)

Provincial Road 520

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

This petition is signed by S. Berube, K. Wessner, J. Wessner and hundreds of other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highways 16 and 5 North– Traffic Signals

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The junction of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north is an increasingly busy intersection which is used by motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Town of Neepawa has raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about safety levels at this intersection.

The Town of Neepawa has also passed a resolution requesting that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation install traffic lights at this intersection in order to increase safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation consider making the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north a priority project in order to help protect the safety of the motorists and pedestrians who use it.

This petition is signed by L. Wrightson, T. Kelly, J.J. Nelson and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care– Steinbach

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The city of Steinbach is one of the fastest growing communities in Manitoba and one of the largest cities in the province.

This growth has resulted in pressure on a number of important services, including personal care homes and long-term care space in the city.

Many long-time residents of the city of Steinbach have been forced to live out their final years outside of Steinbach because of the shortage of personal care homes and long-term care facilities.

Individuals who have lived in, worked in and contributed to the city of Steinbach their entire lives should not be forced to spend their final years in a place far from friends and from family.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health ensure additional personal care homes and long-term care spaces are made available in the city of Steinbach on a priority basis.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by H. Falk, C. Ginter, T. Ginter and thousands of other fine Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): In accordance with section 20 of The Public Officers Act, chapter 230, I rise today to table the fidelity bonds crime insurance information.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Churchill High School 75 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Cassandra Costa. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also seated in the public gallery, we have with us today Judy Dunn, outreach manager for the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba in the Eastman region and the recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal; Andrea Kiesman, AndrewDunn.org committee member; and Tara Brousseau-Snyder, executive member of the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba. On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today Moira Honey, who is the guest of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway); Jack Watts and his children Lauren Derby, Jeff Watts and Allyson Watts, who are the guests of the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady); and 20 participants from the Canada World Youth and KENVO team from Kenya, who are the guests of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

And also, from the Canadian Diabetes Association, we have Andrea Kwasnicki, regional director for Manitoba and Nunavut; Kelly Lambkin, manager for public programs and services; and Randi Gill, western Canada communications manager, who are the guests of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Taxation

Impact on Business Competitiveness

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Mr. Speaker, our excitement with IKEA's opening today is tempered a little bit by the reality that their decision to come to Manitoba was made prior to the tax whack the NDP imposed on this province last spring. Our excitement is tempered by the reality that those tax hikes were the biggest in a quarter of a century and that the unfortunate result has been that many Manitoba businesses are voting with their feet and are leaving. And so, this year alone we've already seen 350 high-paying jobs lost due to plant relocations in this province.

So I'd like the Premier to answer this question: Does he understand that high-tax policies reduce our competitiveness as a province and hurt our province's economy?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as I've said in previous questions, quite a bit has changed since the member from Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Opposition, was last here.

There used to be a capital tax when he was in government that charged every business in Manitoba for the capital that they had under their ownership. That capital tax has been completely eliminated now in Manitoba. There used to be a small business tax of 9 per cent on the first \$200,000 of income. There is now no small business tax in Manitoba. The amount is zero, and that zero applies to the first \$400,000 of income in Manitoba. And, Mr. Speaker, the corporate tax, which when the member opposite was last here which was 17 per cent, is now 12 per cent.

This government has provided \$1.2 billion of tax relief to all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

New West Partnership Trade Agreement Manitoba Participation

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, thank you for the revisionist history lesson.

Mr. Speaker, what difference does it make if we've moved two steps ahead and our competing provinces have moved four steps ahead? We're still falling behind, and the fact is Manitoba entrepreneurs understand that. And they understand what the Premier doesn't seem to understand. The future matters. The past is gone.

And the fact is Manitoba-made companies like IMRIS, Phillips and Temro are leaving the province because other new opportunities await them. Canola crushing plants are locating to Saskatchewan. Flax processing plants are locating to South Dakota. And the reality is the business climate is better there.

Now, instead of working with other western provinces to attract investment to our province and our region, this province hires more communicators to spin job losses as good news.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Why does he refuse to join the New West Partnership?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I actually appreciate the question from the member opposite.

We work very closely with all the provinces in Canada to the east of us as well as to the west of us as well as to the north of us. We have, for example, relationships with the government of British

Columbia and the province of British Columbia, particularly around energy and climate change matters. We have good relationships with the province of Alberta, particularly around issues of securities and economic development and energy again. We have good relationships with the government of Saskatchewan around transportation harmonization as well as education and economic development. And of course I could comment on provinces to the east of us as well.

He's asked about the New West Partnership. The western premiers get together every year. They include the territories of the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, as well as the new territory of Nunavut.

We all work together for not only western Canada; we work together for the whole country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pallister: Manitobans are getting the opportunity to build stronger relationships with departed family members who are moving to Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC for work and career moves.

Manitoba is competing against other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, whether the NDP understands that or not, and other Canadian jurisdictions work together much better than this Province does to create new trade opportunities and new synergies. It's about creating synergies within governments too, to work together on procurement, to become more efficient, to spend smarter instead of less intelligently.

Despite all of these benefits to Manitobans—more jobs, more trade, lower government costs—the NDP refuses to consider having Manitoba become part of the New West Partnership.

So I ask the Premier again: Will he make a concerted effort to involve Manitoba in the New West Partnership?

*(13:50)

Mr. Selinger: Not only do we have procurement arrangements with the provinces to the west of us, but we also have procurement arrangements to the provinces to the east of us and to the north of us, and those procurement arrangements are on things like pharmaceuticals for Manitobans. We work with all provinces in Canada to further our economic development.

I sit on the energy committee of the Council of Federation with the Premier of Alberta and the

Premier of New Brunswick. I sit on the fiscal arrangements committee with the Premier of Alberta and also the Premier of New Brunswick, as well as the Premier of Newfoundland on the energy committee. We work together on furthering the interests of the whole country.

Manitoba does more trade east and west in this country than any other province. We do more trade east and west than any other province, which is an example of how well our businesses—and how competitive they are in supplying services to the east and west of us, and we also have grown our trade footprint outside of Canada other than the United States by 55 per cent to the emerging economies all around the world.

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

Planning Act Amendments (Brandon) Need for Government Approval

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Yes, we do have procurement arrangements for the other—with the other provinces. Apparently they procure our people, because that's where they're moving to.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Brandon, the surrounding municipalities of Elton and Cornwallis have amended their planning act through the Brandon and area planning. This has been sitting on the desk of the Minister of Local Government for several months now. All it needs is his signature. The minister is delaying several million dollars of private development by not signing the document.

What is the holdup? The City and the municipalities have all agreed. Why can't the minister? This is yet another failure by this NDP government.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): We enjoy a great working relationship with Manitoba municipalities, including Mr. Doug Dobrowolski, who was just recently elected this morning the president of AMM, and we want to pass on our congratulations to him and AMM on a great convention.

And we'll want to continue to work with AMM in any way we can, and we certainly work with a lot of municipalities in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to do so.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, this government pays lip service to restraint. So if that's the issue here, I'm willing to help. If the minister's office cannot afford the cost of the ink for the signature, I'm more than

willing to offer him a pen for the minister to use if he would sign it today.

What is the holdup?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you the difference. In 1999 and earlier—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lemieux: Oh, no, they don't want to hear about that, because there was such a hodgepodge of development. Development took place in areas where—were in environmentally sensitive areas. They just allowed expansion and development to happen everywhere. Any way, shape or form, it didn't matter to them.

It matters to us. We care about the environment. We care about Manitoba. We have provincial land use policies that we strictly administer. Where development deserves to happen, it's going to be environmentally friendly,

Mr. Speaker, for all the right reasons, we approve it. When there's some doubt, we'll do the due diligence, not like they did.

Mr. Helwer: You know, Mr. Speaker, if they cared the—about the environment, maybe they would pay attention to their own environmental licences, as they didn't in Speedway. They didn't know what was there.

But, Mr. Speaker, this minister is willing to force municipalities to amalgamate, but when they work together he puts up roadblocks. The City and two municipalities have spent several years putting together a plan that they all agreed to. They've had several open houses. They speak—spoke to people all around, and, yes, they've got a plan that they think is good and they put it in to the minister for signature, but it sits on the desk for months and months.

Why can't this NDP government allow the plan to go ahead?

Mr. Lemieux: You know, Mr. Speaker, the AMM at their convention, the theme is Challenges of Change, and we agree that change is important and to embrace change, but with change there's many opportunities.

You know, a very famous American, Martin Luther King, said: Any day is the right day to do the right thing. And we're doing the right thing, and it's going to happen.

Glanbia Nutritionals (Angusville) Relocation of Plant

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Any day is the right day to do the right thing. Well, this NDP government has failed my constituents in Riding Mountain.

In March 2012, Glanbia nutrients, a flaxseed processing plant, burned to the ground. Yesterday, we learned that they would not rebuild within the RM of Silver Creek. This decision is a huge loss to the communities in the area. What is even more concerning is Glanbia's decision of where they are planning to rebuild. It will not be in Parkland-Westman. No, not even in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be rebuilt in South Dakota.

Mr. Speaker, reasons given by Glanbia to relocate to South Dakota speaks volumes and should be a red flag to this NDP government's mismanagement of this file. Reasons include favourable highways—if you would reflect on Highway 45—reasonable transportation costs, increases in taxes and gas, as well as the strong support of state officials.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister responsible for Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives: How can you justify your NDP government's mismanagement on this important file and have Manitoba lose 55-plus jobs?

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

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Let me say by—I enjoyed the trip down to the area where we met the member opposite as we met in Angusville the day shortly after the fire took place. And it's truly a situation that, being born and raised in a small community, I can appreciate the situation that's faced there. And it was a fire that, I'm sure, nobody in this room—the company ever thought that would ever happen, and fortunately they had insurance to prepare for future situations.

As of today, I want to ensure the member opposite my staff have constantly been in communication with Glanbia and we have made offers, but, 'objully', the decision by the company that was hired to do a business plan have house—entertained alternative choices, and as today, I guess, the choice has been made.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Rowat: Last week's Throne Speech from yesterday's NDP could only muster one line on Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives. They said, and I quote: Supporting expanded access to global markets with the adoption of new technologies in the farm and food industry. End quote. Well, that's exactly what Glanbia does, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, even when the NDP aim low they fail. Glanbia provided jobs both directly and indirectly within several communities within the region.

Mr. Speaker, is this what the NDP mean by tough decisions, by contradicting their Throne Speech promises of support for new technologies in agriculture? Did they mean that the Manitoba families who work in 'foom'—food and farm industries will now have to consider relocating and look for a new job? What does he have to say to the 55-plus families who are now going to have to make uncertain future decisions?

It's a harsh reality—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Member's time is expired.

Mr. Kostyshyn: Mr. Speaker, as you know and the opposition members know, Manitoba still maintains the lowest hydro rates. That is one of the great things that the company has to export.

And as I spoke to the owner of the—Glanbia numerous times, and I think the member opposite is quite aware of the discussions we had about the location, the present geographic location. It was at—and there was a reason why when they hired a consulting firm. We're talking the best business plan, because what we're doing—the opposition party is stuck in the years of when that plan was developed years ago. But as companies develop new markets and they chose to locate, where they chose to locate was a business decision. It was not a decision that our staff—our government provided tax incentives to make it very financial attractive to move forward with that.

Mrs. Rowat: Local municipalities in Asessippi Parkland Economic Development Corporation all worked tirelessly as a team to keep Glanbia in the region. In a very functional way, Mr. Speaker, I might add, incentives were discussed, developed and offered in tax relief and land options.

Unfortunately, what I have heard from these municipalities is that this minister and his

government remained silent for months. As an example, shortly after the fire in March, I had to ask the minister to visit the community, as no one, not even the Premier (Mr. Selinger), were making an effort to get out to the Glanbia site after the fire.

* (14:00)

If this NDP government is truly committed to increasing business opportunities in rural Manitoba, then they better get their head out of the sand, Mr. Speaker. Fifty-five jobs may not sound like a significant number to this government and this minister; however, I agree with my community leaders who believe this is a critical loss to their communities.

When is this minister actually going to do something and ensure—

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

Mr. Kostyshyn: Let me refresh the member opposite of what's transpired since 1999.

General corporate income taxes have reduced seven times of—since 1999. Manitoba's the first and only province to eliminate small business taxes. The corporate capital tax has been eliminated, saving manufacturers and processors \$25 million annually. The payroll tax exemption has increased in 2008 for \$1 million to \$1.2 million, and a reduction rate threshold is increased from 2 million to 2.5.

So I have a real legit answer for the questions brought forward.

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

Puratone Corporation

Environmental Sustainability Project Extension

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Well, it appears at least one of the 192 communicators finally got the answers to the minister right here.

Mr. Speaker, decisions made by this NDP government have forced pork producers out of business, and industry continues to work hard to recover from those decisions. Manitoba's pork producers are environmental stewards of the land and continue to come up with innovative ways to protect our environment.

One of Manitoba's largest pork producers, Puratone, has applied for the manage—Manure Management Financial Assistance Program, which ultimately reduces the amount of manure and

phosphorus and helps to protect the environment. But Puratone has since filed for creditor protection, and they've been unable to complete the project this year. Money has been already earmarked for this project, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister extend this program, or is he going to fail this business too?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): It's—Mr. Speaker, it's truly unfortunate, the situation that arose with Puratone.

We, as the government, have been working with other hog industries, and where we talk about regulations, we continue to negotiate and discuss what the situations that we have.

But the end of the day, lake man—Lake Winnipeg is the regulations that we need to enforce, and I want to remind the members opposite, they voted for it, did they not?

Mrs. Taillieu: What is *[inaudible]* talking about problems in the industry? He caused the problems in the industry, Mr. Speaker.

Puratone has indicated it can and has—it can or has met all of the conditions for the project extension to be granted, but have now been told that their environmentally sustainable project will not be granted an extension into the next fiscal year.

Maple Leaf is set to acquire Puratone. An important part of the purchase agreement is the environmental sustainability of the Puratone operations. This could be a deal breaker, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister extend the program—will the minister extend this program, or will he just allow this business to fall through and see yet another business die—

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

Mr. Kostyshyn: As you know, our government appreciates the industry, the pork industry, as they are a great economic boost to our province.

And we're not in a position to negotiate at this point in time. We know the environmental aspects of it. We need to have continuous consultation of whether we're going to extend the rules and regulations.

But I want to ensure the members opposite that we are going to continue to consult with the industry

for the betterment of the economy of the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Taillieu: He's not going to have anybody to consult with when he keeps doing this. Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's pork producers are deeply committed to weathering these latest challenges and to coming out stronger on the other side.

This project is not only an important environmental issue, but it will have a positive impact on the rural economy, and that minister fails to see that, Mr. Speaker. This Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) said he supports the environment, and this minister isn't doing that.

