



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
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LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
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LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 11, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Health Centre

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of William Hrynkow, Mary Hrynkow, Joe Kowalski and others, praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the First Minister (Mr. Doer) instruct the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to end its plans to remove the Health Centre at 108 Bond Street from Transcona and to consider finding existing space in downtown Transcona.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Health Centre

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Will the Clerk please read.

Health Centre

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth:

THAT the Health Centre, located in downtown Transcona at 108 Bond Street, is an important government service to the community of Transcona and surrounding areas; and

THAT the said Health Centre is centrally located, close to major bus routes, and therefore

convenient to the people, with its community based services of Pre-natal and Post-natal care, Public Nurse consultations, Immunizations, Vaccinations, and Mental Health services; and

THAT the said Health Centre also contains the administrative support for home care in the area, with home care workers reporting in and out of the centre; and

THAT the loss of the Health Centre would be a major economic set back to the commercial well being of downtown Transcona and the entire Transcona community; and

THAT the people of Transcona were not consulted prior to the Provincial Government making the decision to relocate the Health Centre and that the plan for its relocation to a 'strip mall district' runs contrary to all concepts of community development; and

THAT there is plenty of space in downtown Transcona for the construction of a permanent facility or for the leasing of new space or for the expansion and renovation of the existing facility.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Health and the First Minister of Manitoba immediately instruct the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to end its plans to remove the Health Centre at 108 Bond Street from Transcona and instead direct the WRHA to consider finding existing space in downtown Transcona, since much space exists, for both their short term and long term facility needs.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1999-2000 Annual Report for the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the 1999-2000 Annual Report for Companies Office, the 1999-2000 Annual Report for Vital Statistics Agency, the 1999-

2000 Annual Report for the Property Registry Agency, the 1999-2000 Annual Report for the Manitoba Securities Commission, the 1999 Annual Report for the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission, the 1999 Annual Report for the Residential Tenancies Branch, and the 1999 Annual Report for the Residential Tenancies Commission, all copies of which have been previously distributed.

* (13:35)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery where we have with us from Springs Christian Academy 44 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

Also in the gallery we have from Pilot Mound School 15 Grades 11 and 12 students under the direction of Ms. Donnalea Popple. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Physician Resources Recruitment/Retention Strategy

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Last week this Government released a poll that stated that more than two thirds of Manitobans thought the health care they received either has not improved or had gotten worse. When one considers that this First Minister promised to fix it all in six months, and in light of the fact that our nursing shortage has doubled, waiting lists are longer, and the doctor shortage is growing, it is no wonder Manitobans are not satisfied. In fact, 14 months ago the then-Leader of the Opposition promised Manitobans that he had a solid plan to keep and attract doctors. I took this off the Web site and it said: A solid plan to keep and attract doctors: People do not expect miracles from government, but

they do expect quality health care for themselves and their families when they need it. This plan will achieve that, he said.

Can the First Minister explain to Manitobans why he has failed to release his physician resource plan for over a year? What is he waiting for?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): There are a number of inaccuracies in the preamble of the member opposite. Today there are no members of the public in the hallways of our Winnipeg hospitals. I want to congratulate all the staff who deserve the credit because over the whole weekend we went from an average of 54 patients in the first week in December to a situation that has improved, not a hundred percent perfect but definitely improved.

In 1993 members opposite, in fact I believe a person who has been hired by the Leader of the Opposition to be a consultant on public issues, Mr. Orchard, reduced the number of people in the University of Manitoba's medical school. It reduced them by about 25 percent, the number of students admitted to the university. Now 1993 and seven years is 2000. We would be graduating 25 more doctors a year if we did not have Tory cutbacks. We plan to do better and reinstate more of our young people into our medical schools for the benefit of all Manitoba patients.

* (13:40)

Mr. Murray: While the First Minister likes to talk positively about the health poll and all the things that they are purportedly doing, the fact of life is—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, apparently they want to applaud the fact that two thirds of Manitobans are still not satisfied with health care. I might remind the First Minister that he promised to solve it all in six months.

In light of recent media reports that indicate that the doctor shortage is so significant that it is more difficult to access a doctor today than it was a year ago, in light of the fact that one

Winnipeg clinic is closing and another is threatening closure, what guarantee does the First Minister give to Manitobans in need that they will finally be able to see a family doctor when they need one?

Mr. Doer: I think it is important to know that the material that was released by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) last week provided useful information to the public. It provided some positives and negatives in terms of where we are from a year ago. We also know that there was information made available to us, for example, that not enough people knew about the Health Links 24-hour-a-day referral service that could reduce pressure on primary care and primary care could reduce pressure on the more acute care in the emergency wards in our communities. We think the information is valuable management information in terms of what we can do better with our communities.