Will he stand up and support this business in their efforts to advance environmental sustainable practices in this industry and our province, or is he going to sit and do nothing like he always has done, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Well, it's—I think it's kind of refreshing to hear questions about environmental sustainability from members opposite, and I want to congratulate the questioner for raising that important issue.

We have been ongoing in discussions with Manitoba Pork, for one, making sure that we are lock in step in terms of moving towards a greater sustainability for that important sector, and, in fact, we just met this week again on the environmental stewardship leadership that Manitoba Pork and producers in Manitoba are showing. And, indeed, I think we should all celebrate the leadership of Manitoba Pork.

When it comes to the particular circumstance here, we know with Maple Leaf that financial help has been provided, and we can assure the members and we can assure the sector that we will work very closely with the affected businesses here, because we have to ensure—

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

Tabor Home Project Status

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it was two years ago this month that the Minister of Health promised the construction of a new Tabor Home, and the community worked long and hard to convince this government that the current personal care home facility needed to be replaced.

Since that time, the board of directors, the City of Morden and the community have become increasingly frustrated with the lack of perceptible progress, with the lack of communication from this minister and with a lack of sincerity with respect to where things are really at. The minister made a promise in 2010 and this community proceeded in good faith based on the minister's promise.

My question for the minister: Where are things really at? Why has this project not proceeded? And why have you failed to keep your promise?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege to stand today in the House and inform the member, as I believe he knows from our many conversations and correspondences, which, I will submit, had a much more cordial tone than the question today, and I will let him know that of course the community has been working very hard on the planning.

There was an idea that was brought forward by the adjoining community concerning supportive housing. We've worked through that issue, Mr. Speaker. We know that the community wants to see a net increase of personal care home beds. That's what we've committed to do.

The Capital Planning branch in my department is working with the community. We're going to see further development very, very soon.

And I hasten to add, this would be quite different from freezing all capital projects when—

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

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, something doesn't add up. The original timeline for this project showed that construction should commence in March of 2013, and just now the minister's office is informing the board of directors that construction won't start until 2014. And when I questioned the minister at Estimates and concurrence, she gave assurances that things were proceeding as planned. When I wrote the minister in August and asked whether the lack of progress at that time made the completion date unachievable, her response was that things were proceeding as planned. Now the board finds out that the project is indeed behind schedule.

Madam Minister, is this what you had planned? Fundraising efforts are well under way. Commitments have been made. Pledges have been taken. The City is working to provide the necessary infrastructure, but the project isn't proceeding.

Why has the minister misled the community?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, I do want to take this opportunity to commend the community, who, I would argue, is second to none when it comes to doing fundraising and advocating. They're a fantastic community to work with.

And when the communities came together and asked Manitoba Health to consider a change in the plan, to work with an adjoining community on a project, all of those ideas were considered. Certainly, we know that the community wants to maintain their goal of increasing personal care home bed counts. That's exactly what this is going to do. We have decided we're going to maintain the 80-PCH-bed, 20-supportive-housing plan as originally stated. The community asked us to explore a different option. We did. We're going to go forward.

We're not going to freeze health capital like they did, for heaven's sakes.

*(14:10)

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that Morden is a community with a population growth of almost 19 per cent in five years, and over 23 per cent of the population is 65 and over.

Nowhere is the case for providing personal care home capacity clearer than right here in this community, yet she has failed to get this project going ahead. She has not issued a revised project timeline. She has not met with the board since the announcement of the project, despite repeated requests. And she has not facilitated a planning meeting for one year.

Why has the minister failed, and will she say today without equivocation when will Tabor Home be built?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, this does give me a tremendous opportunity once again to say to all members of this House and, indeed, all Manitobans that we are moving forward on the commitments that matter most to Manitobans. Long-term care is one of them.

In addition to our announcement the other day, Mr. Speaker, about increasing hospital home teams, about increasing home care and increasing home rehab, we're already—we're pushing forward with 174 beds in rural Manitoba, in north Winnipeg, 200 more beds in the city of Winnipeg.

I might remind the member opposite it was with reckless abandon that he stood and voted against our budgets on health care, and belongs to a party that froze all health capital spending, for heaven's sake, Mr. Speaker.

Mars Hill Wildlife Management Area Vehicle Trail Use Consultations

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): We've seen many examples of this government's misdirected priorities, like excessive advertising costs, excessive communications staff, a former MLA appointed to a plum job with a hefty salary and, of course, a list of broken promises which continue to grow day after day.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that the democratic process has once again been missed by this government. The Minister of Conservation has tried to hide behind the curtain of stakeholder meetings when we all know decisions for the Mars Hill Wildlife Management Area in regards to the proposed vehicle trail network had been a top-down approach all along.

November 23rd, 2012, was the deadline for submissions of comment cards on that issue.

I would like to ask the minister today: How many cards, petitions and letters had been sent out and responded to, Mr. Speaker, or has his communications staff shelved this issue?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have to all acknowledge in this House that the growing popularity of ATV use is something that we have to welcome. At the same time, we have to manage it to guard against environmental degradation that is, of course, top of mind for all Manitobans as well as the family and tourist opportunities that ATVs bring.

As a result of that recognition, we thought it was important as an approach by government to deal with those direct stakeholders that use those lands—the ATV users, those that are on the land for other purposes, those that care about the land in a region—and bring them together. And that is why we've created a trail working group, because we know that local empowerment is the ultimate solution to better—

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

Mr. Ewasko: Obviously the minister missed my point on the question.

I know that stakeholders from both sides of this issue have been voicing their concerns to the minister's department with little to no response, Mr. Speaker. Our local papers reported that out of 45 people in attendance of the last stakeholders meeting, only four people raised their hand in support of the proposed trail changes; 92 per cent of the people there were there were against the proposed changes by this minister. This government is arrogant, not communicating, not listening and downloading on Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, this minister and his department are not prepared for surveillance and enforcement in the Mars Sand Hills.

Why again is he asking local residents to do his job?

Mr. Mackintosh: You know, sometimes I think as members we have to recognize that local people have understandings and insights on local issues that should be respected. They should be engaged. And sometimes it's important for people down here on Broadway to step back and let local processes take their place, let people work out their differences.

And that's why the trail working group has been able to bring together some very, very diverse interests, and, indeed, I think there has been some very strongly entrenched and opposing views. And what I understand now is, as a result of the bringing together of people, there has been some common ground discovered, and that is the best outcome.

It's not top-down from this building; it's grassroots-up from the Mars Hill users, and we're moving towards a final map that I think people—

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

Water Management Plan Government Priority

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, under the stewardship, or lack of it, of this government and the previous Conservative and NDP governments, there's been extensive drainage without balanced efforts in water retention. And this has resulted in 30 per cent more water coming off the land in southwestern Manitoba.

The NDP government's irresponsible approach to water management has directly contributed to the extent of the flood in 2011, as we documented in the report of the flood of 2011 which I now table. Even a year and a half after the massive flood of last year,

there's still no responsible water management plan in Manitoba.

Why has the government been so slow to act on such an important file? Not acting during the last 13 years and not acting even in the last—

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

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Yes, I'll get a look at the document in a second, but I do want to say to the member this is actually an important question, water—surface water management, water management generally, which is why, Mr. Speaker, we have invested over a billion dollars in southern Manitoba on flood protection works and all of those communities there and homes and the floodway in Winnipeg, and we've invested a very significant amount in the Assiniboine Valley over the last several years. We've got riparian tax credits. We've worked with Ducks Unlimited on watershed management.

But it is true that a lot of the watersheds have been changed through human activity over the last several decades and that has created the potential for greater water flows during times of high-water periods during our history. And so this is an issue not just in Manitoba; it's an issue across the entire Prairies.

But I would say this: I would say that we've done more on this than just about any other province, especially—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I've been calling for a responsible water management plan for Manitoba for the last 13 years, since the '99 flood in southwestern Manitoba and the recognition that climate change will result in increased wet weather and increased problems for Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, at a visionary conference on February 14th of this year, the Minister of Conservation admitted honestly that any water management plan in the government's first 12 years hadn't worked and a completely new approach was essential.

Why, more than six months later from that talk, is the government just starting to get people to talk about this? Where is the new plan? Will the minister today commit to a date when his new plan will be released?

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I think I was there, but that wasn't the dialogue. But, anyway, it's the Legislature; you can say what you want from the opposition benches, I guess.

I think what's—I think what we all have to admit is that we all have to do better when it comes to water management, and that's why the studies are under way making sure that independent views, informed expert views are coming to the table and letting Manitobans look at options that may be more effective going forward, because we just can't afford these kind of flooding—this kind of flooding. We know that climate change and the impact on drought can be very severe, and we know that phosphorus is rushing to our great lake.

So for every reason, we always have to look to see—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, selective memory, which we've heard a little bit about lately.

As the minister has dilly-daddled and twiddled his thumbs, a very large amount of drainage has continued. The good of the ALUS program has dissipated as recent drainage in this area has more than made up for several slower years with ALUS.

Robert Sandford, EPCOR chair of the Canadian Partnership Initiative in the support for the United Nations Water for Life Decade, was in Winnipeg not long ago. He presented the mounting evidence that southern Manitoba is approaching or perhaps even has passed an invisible threshold into a new hydro-climatic state and that we have a water crisis which this government is still not recognizing.

When this is such an urgent crisis, why did the minister not mention a firm date for when he will present the important plan which is so badly needed?

* (14:20)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I think I know what's behind the minister's question. A couple weeks ago, he sent me a report that he had put together, a partisan report following the flood, and I sent him a nice letter back and I said, thanks for your remarks, because we actually will consider what he said.

But we're not going to consider just what he said. We think it's important to hear from the experts on the independent reviews. It's important to hear from, for example, the 200 representatives that came to the Surface Water Management Strategy summit last week. It's very important that we listen to the conservation districts.

And I want to make this announcement to the House: It's very important that we recognize the role of conservation districts. Right now the number of water retention projects completed or near completion in Manitoba by conservation districts is 105.

That's part of the answer for the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Parent-Friendly Report Card Initiative Project Status

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Parents are an integral part of their children's school and learning experience. We know that children do better in school when their parents are full partners in their education.

Will the Minister of Education please inform the House of the progress made on our government's new parent-friendly report card initiative?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Well, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the education partners that we work with here in the province of Manitoba, because they helped us with the new report card.

And for the very first time in the history of this province, we have a plain-language, provincial-wide report card. And I want to inform members of the House that this is a communication tool between parents, teachers and students, and this report card helps us track the student's progress and it helps us provide resources to those students so that they can do better academically.

We have just released a resource document for the report card. It is in two languages, French and English, and because of our diverse population here in Manitoba because of our successful immigration program, we will be releasing that resource document in 14 languages to provide—

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

Personal Care Home (Neepawa) Maintenance and Demolition Costs

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): East View Lodge, the former personal care home in Neepawa, has been closed for just about four years. Despite many proposals for use of the building, the NDP government dropped the ball and costs continue to rise. Maintenance costs are now close to \$750,000.

Why has this NDP government refused to accommodate other options for the building? Why have they been content to waste three quarters of a million dollars on maintenance of a building that they intended to demolish since day one?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Yes, I'm very pleased to review these answers for the member opposite. We have had numerous conversations on this subject.

Indeed, we know that it was our responsibility to ensure that there was an opportunity for people to buy the asset. It was an asset of the people of Manitoba. That did not transpire.

We've been working with the city, as the member well knows, on a variety of options. We've worked through the regional health authority to ensure that costs were covered in maintaining the building while those discussions were going on and while decisions were being made.

I know that the member wished that there had been a buyer for that building. There was not, and so we're going to proceed forward with the appropriate dispatch of that asset.

Mr. Briese: There were numerous options proposed to this government, and they refused to accept any of them. The NDP government knew for years that the former PCH would be empty. Why didn't they have a plan in place to deal with that situation?

We're now told the demolition costs will be in excess of \$1 million. Maintenance costs have increased by—to three hundred—or three quarters of a million dollars. Demolition costs have increased by a quarter of a million.

Why has this NDP government wasted four years and at least a million dollars on a building that they had no intention of salvaging at the expense of Manitoba taxpayers?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, I'll reiterate for the member that when discussions first came to the fore about this building that it did need to be placed on the market

for a potential buyer. That buyer did not come, and so the department and the regional health authority and the Town have had many conversations. The Town has been pleased with the development of those conversations and the communication back and forth.

Certainly, we all hoped that there would be a buyer and a project that would be appropriate for that. We know that the town is very, very interested in having more supportive housing in its environment to accompany the brand new PCH that we constructed, Mr. Speaker. That did not come to pass, but we're going to continue to work with the town on the most appropriate—

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

I'll allow one more question if the honourable member has one.

Mr. Briese: Options were offered. The community looked at possibilities of getting around paying two property tax transfers, because this government has seen fit to double the cost of property tax transfers. They tried to bypass that step; the government wouldn't agree.

In the meantime, we had a buyer very early in this process and then the government pulled the building out of the market, said we were going to put it out for tenders. They put it out for tenders, got no offers. So that developer fell off the table.

So I will ask again why we've wasted four years and a million dollars on a building they intended to demolish from day one.

Ms. Oswald: That was not the case, Mr. Speaker. We've had this conversation a 'kajillion' times.

I would say again to the member that if I had stood in my place and handed the asset over for \$1, which was the offer, we would have heard a hue and cry from members opposite about the fact that we were giving away a government asset for nothing.

When we did indeed put it on the market, we worked with the town. We're covering the costs of the demolition, covering the costs of the mortgage. The member knows that.

What we are going to do, Mr. Speaker, is continue to work with the town in providing more long-term care, like we did with the brand new PCH that his members promised and never delivered on.

And we're also going to continue to build more supportive housing.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Judy Dunn

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, Judy Dunn is been a fierce mental health advocate and has chosen to help raise awareness and educate people about depression, as well as to help reduce the stigma that surrounds both depression and suicide. Judy is currently an outreach manager for the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba in the Eastman region.

In December of 2006, her son, Andrew, had been struggling with depression for a number of years, lost his battle and died by suicide at the age of 23. After her tragic loss, Judy co-founded the Andrew Dunn organization and established an annual walk-run event in Oakbank. Judy, through AndrewDunn.org, has accomplished many goals and has raised \$200,000 since 2007. The amount of outreach programs and events that Judy has been able to help partner, which is staggering.

These include: the Health Sciences Centre Foundation's Putting a Face to Suicide; the mood disorders national conference; workshops for the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference; Springfield Connections, a mental health and wellness group in Oakbank; safeTALK, which stands for suicide alertness training; ASIST, or Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training; Mental Health First Aid; mental health first aid for adults who interact with youth; the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training; the Hearing Voices; your journey recovery; and Aboriginal cultural awareness workshops; the CODI, or Co-occurring Disorders Initiative training; and the continuing education series for paraprofessionals in the field of mental health.

Judy has attended three national suicide prevention conferences, currently sits on three suicide awareness and prevention committees, and she is working—currently working with Sunrise School Division to organize very positive and motivational school presentations for the whole region.

It is my pleasure to honour Judy Dunn and her courageous and noble work here today, and later on,

on December 5th, when she will receive the Queen's jubilee medal. She has truly made something good from a real-life tragedy so that no other parent should ever know the pain of losing a child unnecessarily to suicide. I welcome Judy Dunn to this Legislature today.

Jack Watts

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend an extraordinary individual, Jack Watts, for his recent nomination for a Heroes of Mental Health award, as well as for his numerous other volunteer contributions to the community.

*(14:30)

Jack, a retired accountant, was among several individuals nominated for a volunteer award. He has assisted people experiencing mental health issues with their income tax documents for the past several years, all at no cost. This service is invaluable to those undergoing the stress of income taxes while already dealing with the stress of mental illness.

Mr. Speaker, approximately one in five Canadians experience a mental health issue or illness in their lifetime. This can include everything from depression to eating disorders to schizophrenia. Coping with mental illness is a struggle that requires support from family, friends and colleagues. That is why the Canadian Mental Health Association holds the awards ceremony—to acknowledge people like Jack who provide this kind of crucial support to the community.

Jack has been described by friends and colleagues as sensitive, kind, considerate and generous. At the age of 84, Jack does not only contribute his time to people coping with mental health issues. He donates generously to many causes, and he has volunteered in different capacities with a variety of organizations including the St. James-Assiniboia historical museum association, St. James-Assiniboia Pioneer Association, the Manitoba Deaf Centre, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba and the Manitoba Society of Artists.

I hope that all honourable members will join me in recognizing Jack for his contributions to the field of mental health and to the community as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Diabetes Awareness Month

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the Assembly to highlight a

matter of paramount importance in Canada and Manitoba: diabetes awareness. November is recognized in Canada as being Diabetes Awareness Month, with November 14th observed internationally as World Diabetes Day.

Across our country, diabetes takes a great toll. More than 9 million Canadians live with diabetes or prediabetes, leaving almost one in every four Canadians battling this disease. Factor in an aging population and, by 2020, almost one in every three Canadians will be directly affected.

According to a 2012 report by the Canadian Diabetes Association, 103,000 Manitoban residents live with diabetes. If nothing is done to effectively address this epidemic, by 2032, 190,000 Manitobans are projected to be diagnosed with the disease. It is clear that, in Manitoba, more work needs to be done to address this problem. The toll that diabetes inflicts is dramatic, placing great stress on Manitoba families and on our health-care system—two foundations that make Manitoba a great place to live.

Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association continues to lead the fight against this disease by supplying preventative and post-diagnosis assistance, running programs such as the summer camps for children affected with type 1 diabetes, and through fundraising efforts like the third annual Winnipeg Run for Diabetes, held this past September.

In recognition of the pervasiveness of the disease and of the great work being done, I ask all members of this Chamber to join me in reaffirming November as National Diabetes Awareness Month and by getting involved with fundraising efforts in your community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Clara Hughes Recreation Park

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, amid objections six years ago, the City of Winnipeg followed through with its plan to demolish the Kelvin Community Centre. This left a noticeable void in the community, particularly amongst young residents who benefited through involvement at this recreational facility in more ways than can be said here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform this House of great news: the redevelopment plans of the former site of the—of the site of the former Kelvin Community Centre have begun, and the redevelopment has been renamed the Clara Hughes

Recreation Park, after Elmwood's own Olympian, the only person ever to be awarded multiple medals in both the Summer and the Winter Olympics. Her accomplishments are only matched by her commitment to her humanitarian causes, which include Right To Play and her mental health initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the redevelopment and the renaming of the site would not have been possible without the perseverance of the area residents. Last year, the community claim—came together in protest when the City attempted to sell the former community centre's land to private developers. Unrelentingly, they asserted that the recreational opportunities are essential to a healthy community, and this eventually resulted in the City changing its course of action.

The long list of volunteers who have worked for six years on this issue, since September, 2006, include John King, Linda King, Regan Wolfrom, Ed Innes, Moira Honey, Valerie Denesiuk, Carlos Sosa and Clara Hughes, and more recently Councillor Thomas Steen and former Elmwood MLA Bill Blaikie.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to ensuring the new Clara Hughes Recreation Park is the beginning of the restoration of the site. We'll—we hope we're well on our way to having a true community centre. Now we'll have a new entry plaza, a skateboard amenity, an accessible playground, a basketball and hockey skills area, a pleasure rink and toboggan slide, site furnishings and landscaping.

Mr. Speaker, I'm indeed looking forward to the completion of this project so that we can move on to phase 2 of the park's development. My hope is that this is just the beginning.

Thank you.

Southern First Nations Network of Care

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on a critical child welfare issue in Manitoba, the recent provincial takeover of the governance functions of the Southern First Nations Network of Care agency, also known as the Southern First Nation authority office.

November 23rd, 2012, the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Howard) announced the appointment of her deputy minister, Jeff Parr, as an administrator to replace the board of directors of the southern

authority. The southern authority was established following the proclamation of the CFS authorities act in 2003. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs sat at this common table during that time period. The establishment of the act was in conjunction with the Aboriginal just inquiry child welfare initiative as per the recommendations of the AJI 1999. Hence, First Nations secured province-wide statutory responsibility for First Nations children. On April 27, 2000, an MOU was signed between the AMC and the Province toward this change. The chiefs at that time worked in good faith with the Province in overseeing and guiding this province-wide systemic change. They were adamant that the Province respect the First Nations inherent right to governance in all these proceedings under the AJICWI.

The chiefs feel seriously excluded from this process despite several efforts to address with the minister obvious deficits within the southern authority operations. AMC carried out this function as part of the leadership council. The minister and the NDP government have refused to listen to the chiefs by unilaterally appointing themselves to the southern authority board. This is disrespectful to the chiefs and to the AJICWI.

I understand that the chiefs of AMC have completely lost faith in the capability of the current CEO of the southern authority, Ms. Elsie Flette. The minister's actions have resulted in high suspicion by the chiefs to a possible collusion between the CEO and the Department of Family Services. It is of critical importance that the Province engage in meaningful collaboration with the AMC and southern chiefs to secure a cohesive plan in rectifying the operational and governance deficits within the southern authority.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS THRONE SPEECH (Seventh Day of Debate)

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

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at the Second Session of the

40th Legislature of Manitoba, and the proposed motion of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) in amendment thereto, that's standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, who has 13 minutes remaining.

Is leave permitted? The minister's finished? Okay. Thank you.

Then we also have it standing in the name of the honourable member for Arthur Virden, who has 28 minutes remaining, and was standing in his name as previously agreed.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I want to close off where I was in my opening remarks, I guess, in my—a few days ago in regards to the reply to the Throne Speech, and I was just saying how I hoped that the fine work that the interns do and the pages do for us in our chambers and here in the House are an experience that will be valuable to them in their future careers.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I want to thank you and the diligence of the House, all members in the Legislature yesterday for allowing me to be—or the day before yesterday—for allowing me to be able to carry my speech till today. I guess it was yesterday.

This is a opportunity that I had, an opportunity to meet with Fred Neil and meet with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), who were very diligent in their meeting that they had with Mr. Neil, and I look forward to being able to work with them to be able to come to a solution along with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), who, I know, is very familiar with this particular flood claim as well, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:40)

It was pointed out that Mr. Neil is in a very precarious financial position. He doesn't mind us saying that publicly. He was quoted in the papers as saying that today, and he is also—the \$460,000 that I talked about that he is short is what would bring him back to par, Mr. Speaker, for the dead stock over and above what the veterinarians have indicated would be his normal death losses on his operation.

That's about \$197,000 that it's cost to bring that many animals in from Ontario because they're not available in those quantities here in Manitoba, in the dairy industry, with the volumes that are available for that quality of cattle that he had, as well, dairy cattle.

And then he has also—to bring him back to par, Mr. Speaker, if you will, he's in a very cash-strapped situation, and so, therefore, he has had to sell off nine units of quota, a sum roughly over \$265,000, that of which he will not be able to get back through the dairy producers organization without buying quota back at the market price.

There are some areas where the dairy producers can and will help him in regards to top up for the milk that he may produce over and above the quota that he's left with, Mr. Speaker, at some point, if he gets to that level. But for the quota that he has sold, he will have to buy that back on the open market and he will, in all likelihood, at this point, not be able to buy that back at the price that he sold it for. So I think that's an extremely big hardship that perhaps is not understood by the public in regards to this particular farmer.

And I want to point out that the dairy producers of Manitoba work very closely with the government and with Mr. Neil in trying to solve this situation for himself. And that I want to point out that he is the only dairy farmer in Manitoba's history of this magnitude, to be of this size of an operation, to be flooded out and forced to evacuate his operation and his family, Mr. Speaker.

So, while there have been some funds through disaster financial assistance forwarded to him for the building of his dikes—which community members came in and helped him with, Mr. Speaker. There was so many people there it was like herds of ants all over the place, trying to put dikes in place, to move bales, to try and save as much as they could on this particular operation. It was a community effort.

I also tabled yesterday a letter from the RM of Cameron that came in this week as well, Mr. Speaker, to clarify the process that they went through in order to make sure that, you know, they didn't leave Mr. Neil much of an alternative; he had to either evacuate or they were going to do it for him, and it was certainly for the best for his cattle and his herd. It was the humane thing to do. If he'd have left them there to die, he could've collected business loss insurance but that would not have been a humane thing to do.

And so I'm urging the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, the Treasury Board minister—personnel, I should say, as well as the Minister of Finance, to work with Mr. Neil, to work quickly if they can, before the end of November even, which would be this week, I guess, but certainly before the end of the

session because this cannot go on much longer. This gentleman and his family—he's 69 years old. He has a granddaughter that would like to take over the operation. It's impossible at the present way that this disaster has left him with, Mr. Speaker, and so—but I did want to say thank you to the—all the members of the House on both sides for allowing me to have that meeting and be in attendance yesterday instead of finishing my throne speech off as I had started on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other areas of concern that kind of arise from the Throne Speech and that's why we have put forward—our leader—as the member from Fort Whyte has put forward, the motion to amend the Throne Speech.

And, Mr. Speaker, I guess I could say I've got a few notes here, in regards to some of the differences between the NDP priorities and our own priorities. I mean, the NDP's priorities are to have the biggest debt in the history of the Province of Manitoba. That's a burden on all of the children of the future of this province and it's being done at a time when we are already the child poverty capital of Canada. So maybe they could look at the fact that there's a correlation between their spending and the child poverty capital of Canada being Manitoba.

And I think that, you know, obviously this is—they did introduce the biggest deficit or the biggest budget deficit last year. They had the biggest budget deficit that we've had in over 25 years, back into the Howard Pawley days. It was the highest tax increase in 25 years, Mr. Speaker.

And so that's an issue that their leader, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the member from St. Boniface said he could balance the books by 2014 without raising taxes. And in the September bud-election debate, he said he was on time to do that, but then he went further in the spring and even said that he was still on time to do it. And only after Mr. Flaherty, the federal minister, last week indicated that he couldn't balance his by 2014 like he said, Mr. Speaker, that this government all of a sudden came back and said, well, neither can we. Yet, a short time before that they were still balancing the books. It's one thing to be consistent and say that you're not going to do it and be able to move forward, but that's not where this government was. They misled the people of Manitoba last year. They had to know that when the first thing they did was bring in a \$300-million spending increase, and they know full

well that all of those costs that they've incurred were certainly not from the flood of 2011.

Mr. Speaker, the—I guess I would say that, particularly, the federal government has been providing Manitoba with some of the largest largess, I guess, if you could put it that way, in regards to transfer and equalization payments in this province's history. They did it since they were elected in 1999. The changing in formulas in the early 2000s allowed the NDP government of the day in Manitoba to be the biggest beneficiary of equalization and transfer payments from Ottawa that this province has ever seen through great economic times up 'til '08. Now, grant you, things have changed, but this is the government that indicated that they could balance the books by 2014 even some years ago, and they knew the economic condition at that time. And so, it's a bit—it's a tremendous concern to taxpayers and to people that I see in my daily life not just in my own constituency of Arthur-Virden, where people are very strongly fiscally sound for their efforts in expanding businesses there that are going on and I'll get to that in a moment, but also in the fact that it was done at a time when you got record income coming in at a time of the lowest interest rates in Canadian history—or nearly Canadian—the reasonable past, certainly, over the last 60, 70 years. So this government had the benefit of low interest rates, the biggest treasury transfers from Ottawa coming in, and they still couldn't balance the books.

So this is a big concern in regards to how you can continue to deliver social programming in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I guess that's probably why the government is a bit embarrassed that they're left being the child poverty capital of Canada, that they still have high crime rates in the province and that they aren't able to deliver many of the programs that, you know, they feel strongly about. We believe strongly that there are ways of managing the money better, and I think that's the fundamental difference between the NDP and ourselves. We recognize that the pie is only so large and we will grow it through economic activity, not overtaxing people as the government has done in many areas. Highest—you just have to look at personal tax rates as some of the highest in Canada on just about every level.

And, while they may go on about the wonderful things that they think they've done, the bottom line is, as pointed out today in question period, we have major medical companies leaving this province

taking hundreds of employees with them to go to the States—and not only medical companies. We've lost Glanbia out of the Rossburn-Angusville area and they're going to South Dakota. I've got companies in Virden in my western side of the province where there is an oil expansion, I guess, is the best word rather than using boom. There's a huge expansion going on in that area of our province right now that's delivering millions of dollars, tens of millions of dollars and, certainly, if you add in the tax base, hundreds of millions of dollars, I dare say, to this province's economy as we stand here and debate the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. But many of those companies—service companies, 20, 15, 35 people employed—are being bought by companies from Saskatchewan and Alberta, and that's going on—has been going on for the past two years. Because not only does that impact the location of head offices, it also means that there's a transfer of tax money out of the province. Those companies are very much amalgamating in other areas to be able to take advantage of a 5 per cent PST, as an example, in Saskatchewan over a 7 per cent here. They're taking advantage over the fact that the Premier in Saskatchewan increased the basic personal exemption in Saskatchewan to just about \$15,000 for an individual, not a couple. To—and we're, you know, even further behind Alberta, which is nearly \$17,000 in basic personal exemption.