We know and Manitobans know that when you run a system into the ground for 10 years, it is going to take a little time to repair it. Manitobans know that it takes a few years to graduate a doctor, that when you make a wrong decision seven years ago, you start paying for it seven years later. They are not so short term as the member opposite not to understand that when you cut doctors in admission seven years ago, you are going to pay for it seven years later. That is your consultant that did it, not our consultant.

Manitobans also know that when you eliminate the RN program and you fire a thousand nurses, you are going to have a shortage of nurses. They know that you just do not add water and stir and mix, it takes two years, three years, or four years to train a nurse, and we are doing it, and more so the members opposite.

Thirdly, I think the member opposite should know that in 1998 the number of residents in family medicine were reduced by the former government from 32 to 24. Shame on you.

Mr. Murray: I am delighted to hear all of those things. They claim that seven years ago something happened. I would like to remind them that the critic of Health has been the

Minister of Health now with the critic for seven years. Surely during that time he must have understood and would have brought forward some kind of a plan.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the very outset of the 1999 election, the then-Leader of the Opposition stated and I will quote from this particular piece of paper, which I am sure he is aware of, and it says: Manitobans all across the province are tired of excuses about why things cannot be done.

* (13:45)

Can the First Minister please listen to his own words and, instead of making excuses, will he tell Manitobans in search of a family physician how long they will have to wait for him to follow through on one of the commitments he made during the 1999 election campaign?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know the situation that they were faced with 15 months ago, and that is why they knew they needed a change in direction, a change in priorities, and a change in government, and that is what took place.

There are 45 more family physicians today than there was a year ago. Secondly, the number of residencies that have been decreased by members opposite, that will be reversed by this Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and this Government. The cutbacks that were made into admissions, the reductions that were made to the admissions of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine were criticized by us because it lacked a plan. It lacked a vision. It lacked anything beyond the next couple of weeks in budgets. It was driven by Jules Benson, and some of the members opposite will know him. It totally lacked a vision for Manitobans and its future.

We are going to reverse the decline of students in the medical school, just like we did with nurses. We are going to return hope to our

young people so they can train to be nurses and doctors and live and work and raise a family here in Manitoba.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Deficit

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): In the 2000-2001 Manitoba Budget, the members opposite said, and I quote: Our Budget realistically funds the quality health care services we need, and they asserted that health authorities will have their budgets based on a stable funding formula and they must avoid deficits. They must avoid deficits.

Can the Minister of Health explain why the WRHA is currently running a \$38-million deficit?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as is so often the case with the member opposite, she was wrong last week when she provided information in this Chamber. She is wrong again this morning. She was wrong again with respect to the information she is providing.

All I would like to say to members opposite is that we have received a lot of credit from regional health authorities this year for actually getting budgets out ahead of time, for working with regional health authorities to provide them with the information. We are working with them as we continue through the process to try to balance the Budget, which we did last year, and which we will do this year.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Health could explain what he intends to do about the \$38-million deficit that the WRHA is running, considering he, himself, and his Premier (Mr. Doer) indicated that deficits are not allowed and, according to their second-quarter financial statements in black and white in the second-quarter statement from the WRHA, they are showing a \$38-million deficit.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, first off we are working with all of the health authorities. The information the member has, I think she has it inaccurate, even though it was FOI to the member opposite, unlike what happened over the

past 10 years when that information was not provided to the public.

Having said that, like so much else, members opposite, they oppose the nursing program. Yet now we are training more nurses than ever, and they opposed it. They reduced the number of doctors. Now that we are increasing doctors this week, they oppose it. She is wrong again with respect to her figures. We intend to have a balanced year end, unlike members opposite who at this time last year had a deficit of \$172 million.

* (13:50)

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister of Health could indicate for me now then whether or not the documents from the WRHA are inaccurate. Is he accusing them of putting forward inaccurate second-quarter financial statements?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, what I am indicating is last week the member brought inaccurate information to this House when she said she had e-mailed a letter to our office. She was wrong when she talked about the closure of beds at the Health Sciences Centre. She was wrong when she opposed the nurses program. They are wrong when they oppose the doctors' retention program. It is not the WRHA I have a problem with; it is the accuracy of claims that are brought forward by members opposite.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, we are working with all the health authorities with a consistent program of a number of initiatives to deal with all of the budgets. This year we have done far better than has been done in a decade with respect to deficits and with respect to balancing and dealing with budgets for first year. We have new programs in place. We are continuing the initiatives, a whole series of initiatives that we have launched with all the health authorities and we will deal with that. We intend to have a balanced year end with respect to all of the health authorities.