*(14:50)

So, Mr. Speaker, our leader naturally announced a sound policy that would help low-income people, single mothers, students, of increasing the basic personal exemption by about \$2,000, from \$8,634 up to over \$10,500, leaving \$200 in each individual worker's pockets in Manitoba, as well as \$400 for those who have a two-income home. Quite significant as to what they can do in their own homes and putting food and clothing on the table, transportation enhancements or, more importantly, educational opportunities and sound educational delivery and, perhaps, even some recreational opportunities for the youth of the province of Manitoba. And that is a clear difference, I guess you could say, in priorities between the New Democratic government and our PC side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, there's another area that I think is a significant difference, and that is in the area of the vote tax. The government tried to bring it in once under former Premier Doer, and we indicated we wouldn't take it. We don't—we didn't think then that the principle should be that the taxpayers of

Manitoba should have to fund the administration of political parties. The government was belittled into not taking it at that time. I would say that Mr. Doer's antenna went up rather well, same or sort of the same thing he did when he refused to use the \$20 million from Autopac that he was going to take in 2000 to fix university routes. He was a—his antenna was very acute that way. I know that that's the difference between he and the present Premier (Mr. Selinger) of the NDP, that his pandering to the unions in the backrooms of his own political party, having seen their president quit over this very issue last spring must be disheartening to him to see that kind of a split in his own organization.

But, Mr. Speaker, we know that all they've done now is redress the vote tax with an independent person, who I think they actually thought we might change our minds and be involved in this kind of a scheme. But we have a clearer principle on this side. We will not take money from—jack taxpayers of Manitoba through general revenue taxation increases because they are already paying the highest tax in Canada to fund our political party's administration. We are going out and asking individuals to provide financial support to our party, and I think part of the reason the NDP are trying to make this change is because we're out-funding them. We have been for a number of years.

They've already changed The Elections Finances Act three times since they came in in 1999 and each time they've done it to try and inhibit the ability to raise funds. Our leader was very clear the other day that we agree with the caps that are presently in place. We agree with the processes that are—individuals should be the ones that are providing donations to fund political parties. But now the government wants to go back and have the general population do it. They want to have the single mothers that are on a fixed income—the seniors on a fixed income, rather—they want to have the students who are paying taxes through the jobs in the summer, they want to take money from them to fund their own administration because they're lazy and tired. And that's the only reason that they shouldn't be able to, you know, get up on their legs and be able to go out and ask individuals to support them in their efforts to fund their party.

And so I think that's—you know, Mr. Neville, God bless him, I think he was put in a precarious position when he took on this role. I think maybe the NDP indicated to him they thought the Conservatives would come on side with this idea of an independent

commissioner. But, Mr. Speaker, they forgot to ask us, and that's so similar to going out to Manitobans. It's so similar to what just happened at the AMM meeting when the minister of rural development stood up and said—or Local Government—stood up and said, you're going to all have to amalgamate. Well, he forgot to go out and ask them. AMM was never notified.

Mr. Speaker, this is a hundred and ninety-nine levels of government that are responsible to legislation put in place by us in this Chamber and they didn't even have the decency to go out ask them if they should or would think of being able to amalgamate. They've—and probably, they thought, because they didn't get feedback from the AMM in previous discussions, that they probably felt that, oh, well, we can just get away this. Or was it maybe—I guess it's a theory that I have, and that is that they didn't really want to deal with all these flood questions at the AMM convention this week so they threw this red herring out there, but now that they've got it out there they can't pull it back. So they're stuck in a position where municipalities that were already working to co-operatively amalgamate are now going to be forced to, and many were working, over years, It was taking a progression. I think through time many of them would have, on their own, come together. I know of some in my own area that have been working for the last two years, and as needs arise in those communities and they needed to get together and co-operate, they were doing a fine job of coming together.

But to go in and drive a stake in the ground and say, you're going to have to do this because we want you to, big government's saying you got to do this, you know, it's sort of like when they amalgamated school divisions—said it would save \$10 million and it cost them \$10 million. And the health—you know, they've said that the health amalgamation would save \$10 million over three years. Well, the minister's already out there saying it's saved 11 already, and we know that's not true, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, certainly, there's been no savings in changes of management, in those areas at this point, Mr. Speaker. Now, it may come yet, but these are stark differences in the two sides of the House in the way management of affairs in this province are dealt with. And I think that for the member from the Interlake to go out and say that municipalities in this province under a thousand are dysfunctional—certainly not a very friendly way to approach a topic as large as this. I think that's a grave concern to many

of those people that are gathering over in the convention centre today at the AMM's annual meeting. The topic was: dealing with changes and challenges. What—but having one thrown at you the day the convention starts is not the way to have a co-operative development approach to management of these affairs throughout the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk a—for a moment about the lack of infrastructure in southwest Manitoba, and that's also in—it's not just in roads; it's the Coulter Bridge that they took out a year ago, or almost a year ago. It was hauled away last January. The government has come in now and said they were—will put the tenders out now; they said they'd accelerate the building of that bridge.

I want to put it on the record: a year ago when the citizens' group came in from Coulter, Mr. Speaker, and Waskada, they met with the deputy minister. The minister didn't have time to meet with them at that point, but the deputy and I attended the meeting with these folks. It was a very good meeting, but they were indicated that they should get a bridge started this fall and be finished in 2013. Well, they call that accelerated, because the minister said it usually takes five years to build a bridge from the time you start it 'til it's built.

That's true, Mr. Speaker, but for the four years in between you have a bridge to drive over. In this case, it's gone because of a natural disaster, and I urge the minister to allow a detour to be built in that area for this winter, before that bridge is finished. There's a bridge at Hartney that they've already spent 2 and a half million on, and many people there feel that it's the other \$12 million that is going to be spent on it. All they're looking for is some disclosure of what's wrong with that bridge in the first place. And there's great concern, I guess you could say, about having to spend \$12 million to move a bridge over in a river of 200 feet, build a new highway when there's a mile of highway already there—half mile on each side of it, expropriate land off of either side of it, right down a golf course and across a farm machinery dealership.

It just doesn't seem to make sense—common sense, to a lot of the local people. And, if the government could just disclose the engineering reports that allowed them to move forward with where they're at at this point, it would be helpful.

I'm just going to close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that there are many issues of conservation around the province of Manitoba. I had the opportunity as Conservation critic and Water Stewardship, with

many of my colleagues, to travel around Lake Dauphin, around Lake Manitoba, up and down the Assiniboine River this year and throughout my whole southwest region to look at all of the flood damages. Municipalities—albeit, some of them are still only at 60 per cent payment, but they are being dealt with. I would grant that, not as quickly as they'd like, and they're also being forced into spending hundreds of thousands of dollars more than what the local authorities own engineers indicate that they could have fixed culverts and bridges for. And sometimes the local municipality, it's been documented, they could do it for 10 per cent.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I will finish with those comments. I believe that there are many, many circumstances around this province where conservation issues could have been dealt with in a more direct manner. Like Mr. Neil, we're hearing that the individuals are the ones that are not getting their claims dealt with in a timely manner and, particularly, through the hard work of my own office and that of the member from Spruce Woods, some 100 claims have been turned over in regards to the sand points, and those are all being relooked at.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity that you've provided the other day to allow me to transfer my discussions 'til today. And with those remarks, I'm looking forward to *[inaudible]*.

* (15:00)

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour to speak and reply to the Throne Speech.

Let me say, first of all, I'm very proud to represent the 'constitueny', the Swan River riding, and I'm very proud, as the majority or all of you are quite aware, of Rosann Wowchuk, who was the Agriculture minister for a lot of years and Finance minister and put 21 years of her life into this government business, and she still is very active in keeping her heart and soul in the involvement of it.

But let me say, first of all, I'm very proud to have spent 30-plus years of my life on the farm. It is a life of—nobody else could experience unless you personally experience yourself and realize the great benefits of living out in the rural 'landstom.' It is definitely a unique lifestyle. And, as you may realize, things have changed in 35 years—and much has, as indicated in the Throne Speech, is—Growing

Forward, the different programs that are available. And I want to say I was very proud to represent Manitoba as the Ag Minister as we met numerous times talking about the programs as we move forward.

What farming was like 30 years ago is nowhere. Nowadays, it's a real big business; it's no longer so much segregated as a lifestyle and support. I want to ensure the members opposite there are certain things that have had—made challenges for Manitoba farmers, and I'm sure they will have a tendency not to agree with me, or agree with me.

The Canadian Wheat Board, you know, existed for a lot of years, and there was the benefit while the Canadian Wheat Board was there. And yes, it has changed and we've—we talk about challenges that we deal with in a wheat board, and the producers nowadays have to develop their own markets—take challenges of marketing their grain minus the Wheat Board. But that is a decision that was made, and we have to live by that.

The Growing Forward pillars—let's be realistic about it—it's the innovation and research component that we need to be focused on. Unfortunately, there are circumstances that had been dealt with—that previously were *[inaudible]* with the Canadian Wheat Board—are now being somewhat self-sustained by the individual producers. I guess you'd call it the comfort level of financial support.

But, as we move forward in Growing Forward No. 2, as I indicated earlier, innovation and research are the strong components. As the discussion took place around the table from the federal to all the individual provincial jurisdictions, there has been somewhat of a financial restraint in all provincial—including the federal government and it has definitely been a domino effect in all aspects across Canada. As Growing Forward has opened up a number of windows—and I want to ensure our deliberation, our discussion, was to provide opportunities for the producers out there when we talk about research and innovation.

When we talk about potential alternative crops, members opposite are probably quite aware with a new emerging disease that's in Alberta, places in Saskatchewan, called clubroot. And to the general public who are not familiar with the clubroot, if the producer should happen to have that on his property, that is 20 years of no canola crops to be grown on that piece of property. And given the intensity of

farming these days, those are a very valuable crop for producers to generate additional dollars.

Growing Forward is going to provide opportunities in the research component, whether we go into the soybeans, whether we go into the corn, whether we go into a number of other components to provide flexibility for the producers out there to generate alternative cash crops for them.

As you all know, the yellow aster was definitely a—quite a devastating disease component in canola crops this year, and that is another key component as we talk about research. Those are the key elements as we look forward towards research somewhat fighting off the diseases and the elements that our producers are faced with on a daily basis.

The producers these days cannot afford to have a year of a minimum amount of financial risk. But I want to ensure the members opposite and the agricultural producers of the province of Manitoba, we are working very hard. We are working very closely with the producers. But prior to going in to the final decision in going forward we had meetings with stakeholders. And I'm very proud to say that being involved in municipal politics of 20 years of my life you soon learn communication, consultation with producers and the taxpayers, as I did with—as a municipal leader with a true respect of all as we move forward into a new dialogue.

So I want to reaffirm that the discussions we've had as we move forward in the stakeholder consultation, the stakeholder groups indicated: research, innovation are the top priorities. The producers these days do not rely on cheques coming in the mail on a regular basis. They want to work forward. They want to look forward to some alternative crops. They want to look forward for alternative means of generating tax for them. And I want to assure the members that our government is committed. Our government is so committed that we're going to improve insurance components in crop insurance, and we're in consultation and dialogue with them.

As Minister Ritz and all other Ag ministers indicated, insurance should be our first line of defence. When we talk about the crop side of it, we can talk about the beef side of it. As you all know the forage program has always been challenging to be insurable, and as our discussions with fellow Ag ministers at the meetings those were the topics that we discussed about how can we provide forage insurance for the beef producers out there. And I

want to ensure the members opposite and the agriculture societies that we are in consultation with the ag producers and we want to continue to provide insurable forage production for the beef producers and everybody else that's in the business.

But another key component is the cattle insurance component of Growing Forward number—that was discussed on a regular basis. As the members opposite are probably quite familiar with there was a pilot project in Alberta that was used, and it seems like the uptake it seems to be accelerating as we talk about crop insurance. As we talked to the Manitoba Beef Producers—I'm sure that members opposite are quite familiar with the Manitoba Beef Producers and their strong communication links—that they support, the Manitoba Beef Producers supported the insurance component. But I want to reassure that is our government's commitment to move forward on the insurance component, and how we are going to get there is through consultation with the various organizations such as the Manitoba Beef Producers.

The other key component when we talk about Growing Forward is the fact that ag recovery still has the opportunity to remain. As you know, we are in the discussion straight as far as the 'bilateral' agreement. There are the finer details that we need to iron out. Our wishes are to have the bilateral agreements all signed off hopefully by the end of December into middle of January that we'll have a documentation that we can put forward.

But with us saying that—and I—the member opposite just recently spoke to—indicated that the transfer payments of dollars seem to be increasing on a regular basis to the provinces. I think I'd have to indicate to the member opposite, you know, when we talk about partnerships, and I guess we in the partnership did not really anticipate the community pasture was going to fall into the jurisdictions of the province of Manitoba. And living close to the community pasture of 30 years of my life and respecting the cattle cowboys that—out there that work in the community pasture—and the cattle have been used there.

* (15:10)

These are the challenges that we face, and it sometimes, I guess, as the member opposite indicated, we're taking advantage of the transfer dollars. Well, I think—let's be realistic about the fact, the reason why some of the transfer dollars are occurring, because we seem to be taking on

additional responsibility that traditionally was handled by the federal government.

We talk about rural water lines; we talk about PFRA dugouts; we talk about the well program. As you may recall—and the majority of the members opposite are quite familiar with the PFRA of years ago that provided those windows of programs that were available. Unfortunately, over the years that has somewhat dissolved, and now we're faced with additional programs through Growing Forward, but the dollar is not a fair comparison. So now we're struggling to provide programs similar to what was offered years ago by PFRA. And I think the members opposite would totally agree that was probably one of the greatest farm organization support groups that we've had.

Members opposite are probably quite aware that the Province is also going to be challenged with additional financial costs as Canadian Food Inspection Agency is going to fall under the helm of the Province of Manitoba within a year and a half. We have already started to make financial commitments, tradition that we didn't have to, will now have to come out of our budget to sustain inspections in a provincial 'arbattoir' to the tune of about \$1.6 million by 2013. That's—now it's additional dollars that we've never been accounted for.

So I just want to reinforce, as the member opposite had indicated, that we seem to be getting additional transfer dollars. Well, I think there's two sides to every story, and I'm very proud to say that those are some of the realities of what we as a government are facing today. We realize the importance of agriculture in the province of Manitoba, a \$10-billion industry, and I want to ensure you, as an Ag Minister of the Province of Manitoba, we are not giving up on the agriculture of Manitoba and we will not.

In fact, what we need to do—what we need to do—we have the resources. We have the food that's grown here or grown here on a regular basis. What we need to do is have that secondary step. We need to develop the processing. We need to develop other alternative processing incomes for the province of Manitoba to provide additional employment, additional support for our programs for the agriculture industry.

As we indicated earlier, the flood that took place in 2011 truly is hard to anticipate. As the members opposite probably are quite familiar with the flood of

'97, and the grain producers that year were able to put a crop in and harvest it that year. Let me just bring forward some actual facts of the 2011. 'Unprecedented': 3 million acres of land was flooded; 30 per cent of eligible land was flooded. And our government come out front and brought forward millions and millions in dollars to deal with the issue. And we are still working with the producers.

Sometimes I wonder, from the government's perspective and the members opposite, we do have concerns of the people that are affected, and I'm not truly saying that we should not be involved, but I sometimes—we tend to forget the people that were involved in the actual handling of the flood cases.

I took a trip one day with my DM to Portage la Prairie and I spent a couple of hours with the staff that were committed to address the issues on a daily basis. And I want to publicly make an announcement: I thank those individuals, because there were people sitting there at times really concerned of what the situation was like and deal with the daily pressures on the stress level that the producers were handling, but also our staff were so dedicated that they personally had issues trying to deal with those issues. And I want to thank the staff that had to deal with those issues on a daily basis for their hard time that they put up, and there was things that they were so dedicated that they went home thinking about it and they still do think about it. So there are scars from the flood that the people had to put up, not only the people out in the lay of the land but to the people that worked in our office, and I'm very proud to say that I'm—they were there for us.

The fact that the opposition tends to criticize it's never enough—well, I want to assure the members opposite, \$350 million have been allocated to the people that were affected by the flood. And let me give you some examples: \$4.8 million of those impacted to the Hoop and Holler; \$33 million through the Lake Manitoba financial assistant programs; \$130 million through various off ag recovery programs, including \$108 million for excess moisture assistance and \$162 million through the excess moisture assistance—\$162 million, pardon me. And let me make note of this as well—there was a number of programs that were 100 per cent provincially funded, such as the greenfeed assistant program, Lake Manitoba pasture flooding assistant program, the spring blizzard livestock mortality program, the Shoal lakes agriculture flooding assistant program. There was numerous, numerous programs, but somehow we tend to lose the

recognition from the members opposite—that this government's 'basey' done nothing to help the people out and I'm sorry to say, to beg to differ with you on that, that our government was there. And, I think, in reality, if the members opposite would do some comparison, if you happen to live in Minot and found out what kind of compensation those people received, I think we're very blessed that our NDP government stood behind the people that were affected by the Manitoba flood and let it may not happen again.

And I also want to make sure that—just to remind the members opposite that our government was very instrumental when we talked about the various programs that crop insurance brought forward. And one of our prides and joys of the program—was brought the program in in 2000, excess moisture program. The government opposite had been in power for 10 years and never even thought about bringing that program in. We were the first in Canada. The Province of Manitoba was the first in Canada to introduce permanent excess moisture program, and to this day, it's still being used, and the farmers still appreciate that program. So I have to compliment our crop insurance people, Province of Manitoba, for thinking ahead for the producers, and insurance being—when we talk about other great things this province of Manitoba has offered in agriculture, the centre of excellence is still being seriously discussed, and these are the innovation, the research component, that we need to work together in partnership with the universities to the private sector and our government. Our government is committed as we move forward in the new era of farming.

I want to also indicate with the flooding scenario, being involved in conservation districts for the last 18 years, 17 years of my life, and also being very proud to be the chairperson of the Manitoba Conservation Districts Association, I truly value the conservation districts. Because what you've got is partnerships that develop between the 'municipal' government, the provincial government and occasionally the federal government, but what you have is ratepayers, landowners, people from the urban setting are involved in the communication base of conservation districts. It is truly a very unique model of communication.

When we talked about surface water management, Manitoba has really become kind of the Devils Lake scenario as you look at US side. Manitoba is 'basey' the bathtub of water coming in

from the Alberta-Saskatchewan side and from the south we get US water. The unfortunate thing when surface water management is somewhat not being addressed in other jurisdictions, three or four more taps are opened up, being that Manitoba's the tap, but, unfortunately, the drain hasn't changed any. So when we talk about the flood of 2011, some of the situation was escalated by other jurisdictions to a point.

* (15:20)

And I want to kind of paint a picture of what we talk about watersheds. Watersheds do not exist just within the provincial boundaries. In my consultation during the Growing Forward No. 2 meetings, I had the pleasure of sitting with the Ag ministers from Saskatchewan and Alberta, and they all indicated that we truly have to get together, as western premiers and Ag ministers have together, to put forward a plan to address it. We've dealt with floods and we're purposely—we're presently seeing situations where we've got floods happening in one area of the province; the other side of the province we've got droughts.

And, in fact, the day is probably coming where we're going to be wondering why we didn't have retention ponds to enhance some of this water. Because, unfortunately, I think the days of the cycling of water—at this point in time is too excessive—but the day is coming when we'll be looking for water for irrigation purposes, much like the province—in the southeast portion of the province is. But these are things that the Growing Forward 2 is bringing forward, and we need to have that partnership of communication and financial support from the federal government as well.

Mr. Speaker, member opposite brought in a dairy producer—was very unfortunate being in a circumstance that he was. And I guess, as we talk about the changing agriculture sector, historical, I think supply management is going to be a real concern as we move forward in the new era of farming. And as you know, Minister Ritz has indicated—personally told me—he believes in supply management. And I think that's—it's a comforting notion knowing the supply management is going to be around.

I personally think supply management is a food safety component. When we talk about—the consumer, yes, is maybe paying a little bit more, but it's definitely a reinforcement to the producers, whether it's milk, chicken, turkey organizations, that

they have a profit margin, that they don't have to take short cuts in order to make their food safe in the farm gate component.

If we—do we risk the fact, if supply management is dissolved, do we risk elements of food safety in the province of Manitoba. And that is just a small price, I think, for supply management—to the consumers, that we have to reinforce.

I'm very proud to say that our government brought forward Buy Manitoba through Safeway grocery store. It was announced earlier this year. It's truly amazing the uptake we've had of producers—or consumers buying the product at the designated stores, and it's great.

And I think that's what we talked about in my earlier speech; we have such a wide variety of farm agriculture products that are grown in this province of Manitoba, and as your Agriculture Minister, I truly believe we can enhance the products we grow in this province, whether it's the sea buckthorn, whether it's the buckwheats of the world, whether it's the hemp that's grown in this province, there is such a window of opportunity to the producers that are out there on the landscape, but we can somewhat saddle that with continuing processing of the plants of the various commodity groups that we—or commodities we grow in this province of Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me sum up by saying I'm very proud to be the Agriculture Minister for the province of Manitoba and I want to ensure that I will continue to work with the stakeholder groups as I did prior to the GF2 being signed.

And we will continue to work together as a team, as a family, because at the end of the day, agriculture is a \$10.1-billion enterprise. We can build on that; we can go to \$15 billion and exceed that dollar amount. And I'm very proud to say that we will continue to consult, work together with stakeholder groups.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time allowed.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): It is an honour to be here as the MLA for La Verendrye, one of the most diverse ridings in the province. I would like to start by thanking the people of La Verendrye for their confidence and the opportunity to be here today.

I would like to extend my thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, for your patience with me when I did not always follow procedure. I would like to thank the

clerks and all officers and staff of the House for the part they play in keeping the House running smoothly. I would also like to welcome the pages. It's great to see youth taking an interest in politics. I congratulate them for all their hard work. I would like to thank my colleagues for their advice over the last year. It's a privilege to work with a caucus like this one. This caucus is full of energy and ready to work.

I would like to welcome our new leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister). I look forward to working with him over the next number of years. His work ethic and knowledge will provide us with the leadership we need to be a strong opposition and good critics.

I would also like to thank the members of—across the House. They have taught me a lot over the last year.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my wife and our family: our four sons, daughter-in-law and new grandson as of last week, Nash Alexander, who I'm very proud of—first one. It's not an easy task being married to a politician, with the commitments to the riding and all the public events one must attend. I thank them for their understanding and support.

Mr. Speaker, my first year as an MLA has been very interesting and exciting, but at times very scary. In the past year, parts of La Verendrye suffered huge damage from three different wildfires and a snow and ice storm. Despite all the damage and hardship, it was inspiring to see how people came out to help other people. I would once again like to thank the hundreds of volunteers that came out. It's not hard to see why Manitoba is No. 1 when it comes to volunteering and donating.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that La Verendrye is a very diverse constituency: agriculture, small business, tourism, logging, and parts of it also being the bedroom community to Winnipeg. To me, La Verendrye is a crown jewel. In the last year, as I visited communities in the riding, the one thing I heard most was the lack of services. That puts us in a very difficult position. We cannot attract business because we lack services; we lack services because there's not enough population base or business base to get services.

Mr. Speaker, I've been given the role of critic for Children and Youth Opportunities and Healthy Child Manitoba. This is a role I look forward to. I know

how important it is to provide the children and youth of today with the tools they need to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Today I speak in response to the Speech from the Throne. After listening to it, I cannot support it and will be voting against it. I will, however, be supporting the amendment moved by the member from Fort Whyte, which I would encourage the members from across to support as well.

As a new MLA, I'm shocked by the fact that this NDP government has no problem breaking as many promises as they have since the election of 2011. The candidates running had no problem promising no tax increases, but not longer—long after brought in record tax and fee increases. Mr. Speaker, an old uncle of mine once told me, if you can't keep your word, don't give it. Maybe some of the members from across the floor could use this advice.

* (15:30)

I hear a lot from across the floor about the 1990s, but what worries me is what the present NDP government has done in the 2000s. They don't have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem. They can't manage a budget. Over the past 12 years, they have spent more than budgeted 11 times.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has increased the provincial debt to record levels—more than \$26 billion. Divide that by 1.2 million people in Manitoba and see what you get for a number, and see if you like that number. Now the NDP are breaking another election promise, to balance the budget by 2014. How much more will that add to the debt?

All of these things are happening despite record tax increases, record transfer payments from the federal government, record low interest rates. This just goes to show that this NDP government cannot manage Manitoba's money.

The cost of servicing Manitoba's debt is reaching \$1 billion per year. Should interest rates go up by a couple per cent, how will Manitobans be able to afford this?

This government keeps talking about how good they are doing with health care. The Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) stated since 1999 they've had a net increase of 500 doctors but yet almost 20 rural emergency rooms have been partially or fully closed by this government. The reason given is shortage of doctors. Where are all these new doctors the minister brags about?

On October 17th, the emergency room in Vita was closed. It was supposed to reopen on November the 12th. While it was announced as a temporary closure, there's no end in sight. The residents of southeastern Manitoba are afraid that the emergency room is closed for good. Despite all the announcements by the Minister of Health as to how well the health-care system is doing, and all the new programs they are introducing to increase the number of doctors, Manitoba has the lowest doctor retention rate in Canada. I would ask the minister why.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

The emergency room at the Vita health centre has around 1,700 visits a year. These 1,700 visits would have to go to Steinbach, where the emergency room there is already overworked. The Vita ER covers a large part—part of southeastern Manitoba: to the east of Vita, all the way to Moose Lake and Buffalo Point, more than a 60-minute drive; and to the west it covers in the area about a 30-minute drive. Several constituents have said to me, if not for the emergency room at the Vita health centre to stabilize their loved ones before going on to other hospitals, they felt their loved ones would not be here today. The Minister of Health has told us they are looking for doctors for the Vita emergency room. The southeast will not quit making noise until they are guaranteed that the ER in Vita will stay open.

I look what happened in Whitemouth: ER closed, hospital closed, X-ray closed. Now they are having a hard time finding doctors for the clinic. I wonder why.

I listened to the minister talk about keeping the elderly in their own homes longer. Keeping them in their own homes is healthier and in the long run, saves the government money. In the last year I've had people that live east of Vita ask what it is like to get housing in Vita. They would like to move to Vita to be closer to a hospital. They feel that Vita would be a good fit because housing in Vita is reasonable. They could not afford to purchase property near Steinbach, and they don't want to move to Winnipeg.

The minister talks about working to make sure seniors have options about where to live that are most appropriate for them and their families. They must do something to solve the doctor problem in Vita and other rural hospitals. She needs to find doctors that may want to stay there, not just bring doctors that have no intention of staying but are just there long enough to write their Canadian exams and then are gone somewhere else. Are these some of the

reasons why Manitoba has the lowest doctor retention rate in Canada?

This government talks about being a friend of the low-income family and small business. But the tax and fee increases this NDP government imposed on them is not being a friend—PST on home insurance, when a number of families cannot afford insurance to begin with, let alone paying an extra 7 per cent on top. Two and a half cents per litre on gas that was to go on the highways network, but they have cut the highways budget, not increased it, just another broken promise from this NDP government.

As the critic for youth—for Children and Youth Opportunities and Healthy Child Manitoba, there was nothing in the Speech from the Throne in regards to food bank use in Manitoba. Food bank use in Manitoba has grown to levels never before seen. Chilling statistics have recently been released: 63,000 Manitobans use food banks, which is a higher net per capita than any other jurisdiction in Canada. You'd think with Manitoba's economy doing as well as the government claims it is, this would not be the case. The sad part is almost 50 per cent of those who use food banks are children. Food bank use in Manitoba grew by a huge 14 per cent, compared to the national average of 2.4 per cent. How can we expect our children and youth to prosper when almost 32,000 children are relying on food banks to get their basic food?

Manitoba children and youth are struggling. Under this NDP government, whether it's the education system, the health-care system or, most tragically, the child and family services system, this government has failed to make Manitoba's children and youth a priority. Once again, Manitoba is the child poverty capital of Canada. Manitoba has the worst poverty rate in the country, almost 3 per cent above the Canadian rate and 1 and a half per cent above the next worst province. We see race-of-rates of youth suicide that are tragically high. We see continued youth involvement in gangs often paired with addiction to alcohol, illegal drugs and prescription narcotics. Manitoba's high school graduation rate is one of the worst in the country. These are all very sad statistics.

When I see how our youth compare to other jurisdictions, I have to question whether or not our programs are working. Last year the NDP created a new minister position, that being Children and Youth Opportunities and Healthy Child Manitoba. It seems that this government—this department was created to

give out grants, to fund community programs and have photo ops. This government seems to think that if you have a problem, throw money at it and maybe it'll go away. They have no concrete solutions. The children and youth of today need solutions, not excuses. In all the reports to date, the NDP is failing our youth in the education system, in the health-care system and child and family services. Manitoba has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Canada. The Province has invested \$13.3 million in the FS-FASD strategy since 2007. However, in a report released in May on prenatal care in Manitoba, we fall below the national average. Some of the most alarming issues are 13.6 per cent of Manitoba mothers reporting drinking alcohol while pregnant, while the national average being 10.5 per cent. Manitoba's infant mortality rate is higher than the Canadian average. The list goes on and on. Can this province afford to lose a generation of youth?

One of this NDP's government's comebacks when speaking about us is, so you want us to spend more money? What I would like to see this NDP government do is spend the money wisely. Anybody knows, it's not about how much money you spend; it's about how you spend it.

A member mentioned yesterday the new IKEA store—I'm glad he did—built on time and on budget. It seems whenever this government gets something built, it is always late and over budget, and over budget by a lot. This government wants to get Crown corporations doing some of its work, muddy the waters to hide the mismanagement and raid the company's bank accounts. This NDP government is trying to spin their mismanagement of Manitoba's finances and play a shell game with Manitobans. Since when does an insurance company, MPI, have the expertise to build roads? MPI's mandate should be to provide Manitobans with the most reasonable insurance possible. If MPI wants to create safer roads, they should convince the government to keep Manitoba's roads snow plowed and free of ice.