First Nations Casinos Minister's Involvement

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, since day one the entire Aboriginal casino issue has been mismanaged by this Government. It has

been mismanaged by the first Gaming Minister and now by the second Gaming Minister. You can see what has happened to the residents of Headingley and the Swan Lake First Nation. I am sure that we will be moving on to a third Gaming Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Doer) was part of this mismanagement. Can he explain to this House why he allowed his minister to raise the hopes and the expectations of the Swan Lake First Nation for eight months if, as he said, the deal was dead in April?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Of course it is very easy for the Conservatives to talk about process with Aboriginal gaming, because one of the difficulties we face in this province is the Opposition when they were in Government sat and did nothing in terms of Aboriginal gaming, ignored the Bostrom report. Issues like the VLTs, never once worried about community input until they had increased the VLTs 23 times over the space of one decade.

I say to members opposite that when we came into Government there was a real opportunity to work with First Nations to change that. No one is denying that we had to go through a learning process, but that is far better than no process at all under the Conservatives.

Minister Responsible for Gaming Control Act Resignation Request

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Maybe if he spoke a little slower we would hear the answer, but, Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the Premier: Knowing how badly the current minister has bungled his gaming responsibilities, will he now remove this Minister of Gaming from his responsibilities, just as he removed the first minister.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): No, Mr. Speaker.

Former Minister Responsible for Gaming Control Act Resignation

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier wants to put on the most

positive face that he can in order to protect one of his ministers who totally and completely failed in his responsibilities, but what is happening here is that we want all Manitobans to have all of the information.

My question is to the Premier. Will he confirm for this House that the conflict-of-interest charges against this first Gaming Minister came to light on June 26, 2000 and that his first Gaming Minister then resigned on July 4?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I will take those dates as notice.

* (13:55)

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a copy of the Hansard of June 26, 2000. I would like to also table the news release that was put out by the Government on July 4.

I would also like to table for the House today the contract between the Government of Manitoba and Mr. Eric Luke and Associates. I might just add that Mr. Luke's contract says that the minister should report to the Minister of Highways on June 21.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now ask the Premier to explain why it is that although his first Gaming Minister did not resign until July 4, as of June 21, Mr. Luke was reporting to the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Why was he not reporting to the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux)?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I will look at the specifics, but the reporting was as indicated to the House at the time.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain to Manitobans then why when I asked the question on June 26 as to removing his first Minister of Gaming the Premier said no, when in fact this had already happened? Was he misleading the people of Manitoba, or does he not know what goes on in his own Cabinet and in his own Government?

Mr. Doer: Well, I will check in terms of the dates, Mr. Speaker, because I know that there were discussions at the administrative level with Mr. Luke to deal with the implementation.

Mr. Speaker, I recall very clearly at the end of June, prior to July 4, urging publicly and privately to the minister responsible for the Aboriginal casinos that he was not in a conflict of interest, that in fact even though he was receiving a—*[interjection]* Well, again, members opposite want to put false information on the record.

The Minister of Gaming came to me and said the allegations being made against him and his spouse were causing a great deal of concern and strain on his spouse. For those reasons, in spite of the fact that he was not in a conflict of interest, he asked that his status be changed. I urged him not to leave. I urged him not to go bow to the kinds of attacks that were being made by members opposite.

Subsequent to that, there was a legal opinion obtained because we could not get a legal opinion directly because the person who had been hired by the previous government was a partner with Mr. Freedman, who was involved in the independent process, so we got a lawyer that was working for the commissioner in British Columbia, Mr. Hughes, and he said clearly the minister was never in a conflict of interest, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:00)

Environmental Hazards Community Notification

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

In March of 1994, the then-Abitibi-Price mill at Pine Falls experienced a spill of Bussan 52 *[phonetic]* into the Winnipeg River and failed to immediately notify either the Department of Environment or the downstream community. This resulted in charges rightly being laid by the provincial Department of Environment. I want to ask the First Minister (Mr. Doer) at this time if he believes that it is essential and important for communities that are downstream of chemical

spills to be notified when those communities draw their drinking water from the river or the stream or the lake that has been contaminated. Does he believe that is important?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's question, of course everybody on this side, as I am sure it is for everybody on that side, is very concerned about the environment, protection of the environment, that we take proactive measures in order that the environment be protected, but more importantly, of course, we are concerned about the health and well-being of people who reside near industries like Pine Falls. So of course we place a very, very high importance on preventative measures in order that the people downstream might be protected.

Mr. Praznik: My supplementary to the minister. Can the minister then tell this House why, when the Pointe du Bois Generating Station owned by the City of Winnipeg experienced an explosion of a transformer on the 26th of October and dumped 1200 gallons of oil into the Winnipeg River, no notification was provided to any of the downstream communities that draw their water out of the Winnipeg River?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I do not have information on hand in regard to the member's question, but I will endeavour to look into it today and tomorrow and get back to him in a very short while.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to table memos from both the Town of Lac du Bonnet and the Local Government District of Pinawa that confirm that neither of those communities whose main source of water is the Winnipeg River—and I can tell him, if he checks with the Seven Sisters Water Co-op, Whitemouth or even any of the users in the Whiteshell Provincial Park for which he is responsible, that none of them were notified by his department of this spill in the Winnipeg River. I would ask him why such a failure to notify people when their source of drinking water faced a potential contamination.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, as I have previously noted to the member, I am very much concerned

that we protect the environment, lives of people and that industry follow the rules and regulations that have been set for them. For that reason, I again would like to advise the member that I am going to look into this myself and get the answers that are required, and if regulations have been breached, then we will take the necessary action.