*(15:40)

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this NDP government has a long record of mismanagement. They are tired and out of ideas; they close emergency rooms after they commit to ending hallway medicine; they raid the accounts of Crown corporations to fit their agenda; they blame the flood when only they have themselves to blame; they create new ministerial portfolios to help children, and then they do exact opposite; they pledge to balance the budget and not

raise taxes, and turn around to say they can't balance the books and will be raising the taxes.

The more I hear what this government has to say, the more convinced I am that this government is tired and out of ideas. They need to quit blaming the '90s; they need to quit blaming the federal government; they need to quit blaming the flood. They need to stop putting themselves first and start putting Manitobans first.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): It's a pleasure to rise and speak in this Chamber this afternoon, and I want to, first of all, congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his return to this Chamber as the new leader of his party and also the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister). I recall serving with him and our fellow Manitobans some years ago when he was the member for Portage la Prairie, and I know he'll do a commendable job in his role as not only the MLA for Fort Whyte, but, indeed, as the Leader of the Opposition.

I also want to congratulate the young people that have been selected to serve as pages in this House. I believe that this is a—also a tremendous experience in your future endeavours and I congratulate this young man from Churchill High School and the other young people that have joined us in this Chamber to serve the members in this Chamber. And some members, as you probably discovered by now, are a little more needy than others. I want to just—I wish you well in your career this coming year.

As I was saying, having served with the member for Fort Whyte, a lot has changed since he was last here. For our part, I am pleased to note some of the important developments that have occurred in northern Manitoba. One of those things is something that's very close to my heart and close to your heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the protection of the east side of Lake Winnipeg, something that we take very importantly, and the development of an east-side all-weather road which will replace a system that's required, definitely, in that region of the province. Because I need not tell this Chamber of the high cost of living and the tremendous need that we need for all-weather transportation in that region of the province, and it'll serve to replace the winter road systems that are currently operational right now in that part of Canada.

And the all-weather road network that this government has embarked upon, singularly, without

the help of another level of government is, indeed, the first in an extraordinary development in Canada. The Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage project is moving forward on its nomination for a United Nations World Heritage Site designation, and we have a lot of hope that that will come to be as well.

Three bridges are being put on the provincial road—Provincial Road 304. They are part of the work to reach Bloodvein First Nation, Blood River First Nation as they call it, in two years, and the Berens River community soon afterwards. Additional new bridges at the Wasagamack, Red Sucker Lake and God's River, or Manto Sipi as we know it, are extending the existing winter roads and positioning the roads for the upcoming all-weather roads as well.

One thing I want to talk about briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the creation and the success of the Manito Ahbee Festival, which is a festival for all nations. It's had a wide-reaching impact, not only for our province, but across the country over the last seven years. And our government was a part of the beginning of the Manito Ahbee Festival, because it was our government that called upon artists and young people from this province to bring about their ideas and bring about some of their aspirations in how we can promote the culture of Aboriginal people through the arts and music being the basis of that. So they did that and we created the Manito Ahbee Festival.

And this past November was the seventh anniversary of the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music awards and the Manito Ahbee Festival for all nations. The number of winners this year were artists from the United States and other countries, and it gives you an indication of how it's become an international festival and we're very proud of that.

And Manitoba and Winnipeg have become the centre of what the Aboriginal people tend to call North America's Turtle Island. So we're very happy of the positioning that the Aboriginal people, the indigenous peoples of Manitoba have placed themselves in in being the hub of the industry here in the province of Manitoba.

It's not to say that we don't have challenges facing Aboriginal people in Manitoba and across Canada; those are certainly well known, well documented, written about. The legacies of the Indian Act are something that we still feel to this day, residential schools, the '60s scoop, the forced assimilation and racism. They've scarred generations,

no doubt, including myself in this province and in this country.

Our communities contain some of the poorest living conditions anywhere in this country, and I wish we could take—we could just make a decision and correct everything and make everything better all at once. But, regrettably, that is not how the reality of the world is. Today, a quarter of our communities have unsafe drinking water and, for some, none at all, as in the Island Lake region. But that is something that our government has taken on as a provincial government and in order to also accommodate our fellow citizens. Aboriginal people, First Nations people, were long regarded not to be the responsibility of provincial governments, but simply wards of the federal government. But our government has taken an opposite view of that and we have taken every measure to ensure that the First Nations people are treated as fellow Manitobans.

As a provincial government we are trying to address these challenges and we acknowledge that future development in this province must include the participation of First Nations. So it is for this reason that we've entered into partnerships with First Nations on hydro development projects. The Wuskwatim Hydro project partnership which went into production this past July was the first such partnership in Canada, and similar partnerships on the Keeyask and Conawapa projects are also in development at the current time.

We have partnered with First Nations as well on dialysis treatment facilities at Garden Hill, Norway House, Peguis and Berens River, the only such projects on reserves in Canada. And I think that we break a new ground here in the province of Manitoba in forging ahead and in ensuring that First Nations people have the opportunity to obtain such services. There used to be a time when elders, as an example, were suffering from the need for dialysis treatment and they had to leave their families and—only to die of loneliness in strange centres like Winnipeg and other urban centres in the province of Manitoba. But we're slowly changing that. I wish the change would move a little bit faster, but, at the very least, we've taken a step towards correcting that wrong that has occurred.

Similarly, we have created the University College of the North with 12 regional centres at: Churchill; up in point B, otherwise known as Oxford House; Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Split Lake, as they call it; St. Theresa Point; Grand Rapids;

Pukatawagan; along with other communities in northern Manitoba.

We are addressing the skill shortages in the north through our commitment of 4,000 new apprentices and initiatives such as the Northern Mining Academy. We believe that there is a future, and even though there's work to do—and maybe I'll address that a little bit in a few minutes.

*(15:50)

I've had the opportunity of travelling to many northern communities, many of our remote communities with the First Minister, and he has seen first-hand and understands the realities that our First Nations and other indigenous peoples face and strongly supports our action to deal with the regional disparities that have existed in this province. And we are taking measures to correct those wrongs that have long existed in our province.

Northern Manitoba, rightly, is now receiving the attention it rightly deserves, and it did not receive that attention for a long time in our history. Our government has made major progress in a number of areas, including northern sewer and water projects, treaty land entitlement, hydro mitigation agreements, improvements of the infrastructure and capacity of Northern Affairs communities, along with the major road improvements throughout northern Manitoba. The creation of the First Peoples economic development fund, the Metis Economic Development Fund and the expanded mandate of the Communities Economic Development Fund are creating employment in northern and remote communities, something that wasn't there before, and now we're making breakthroughs in trying to address that gap.

The northern healthy foods initiatives—initiative, rather, has overseen the number of gardens in northern Manitoba rise to over 800, and that is something that we're very proud of because it gives our communities a healthier choice of food, rather than the high prices of not so nutritious meals they can purchase at the local store, and the involvement of over 80 communities is a very encouraging development, indeed, in northern Manitoba.

It is our expectation that there will be many more such partnerships in the years ahead to promote economic development and self-sufficiency in northern Manitoba. The Canadian Wheat Board has long been responsible for almost all of the grain shipped through the Port of Churchill, and we're

working with the Town of Churchill to help them diversify their economy and to promote their historic ties with the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut. And we've established strong relations with the territory of Nunavut, and there was an agreement that was an MOU, signed between our Premier and Premier Aariak of the territory of Nunavut, in order to promote greater co-operation. And I was just in Rankin Inlet last month to—with the northern Manitoba mayors and the mayors of the Kivalliq district of Nunavut to further talk about ways that we can co-operate between our two jurisdictions.

Last month nine provinces, three territorial governments and the national Aboriginal organizations, the five of them, met in Winnipeg at the National Aboriginal Women's Summit III to discuss how we can collectively move forward on addressing the national tragedy of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. We are continuing our work on this important issue, and we will have more to say about that in the coming weeks.

The Province recognizes it has a duty to consult in a meaningful way with Aboriginal communities, and we're committed to working with the leadership and residents on addressing these responsibilities. And these are responsibilities that stem from Supreme Court rulings under section 35 of our constitution of this country.

There are another other—a number of other developments that I would like to discuss very briefly before my time expires. I just want to have a quick look at northern Manitoba. To the southern part of the constituency we have the community of Hollow Water, which is surrounded by the Northern Affairs community of Seymourville, Wanipigow and Manigotagan, which is in the constituency of my colleague from Lac du Bonnet. In Hollow Water we have Chief Larry Barker, who has been very busy in trying to improve the lifestyle and improve the life of the people that he represents in the Hollow Water community. And he's been deeply engaged in the east-side road initiative and the east-side road projects—and the east-side road project, rather, because the east-side road commences at Hollow Water and moves northward.

Chief Roland Hamilton in Bloodvein—the Bloodvein River First Nation has been very active in promoting his community. Irene Rupp, who was a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal at the ceremony that was held at the Manitoba

Legislature on the 2nd of November, I believe it was, is somebody we're very proud of because she has dedicated her life to education, and she is one of the first and few Aboriginal people that has gone on to receive a master's degree in education and currently working on her doctorate. And I'm very proud of the accomplishments of Mrs. Irene Rupp in the work that she has done.

Chief George Kemp, as well, has been—has recognized the need to promote economic development for his community, and he's been very proactive in, again, reintroducing everybody to the role that Berens River once had, as being the centre of that region of Manitoba. It was the hub of the transportation system inland to Little Grand Rapids, to Pauingassi, to Poplar River and southward to Bloodvein. So he has been promoting his community because he has proposed that a regional hospital be established in the community of Berens River, an idea so—not so far-fetched, and possibly we could see that somewhere down the road.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I want to commend the work that Michael Constant, the chief of the OCN, the home reserve of my colleague, the member for The Pas (Mr. Whitehead), and he and the relationship that Mayor Al McLauchlan of the town of The Pas have created in ensuring that they have one stable community. At one time, those two communities were separated by a bridge, and also in difference because of the colour of their skin, and today we see a community that's thriving, brought together by a hockey team, I might say, the OCN Blizzard. And I'm very proud of that reality, and I know the member for The Pas is very proud of the accomplishments of his community and also the town of The Pas and the community of OCN, the First Nation of OCN. And I commend Mayor Al McLauchlan and Chief Michael Constant for the great work that they're doing.

I want to commend similarly the kind of work that Mayor Jim Goymer is doing in the town of Gillam, and his neighbour, mayor—or Chief Walter Spence of the Fox Lake First Nation, and co-operatively they have worked together to ensure that the ongoing life of Gillam and Fox Lake is sustained by establishing a communication link. Both gentlemen travelled with me when we went to Rankin Inlet to talk about the desires of northern Manitoba communities and northern Manitoba. And this is an illustration, Mr. Speaker, of the co-operation that can exist in any community, and this is

one that happens in Gillam with Mayor Goymer and Chief Walter Spence in Fox Lake, Gillam.

I need not tell members, because many members in this House are very well aware of the unfortunate move that occurred back in 1956 of the Sayisi Dene people from their traditional homeland at Duck Bay and moved to the banks, or to the shoreline, of Hudson Bay at Churchill, and when they arrived in Churchill, there was three different locations that they were placed in the town of Churchill. And when they arrived there, because they were not familiar with the land, the traditional livelihood of the Dene people was taken away from them literally by the government who, in their thinking, thought that we will do right for these Indian people by moving them into the town of Churchill.

And what happened to the Sayisi Dene people was a loss of life, a loss of culture and literally one third of them died due to alcohol-related incidents that included house fires and other matters. And this is something that is really regrettable.

And I want to really—I really want to commend people like Ila Bussidor, who is the author of *Night Spirits*, and their current chief, Chief Jim Thorassie, who was just a little boy at that time when this move occurred from their traditional homeland at Duck Lake and to Churchill. Eventually, in 1972, the move back to their current location occurred. First, a one location was attempted and then the current location of Tadoule Lake was finally agreed upon so that the people of the Dene Nation would continue living the way they were most accustomed to, and that was to live off the land and live in the traditional lifestyle. So I want to commend Chief Jim Thorassie, Jimmy Thorassie, for the great work that he has done.

* (16:00)

But, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the federal government and Minister John Duncan for the work that he has done in ensuring that the work that Jim Thorassie and his council are doing is not in vain. And I hope that in our lifetime, within the next year, I hope that there'll be a package for the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake. And I hope that an apology, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, will commence and the compensation package and apology by the federal government will occur for the Sayisi Dene people of Tadoule Lake.

Certainly, our government is very proud. When our Premier (Mr. Selinger) hosted the Council of the

Federation back in 2010 in Churchill, we did our part by returning 13,000 acres of land that was the—that was rightly the land that belonged to the Sayisi Dene people of Tadoule Lake in a very moving ceremony that we had at the original signing location of the adhesion of Treaty No. 5 on DOT Hill in Churchill.

I also want to commend the great work that Chief Alex McDougall of the Island Lake region has done over the several years in promoting health care for the people that he represents, and I commend him not only as the chief of Wasagamack, but, indeed, as the chairperson of the Island Lake Tribal Council. He has been a good guy to work with—a good person to work with, and he's certainly not shy to kick our government in the backside when we require a little bit of a nudge. And he's certainly a chief that is motivated and this is the type of leadership that we work with here in the province of Manitoba.

And I want to commend people like Chief Arlen Dumas as well from Mathias Colomb First Nation in Pukatawagan. We don't always agree on the things that he tells us, but we certainly agree that he wants the best for his people and his generation and the people—the generations to come. He has been, certainly, a great person to deal with.

As well, I want to commend my old friend, a guy that I grew up with in our early years, the mayor of Churchill, Mayor Mike Spence. He's been truly a champion in promoting the town of Churchill, not only the tourism element, but, indeed, the viability and the ongoing life of Churchill, the Port of Churchill. Indeed, he's been a strong champion not only for the town of Churchill, but, indeed, for the province of Manitoba.

That's a quick glimpse, Mr. Speaker, of northern Manitoba as I know it, and I've come to know it over the years of having the honour of serving the people of formerly Rupertsland, now Kewatinook. Kewatinook is probably a more suitable name because Kewatinook in my language means the north. So I'm very happy that we have seen fit to change the name of that.

There's a lot more work to be done; there's no doubt about it. I look forward to working with all of the members in this Chamber to ensure that we have the grit to improve the lives of indigenous peoples in the province of Manitoba. Certainly, those people that I mentioned believe, as I do, in an old Cree saying that the hurt of one is the hurt of all; and the honour of one is the honour of all.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to you.

I want to, first of all, say welcome to you, Mr. Speaker, as you resume your role in the Legislature here as our Speaker. I know all Speakers have their own style, have their own way of dealing with things. We're learning yours, and I can tell you, in the last year I've been duly impressed, I think all members have been with how you handle yourself here in the House—the even hand that you do. You use a strong hand when you need to, but you allow enough rope so that all of us—I wouldn't want to say can do anything more severe, but that we have the ability represent passionately our own constituents and their views.

I want to commend you, Mr. Speaker, and the confidence that you have of this House.

I also want to make note of the table officers, as others have, and the great work that they do. I sometimes question the rules of the House. I sometimes think that they're arcane a little bit, but then I'm always educated by the table officers and our Clerk about why it is that the rules are the way there are. And, typically, there is some good explanation in terms of why it is set up that way, and—but still, sometimes I think they are arcane and need to be changed, but that's okay. Generally, I get a really good explanation and I appreciate the good work they do.

I would note that our Clerk was recently elected or appointed as the chair of the editorial board of—the Canadian Parliamentary Review, and I want to commend her as she continues on, not only in this important role here, but is representing us nationally in that new role as well.

I want to welcome our pages here as others have done. As you learn about the democratic process from a very—a front-line perspective, I hope that you're encouraged and not discouraged by what you see here. I think you will be encouraged generally, and that you'll be—if not motivated to be involved in active political life yourself, you'll certainly take the knowledge that you'll gain here to the other careers that you might take and other portions of your life.

Also, the interns that we have here in the Legislature—and I know there are many good and qualified interns. I had the opportunity to serve as an intern in 1994 and I think the quality of interns has

improved over my tenure anyway, Mr. Speaker—very, very well qualified academically and otherwise. And I certainly want to welcome the interns on both sides of the House and the government caucus and serving in our caucus as well.

I want to commend and congratulate the new member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), the Leader of the Official Opposition, on his by-election win since this House last sat and welcome him here as well as recognize the former member for Fort Whyte and the member for—the current Leader of the Official Opposition did this as well—but to recognize Hugh and Jen McFadyen, who have now gone on to a—not a public portion of their life, but to go on to do other things. And we want to commend them and wish him and Jen and the kids well, as they take on other challenges, Mr. Speaker. And I know that Mr. McFadyen is adjusting well to the new role that he has.

In addition, there were other members here in the Legislature who I had the opportunity to work with, who've gone on to do other things: Jon Lyon, as members know, were—is now heading up a health foundation here in Manitoba, and Jon is someone who I had the opportunity to get to know over the last number of years. He—I didn't know his father well, Sterling Lyon, and I got a chance to meet him a few times, but I heard a lot about Sterling Lyon from somebody named J.D. Lees, who was a teacher of mine when I was in high school. And Mr. Lees was the executive assistant to Sterling Lyon, and after hearing many stories about Sterling Lyon over the years, I felt when I got to meet Jon that I had a better understanding, because he really is the personification of his father. And so that was an opportunity, and I wish Jon well as he goes on with the health foundation, along with Greg Burch, Mr. Speaker, who is working with him as well.

I most want to thank the constituents of Steinbach, the constituency of Steinbach and the RM of Hanover—the portion of that RM that I represent. It's a tremendous area to represent in the Legislature of Manitoba. It's a quickly growing area. It's certainly changing. It's very different then when I was a young person growing up in the community as a child. I don't think that any of us could have projected the growth that the city has undertaken, now the third largest city in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

And not just the fact that it's growing in size, but that it's become very, very multicultural. The

community itself is very different than it was. I think the reputation of Steinbach, in many ways, is 10 years behind the reality, Mr. Speaker. It is probably one of the most multicultural communities in the province, certainly outside of the city of Winnipeg.

And I enjoy going to the Filipino events, to the different organize—or communities that are there. I think, looking at the Christmas list that I have, we have two Filipino Christmases to go to in Steinbach: one for the general immigration community and then a few others as well.

I had the opportunity to have a Filipino co-chair on my campaign. I don't think anybody 15 years ago would have expected that in the city of Steinbach, but it's a growing community. Probably about 15 to 16 hundred Filipino families are now in Steinbach and we've enjoyed visiting their homes, my wife and I learning how to karaoke and do other things that are common in the community, Mr. Speaker. Of course, learning about the cultures and the food as well.

* (16:10)

I think some day, and I've said this to some of my Filipino friends in Steinbach, there will be an opportunity someday for a Filipino MLA from Steinbach. That would be something. That would be something. [*interjection*] I think my colleagues hope that it's sooner than later; I'm not sure by their response. I'm hoping it's not too soon, but I—but it's a remarkable about how much the community has changed in Manitoba, and I encourage them to continue to be involved in the community and I know that they are. I look forward to wishing all of them maligayang Pasko, merry Christmas, in the days ahead as I visit some of their events celebrating Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, I—

An Honourable Member: Are you leaving?

Mr. Goertzen: What?

I also want to generally thank the residents of Steinbach, Mr. Speaker. I often remark how fortunate my wife and I are to get the words of support from the community. They often offer their prayers. They say that they're thinking about us. They're very kind to my son in the community. We appreciate that a great deal and there's not a way to sort of replace that kind of support. I know that those who were in the riding before me felt the same way

as they helped to make sure that that was a strong conservative area, whether it was my predecessor, Jim Penner, or before him Albert Driedger who we'll have, in the next few days, an opportunity to say more remarks about, Helmut Pankratz before him or Bob Banman before him. And certainly I still enjoy conversations with Mr. Banman and Mr. Pankratz about the riding and the things that need to happen within it within the future, as well as with Bev Penner, who was the wife of Jim Penner.

I want to thank my local PC executive as always for their support. Ed Penner, who's the long-term president of my association, I think he's been my president for the last 11 years—some of the members on our side are familiar with Ed, and he has been a great source of support, and I appreciate the things that he has done in terms of supporting my wife and I.

I also want to thank, of course, as other members have already in their Throne Speech addresses, thank my wife for the great support that she has given us. All of us who have spouses or partners here in the Legislature rely on them for different things, whether that's to attend events or to offer us support in our domestic lives, and we appreciate that. Kim is a very-eager to go to events and outstanding in terms of coming with me to events, and I appreciate her willingness to do that and to be a part of that. She works for the MP in our area and has for the last 11 years, so she has her own sort of political—her own political world that she exists in, and I appreciate that she is helpful within the one that I exist in.

My son, for members who are interested, has started grade 1 this year and, as often these things are, it was harder on us than it was on him. He adapted seamlessly as I would have expected—very outgoing—but for us, as he entered the full-day school it was somewhat difficult and I expect that he'll continue to shine well. We actually had his student-parent report yesterday, and my wife and I went to hear how he was doing and we got his report card. Members might be interested to know—some have been commenting that I'm a little quieter these days in the House during parts of the House, and I looked at my son's report card yesterday and it said, maybe this is the plain language part of the report card, but it said that Malachi, my son, should spend more time worrying about his own behavioural issues than pointing out the behavioural issues of others. And so, Mr. Speaker, maybe that's the example that I'm trying to set. Maybe he's been watching question

period. I don't know, but that was—I laughed out loud when I read that. The other parts of the report card were very good, but that was interesting.

We, in fact, did, Mr. Speaker, and I will thank you for this, we had—and I'll mention this to all members—we did our Christmas pictures here at the Legislature and we had the opportunity to do some pictures here in this Chamber with our family. We read the rules carefully, and you can't take a—pictures and use them in political campaigns, not that any member would ever do that, but I would encourage all members who have family members to take that opportunity, to take pictures here in the Chamber with your family, if you have the opportunity. It's a unique thing to do. It's something special for them. It takes a bit of time but I think it's worth doing, and I would like to mention that to all members, to take that opportunity.

Also, I want to thank our extended family. You know, with a young child and the schedule that we have, both my wife and I involved in politics, we rely a lot on my mother and my wife's mother to do a lot of babysitting for us, and they'll be doing that again tonight as we attend the banquet for AMM, and we're very, very appreciative of the fact that they do that for us, that they're very, very involved in allowing us to be out at different events that we're expected to be out at.

Both—like every family, there are sometimes health challenges that make it more difficult as years go along, but they're still very interested and active in Malachi's life and we appreciate that and the help that he gives us.

Now, I want to speak a little bit about some of the local issues within my area, Mr. Speaker, before I speak about the amendment itself. And I've been raising the issue of the—through a petition, about the need for personal care homes in the city of Steinbach, and members opposite know very well the growth of the city and the need and the pressure that that puts on the community.

Certainly, I want to say that that growth is a result of the people who live there, the great entrepreneurs, the wonderful individuals who make the community what it is. It's not a result of government; it's not a result of anything else other than the people who are there. And when they want to stay there later on in their lives, it's difficult for them to do that because they simply don't have enough long-term care spaces in the community.

Bill Lepp, who is one of the individuals who's been organizing the petitions for me, is passionate about this. His wife has had to go to—at one point, to live in Vita, a wonderful community in and of itself, Mr. Speaker. And I commend the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) for the work that he's doing in terms of trying to get the ER opened there and emergency cellphone services and broader cellphone services to the area, but for Mr. Lepp, that's not his wife's home. That's not where she grew up, that's not where she lived and it's not where she wanted to live out her final days. And so it was difficult for a long time for her to get into Steinbach to come back home, and so there's a need for additional personal care homes in our community as that city continues to grow.

There's also a need for more work on surgical rooms within the ER. There needs to be a revamping of the surgical suites to ensure that people can get the services that they need. The emergency room is finally being redone, Mr. Speaker, after five years of announcements by the government, there's finally construction happening on that emergency room. There had to be literally hundreds of emails that went in from constituents to the government, to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) directly, to try to get them to get the ER going. But that's going, and the needs continue to grow, though, over that time.

When you talk about roads and intersections within the community, Highway No. 12, which goes right through the city, is a provincial highway that almost—well, wasn't the bypass for the community, but it was close at one time. But because of the growth, it really has become a main thoroughfare right through the city. There's been very little done in terms of intersection control in terms of widening some of the lanes even though it's become one of the busiest highways in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and that shows up in the accidents. And I would ask the Minister of Infrastructure and highway to look at that and the need, because the only time that anything is really happening in terms of highway redevelopment is when private industry is doing it. So if Walmart is coming into the community, and it is coming into the community, they redo the intersection that needed to be done for a long time. So it's private industry doing it, but it's taken an awful long time and there are so many more intersections in the community that need to be redone and the highway needs to be looked at in and of itself.

That's so true also for the RM of Hanover for the areas that I represent, Mr. Speaker. There are many,

many areas where the roads were not built for the kind of traffic and the volume of traffic that exists in the rural municipality of Hanover. And I would certainly ask the government to look at that and in terms of getting their House in order and making sure that investment dollars are going into that area, because they're getting those dollars back. Because of the growth of the area and the region, they certainly are getting that back in spades through the tax dollars that they have.

There are, of course, soft infrastructure needs, recreation needs within the community as it grows. It is, I think, if not the youngest community in Manitoba, it's one of the youngest communities in Manitoba. Certainly, many, many a young people as new families come in, bringing with them many young children that puts a lot of pressure on the recreation needs, of course, on schools as well. While there'd been some work done on schools in the area, I can inform the government that none of the huts that are on the elementary schools or the other schools are coming down. Even though there's been one new school that's been open—it took so long—that those huts are still needed because of the growth that happened between the government acting on the school and it finally being completed. So, there are lots of pressures within the community with growth pressures. I know that those are good pressures to have, but they still exist and they need to be dealt with and people within the community have an expectation that those things are going to be dealt with in time.

Now, we're going to be voting on the amendment in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, much to the joy of colleagues around the House. And, certainly, I'm going to argue in favour of the amendment and hope that members opposite will see the wisdom of voting for the amendment.

*(16:20)

Now I know that I've got a steep hill to climb with many of the members opposite, that it's going to be a difficult argument to make, but I want them, Mr. Speaker, to think a bit about the pledge that they will have made to their own constituents. And I talked a lot about my constituency, and I know the members opposite have talked about their constituency in their addresses to the amendment to the Throne Speech. But I want them to concentrate on their individual constituents, who they would have made promises to, and promises is a word I think that we don't throw around lightly, that we think it's important that when

we talk about a promise made—and some of my colleagues have said in the past that it's a promise kept.

And we would be hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite would realize that the promises that they made a year ago to the people of Manitoba, either collectively as a campaign or individually as campaigners, were not kept, that they simply made promises, hoping that they would get elected on them, and, to that extent, I suppose they were successful. But, at the end of the day, we as legislators are accountable to the people who elected us, and when those members opposite said to their constituents that they would be balancing the budget by 2014, I expected most of those constituents on—represented by members opposite would have believed them, would have taken them at their word and said, absolutely, we expect you to adhere to your promise.

When they said that they weren't going to raise taxes, Mr. Speaker, when they weren't going to bring in any more tax burdens on the people of Manitoba, I expect that the constituents represented by the members opposite would have said, we expect you to keep that promise. And yet we've seen in the last year that promise hasn't been kept. In fact, the taxes have been increased by a higher level than any time before in the last 25 years by this government. They recently announced that they wouldn't be balancing their budget by 2014, and so we know that the promises that were made by the members opposite haven't been kept by the members opposite. And so it's difficult, I think, for them to vote for a throne speech because when you look at their last throne speech it never indicated the taxes would be going up at the highest level in 25 years.

I had the opportunity to review it yesterday. I looked at it closely. I didn't see any mention at all that taxes would be increasing by a level higher than any time in the last 25 years. And then I looked again to see whether or not there was any indication that the government would be breaking its promise, Mr. Speaker, to have the budget balanced by 2014. None of those things appeared in last year's throne speech, and one would expect that those sort of major broken promises would appear in what the government considers to be a vision document. But they didn't—there was no mention of breaking the promise to balance the budget. There was no mention of breaking the promise not to raise taxes, and yet they expect us to vote for this Throne Speech: sort of the

trust us now; we may have fooled you before but now you should believe us.

Well, I don't think that Manitobans do believe them. I think that they don't believe what was in the Throne Speech. I think they could look at a bunch of platitudes and go, well, we've heard them all before. And there's a difference between what the government says and what it actually does. And that is to the detriment of all of us as elected officials because, ultimately, all of us as elected officials want people to rely on what we say. We want them to believe that when we go to their doors, when we go to their coffees, when we go to the different festivities that they invite us to, that when we say something, that they believe us, that they believe what it is that we're telling them.

But, in fact, Mr. Speaker, having broken a number of promises, I named just the biggest two, the government has made a clear signal to Manitobans that they can't believe what is said. So why is it that we would vote for this Throne Speech when all the major broken promises never show up in the Throne Speech anyway?

The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), the member for Fort Whyte, who's listed off a number of failings by the government, ranging in every government department almost because there was a lot to pick from. I know he could have added more in. There was more things that he could have identified as failures by the government, but he simply, you know, for the ability to be expedient, didn't put everything in there, Mr. Speaker.

But, when you look at the areas of health care, and we see record spending but not record results, that there are still people who are waiting on long lists for surgical procedures. There are still people who aren't able to get the kind of procedures to better their life. Whether they're life-saving or just simply to make their life more rewarding, they aren't able to get that. We know that many people leave the province and go to the United States for those procedures because they're frustrated that they can't get it here in this jurisdiction.

We know in the area of Justice that we still have the violent crime capital of Canada, something that none of us are proud of. And certainly members of this side of the House, including the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), have brought forward many suggestions about how it is we could make a safer community, safer city in the city of Winnipeg and a safer province, and those suggestions are

ignored by the members opposite, repeatedly not adhered to.

We see a government that is top-down, Mr. Speaker, a government that wants to impose its will on the electorate. We see now with the forced amalgamation of divisions which the member for the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) referred to as dysfunctional, referred to all of those different—he nods his head. He still believes it that all of those different councillors are dysfunctional. All of them who were duly elected, all of them who go to their council meetings and, I think, do the best job that they can for the electorate that elected them, he believes that they are dysfunctional as individuals and collectively as a council. And the government says that they're going to top-down force the amalgamation to happen, even though the AMM and those municipalities would be hoping that there would be discussions and a collective discussion before any decisions were made. But that's something that this government doesn't believe in. They believe in making decisions from the top down, from forcing things to happen and not allowing a democratic process to take place.

And so how could we support a throne speech and how could we not support this amendment, because this amendment clearly says that the government should be working with different groups at a local level to ensure that local priorities are met and that we don't have a government who is imposing the will on members?

And I would hope that the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) would be taking this message back to his caucus and saying that we have to reapproach this, that we need to be more democratic in our approach. He was quoting Martin Luther King today, Mr. Speaker, in question period, and I don't think that anything that Martin Luther King stood for would support this kind of top-down, heavy-handed approach on individuals. In fact, I think, quite the opposite. If he does some reading about Dr. King, he would know that his approach to things were quite different and that they weren't top-down and that they were collaborative, that they were working with individuals, that it was about ensuring that people had a voice in many different things. I'm sure he wasn't thinking in particular about this case but, generally, he was thinking about ensuring that people had a voice.

So, Mr. Speaker, members opposite will have an opportunity to vote in just a few minutes on the

amendment by the member for Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister). I hope that they'll reflect on the fact that they made promises to their constituents, that they made promises to voters in the last year, that they didn't fulfill those promises and that, ultimately, when they stand up and they vote against this amendment, as I expect that they will, that they are disrespecting not us as members of the official opposition, but they are disrespecting their own constituents, the people that they made these promises to, the people that they said they wouldn't raise taxes on, the people that they said we're going to balance the budget by 2014.

So it's not a vote against our amendment, Mr. Speaker. It's a vote against their own constituents, the people that they have made these solemn promises to. So I hope that each of those members will reflect upon that, will think about that, will know that to side with the people who would've voted for them or may have voted for them or ever considered voting for them, to side with them, that they would side with this amendment to admit, in fact, that they didn't keep their promise.

And there's nothing wrong with admitting that you've made a mistake, Mr. Speaker. I think that people appreciate the fact when you come forward and say that a mistake has been made. And so this would be an opportunity for all of those members on the opposite side to stand up and say, we made a mistake. We want to ensure that we've set the record straight, that people know that we made a mistake and that we'll go forward from here and try to do better as a government.

So I've made my best case over the last 25 minutes, Mr. Speaker. I hope that members opposite will have listened carefully, will consider. If they need a recess so that we can discuss, so they can think about it in terms of changing their potential vote. They may have come in here thinking they're going to vote a certain way, but now they're reconsidering. I'm certain that we could adhere to that.

But I ask them, on behalf of Manitobans, to do the right thing, support this amendment; admit that you made a mistake and that you didn't tell Manitobans the truth.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a great pleasure for me to rise today, this afternoon, to speak on the 10th Throne Speech. Indeed, it's a

great honour for me to be back here. I spoke previously but I once again like to thank the people of Radisson—

* (16:30)

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

The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 45(4), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

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

But this House regrets:

- (a) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, the provincial government continues to spend beyond its means to the detriment of future generations; and
- (b) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, the provincial government has doubled the provincial debt; and
- (c) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, Manitoba remains the child poverty capital of Canada; and
- (d) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, Manitoba food bank usage is at a record high level, including the highest percentage of children using food banks in Canada; and
- (e) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, Manitoba's infrastructure deficit is not being addressed and roads and bridges are in disrepair; and
- (f) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, many recent flood

- victims have still not received adequate compensation for their losses; and
- (g) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, long wait times in emergency rooms and for surgeries continue to put the health of Manitobans at risk; and
- (h) That despite record tax increases and record transfers—increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, many seniors face long wait times for long-term care beds; and
- (i) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, Manitoba students continue to score at or near the bottom of core subjects such as math, reading and science; and
- (j) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, Manitoba universities are still ranked near the bottom compared to their Canadian counterparts; and
- (k) That despite record tax increases and record transfers—increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, there continues to be a critical shortage of affordable housing; and
- (l) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, the provincial government insists on politically interfering with Crown corporations in an attempt to siphon more money from them and from Manitobans; and
- (m) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, Manitoba remains the violent crime capital of Canada and gangs continue to flourish; and
- (n) That despite record tax increases and record transfers—increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, many Aboriginal Manitobans still live in poverty and their communities lack basic services; and
- (o) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, many farm sectors do not receive adequate support when circumstances beyond their control impact food production; and

- (p) That despite record tax increases and record increases in transfers from other jurisdictions, far too many Manitobans are leaving to live in other provinces.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has hereby lost the trust and confidence of this House.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, could you summon the members for a recorded vote?

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

* (16:40)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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

Division

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

Yeas

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.

Nays

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 20, Nays 35.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

Mr. Jha: Mr. Speaker, I ask your leave for the—of the House to continue my speech.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the honourable member for Radisson to continue his comments? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Jha: Well, I was just mentioning that I'm very thankful to the people of Radisson that had given their confidence in me to continue representing them, and I can assure them that I will work hard for them and for their cause with my government and with my party, and continue as we have been doing for the last several years.

One of the things that I'd like to mention this time, Mr. Speaker, is those people who supported me, a number of volunteers, but I have not yet done, in a very big way, thank to my wife, who has been standing by me for every time that I have decided to run and work for public office. She has given a huge amount of sacrifice and I thank her for this, and I will continue to say that I will try to be as best as I can be as a family person. At the same time I have shared with her that my responsibility to serve people goes beyond normal circumstances. People say that, yes, family first but I've shared with her my own personal passion when I see people suffering and try to see if I can help them and if I can make the part—a small part of the better world that we are all trying to do. She has agreed to help me and continue supporting me. So I thank her for that.

The constituency of Radisson is very unique. It borders several constituencies, including Transcona, Rossmere, Concordia, St. Boniface and Southdale, and all these constituencies are very unique in their own ways. Their character is different; their needs are a little different. But, at the end, if you could really compare all of them, they're all want to be

good citizens of our country, our province and good family. They want to raise their children well. They want to work well with our society and work. And I have a lot of personal experiences with families and people that when I do door-to-door, as well as we go to community centres and talk to them, I feel very proud to be representing them.

But, again, as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, I am very thankful to people of a new area of Radisson who voted for me first time. It's the Southland Park—Niakwa Park part of St. Boniface and part of Windsor Park, that the member from Southdale handed over to me, and that's very, very good people there that supported me, and I'm very thankful to them for having their confidence and trust in me.

Now, I would not elaborate the salient features of the Throne Speech which is here and most of you have read, and you may read again and again. I think it really gives you all the basic ingredients that we need to really learn about how we are performing and how we wish to perform in the next few years ahead. But I would say on the top of my list of things to be done, it is several issues that I will address to my constituents' needs, and I am addressing them through to you, Mr. Speaker, and through this speech that I am open for them 24-7. If anyone has any concerns, they do approach me. They talk to me, they write to me, and I think that I would be more than happy to look after their individual as well as social needs as their representative in this Legislature.

I welcome the member from Fort Whyte, who has also taken the chair of the Leader of Opposition, and I wish him well. And I think that he will and I will be working together to see how we can work together. My attitude, Mr. Speaker, is I've spoken very obviously. I think they're all fine people there. There is no problem in my saying that we are all trying to do. The question is only one which is the difference in the approach. How do we do this? Some people think this way; some people think that way; some people think that other way. So there are ways by which we can work together on several issues.

And I remember last time, when I passionately talked about the antismoking, you know, law that we passed. It was a member from the Conservative party that started that. So it is not that we only have the monopoly of good ideas. They have also monopolies, we have also monopolies—no. We all have the right to express, to bring forth good legislation, and we all

work together. My attitude is that we have to build, rather than go and go back in reverse. We've got to move forward and make sure that our province, you know, keeps on progressing and does the best we can do.

There are issues that I like to share, I've spoken before. But Manitoba miracle, when people talk about in the business world, when I travel outside Manitoba and they ask about Manitoba, and I say, yes, this is what we have done. How do you do that? It's a miracle. But I really thank the hundreds and thousands of people, workers, that they work in the factories and the fields, our civil servants, the front-line workers. They put the hard work. They do that. I mean flood is an example that we have witnessed how they have worked—they have performed together.

* (16:50)

So I think it is the people of Manitoba that I like to thank for making this reality of Manitoba miracle, that Business Week called, and reality is that, when we have surpassed the recession, we have worked hard to make our province still sustain and we have not gone down.

We talk about deficits. We talk about deficit. Now the majority government, a majority federal government, has one of the highest deficits you can imagine. But, frankly speaking, I don't like deficit; nobody likes deficit, but when I talk to my people they are not concerned about deficit as much as they're concerned about health. Wasteful, wasting time and money, and who likes that? But they are very concerned about really not trying to say balanced deficit, balanced budget, but close the schools, close hospitals, close everything that they need. Their children need to be educated; they need to be healthy; they need to be living in a society that can—they can lead a good quality of life. That's what all about. That is what this society is about.

So I think when I compare, I would like to really, again, cite, and some members may realize I have two children that they live in Toronto, and one, my daughter, who is a doctor, is in Washington, D.C., and she's a radiologist. Her husband is a pathologist. Dr. Reena Jha and Dr. Prakash Jha. I compare notes with them. We just had the election in the US, and they were working and my granddaughter—she's a, you know, teenager, but she was working with Obama campaign and she was trying to tell us about the stories, which I was very pleased, and she said—she calls me Nana [*phonetic*].

She said: Nana [*phonetic*], how is the Canadian health care system working when Obamacare has been criticized? Could you send me? So we sent some information to her and she was comparing. I really—I think I've shared with my colleagues that per cost—cost of per patient in the hospital system in Canada is less than in US.

So what it tells you that people there—I don't know—40 million or so many million people were without insurance. So President Obama tried to bring a new idea called Obamacare, which, in the election, the Republican leader said, no, it's not a good idea. And therefore he was going to undo it. And his—his sermon was, yes, economy. We will build economy. Of course, you can build economy as well as you can maintain health care. Manitoba is an example here. We have done both. You can bring lot of revenues by investment, working hard, and trying to bring the economic productivity by working with people. But, again, if you try to go back in the history, and I have no doubt that people all here appreciate that, that at one time it was the ruler and it was the ruled. It was the master and they were the slaves. But that society is no more. No—no one, no person in the world would accept reality that, yes, I will rule you and you will be my slave.

So the economy has to also see how we can make people living with a minimum wage little bit better quality of life. When the income comes in their pocket, they spend that money. When we give them little more money, it's not that they eat money. They invest money; they buy homes; they buy furniture; they buy things; they educate their children. So economy is a very mixed kind of a—confused, some people feel. I used to be in business. People think that to run a deficit-free society you have to be a businessman. You don't have to be a businessman. You have to have a common sense and a value. And I think Obama's idea of economic recovery—people said, and the richest man on the planet—I forget the name of this gentleman—who said that no matter who wins, the US economy is going to be improving because it has been recessed there—

An Honourable Member: Warren Buffett.

Mr. Jha: Yes, Warren Buffett. You know, this gentleman said, no matter who is the President, the economy is going to recover. It is recovering, but it takes a few years to build, like it takes 10 years to get a doctor trained. When the doctors were fired during the time, it took 10 years to build and make a doctor go and be qualified. Now we are seeing the change

coming because we took a lot of time to build. I appeal my colleagues there, co-operate, think, think of how you build. It will not be instantaneous, it's not instant coffee. It will take time to build. It will take time to work. We are almost on the track. So I would say that if you look—the choice—what is the choice? Democracy is so beautiful a thing, Mr. Speaker. Democracy is something that we enjoy.

When I talk to some of my friends who live—and they come from the oppressed societies that you see the freedom of human mind is so important. Firstly, it's hunger, you need to feed yourself, but once you have fed yourself you need shelter, but then your mind needs to be free. You don't want to be ruled, and this is what I call freedom and freedom comes by choice. So we have to make a choice to say what—how we can make society better. How we can work together, and particularly the grandfather—when I look at children, young children, and I see 50 years from now, 100 years from now, what kind of world we will leave, be it environment, be it health, be it health care, be it education, what shall we do?

Now, if we try to go back and say we will only do one thing, we will create a lot of wealth. You know, what will you do? I like to share with my colleagues here, I think I have not shared with everyone when I went to India, the last trade mission. Some people came, a farmer came and he said, listen, all my farmland has been taken care by the industrial development, I have no land left and I'm not going to eat dollars. I have a lot of money but we need food. So we have to see that there has to be a balance in terms of surviving. You can create wealth, but creating wealth for what? To be rich. For what? And that is in personal life, in social life and in your—any government and any society and any country and any province you live. We have to see what are we trying to achieve at the end.

So I would say that we have seen in the US election all these things which has come, gives us an idea of what and how we can make this world, which is better with courage, with plans, with desires, we can do it.

Now—so—also I like to share on the business front, Mr. Speaker. You have been there before,

several of members from both sides, we go to Midwestern Legislative Conference. I participated in the economy and I think trade development committees. This time, we started talking about—and they, all the senators from the Midwestern were very excited about—how do we do that? And when I mentioned that we have—and I thank the minister of enterprise, trade and training and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and others who have been building this, you know, apprenticeship program and training—and I said we have a college. So, if you are an industrialist, you want to make automobile business. Red River College can train those people to be very focused and tailor that particular trade, then, skill shortages can be removed by training our own people. We have been working on now to go in the north and work with the Aboriginal community to give them the training so that they can be employed right in Manitoba with our own industries. We can attract businesses here by training our own people, and they were all interested, and one—in fact, one senator said to me that we like to see and come and talk to you people., and how do you provide training in your colleges which are very focused to the local industry that you want to build.

So we are not really magicians. We have a program, we have a package that you can develop and build. Midwestern Legislative Conference gives me an example how people are thinking that, yes, this is the program that works. It gives you employment, it gives you training and it brings businesses. When the businesses want to move here, they say we have a shortage of labour. We can provide that by training. And I think we have some other things. I must say, the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. Selby), I'm going to meet with her and explain that there is an engineering university that wants to work with the University of Manitoba because they have certain things that—

Mr. Speaker: Order please. Order please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Radisson will have 13 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 28, 2012

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