Knapp Dam and Pump Station Status Report

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of Conservation about the Knapp Dam in The Pas, but he seemed to have some difficulty in providing information. Will the Minister of Conservation today tell this House whether the Knapp Dam and Pump Station near The Pas, which were due to be completed in August, have by now fully passed all tests and are fully operational?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, the project in The Pas is slated to be commissioned in the early spring. I do not know where the member is getting his information from, but I am advised that the project is slated for completion in the early spring.

Mr. Gerrard: I understand that initially it was supposed to be due in August. On Friday the minister mentioned that there were some problems, and I would ask the minister whether the problems which have been associated with the completion of the Knapp Dam are due to the fact that the concrete was produced by a company which did not have its full certification through the Manitoba Ready-Mixed Concrete Association.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, I noted the member's questions regarding the project in The Pas. I think I have advised him already in his previous questioning that, yes, there had been a minor problem, but a problem that can be usually rectified. There is no problem to the structural integrity of the dam, so therefore I am satisfied that the project is not in danger. There is no problem to the structure.

I want to also advise the member that if there are indeed any serious problems, any structural defects, then of course I would be

interested in talking to the general contractor and the consultant who administered the contract to see where the problems are but also to make the contractor accountable if there are any serious deficiencies in design.

Mr. Gerrard: I ask the minister whether there was political interference in the awarding of the contract which resulted in these problems, as I understand that Mr. Eric Hutchison of Cochrane Engineering, who was involved in setting the specifications, informed a certified contractor in The Pas that he would be recommending that United general contracting purchase the concrete from a certified plant, and yet they failed to do so.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, there was no political interference.

Urban Capital Projects Funding—St. Vital Streetscaping

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): My question is to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The Urban Capital Projects Allocation III is a provincial capital funding program which provides support for infrastructure and enhancement projects. The provincial funding flows directly to the City of Winnipeg.

Could the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs clarify whether or not our province has flowed any money to the old St. Vital in my constituency and whether or not our province contributed any money to that project? I know that I would appreciate that being clarified. There is some concern in my constituency. As well, it has been raised with me by my colleague across the floor, the former Minister of Urban Affairs and the MLA for Southdale (Mr. Reimer).

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Yes, I am pleased to provide some detail on this program. It is part of the UCP III program that we fund jointly with the City of Winnipeg, and I am pleased to advise that we do continue to work co-operatively with the City on many of these issues.

The St. Anne's-St. Mary's roads street-scaping project came in at \$300,000. It was

divided between the Province paying \$145,500 and the City which paid \$154,500.

**Water Resources
Water Management Review**

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, during Estimates this past summer the need for a comprehensive approach to dealing with drainage and water management was discussed at great length. The Conservation Minister promised that this fall, as soon as the House was out, the Government would review water management in a comprehensive way.

Will the Minister of Conservation explain why his promised review of and consultations on water management have never materialized?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): I recall the meetings that the member is referring to and, yes, he is correct in saying that we had made a commitment not only in Estimates but also during the public hearings process that we were arranging to have a consultative process going in the late fall. I believe that process has been arranged, and I think it is just a matter of a short while now before we get proceeding on holding those hearings.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that there will be meetings coming. Well, we had those on The Wildlife Act, as well, after the fact.

Can he now announce when the series of meetings will be held, and will they include the creation of watershed management districts?

* (14:10)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, you know, as I have pointed out to the members opposite before, we have some huge challenges in the area of drainage in Manitoba and mostly because the drainage work had not been done for quite a long period of time. So when we came into office, the first thing we had to do was to identify where the main problems were and then try and come up with a strategy as to how to resolve some of the very, very serious problems that we have in drainage in Manitoba.

**Water Resources
Drainage Application Processing**

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the minister has some concern about the amount of drainage.

Can he tell this House how long it takes his department—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Yes. Well, the member is now in a second supplementary question. Of course, supplementary questions require no preamble.

Mr. Speaker, would you please remind him of that.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members that *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the honourable member to please put his question.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

How long does it take the minister's department to process a typical drainage application from an individual or from a municipality?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, since I have become Conservation Minister, not a week goes by that I am not confronted with the issue of drainage problems in Manitoba, and there is a very good reason for that. We have a backlog of requests for maintenance, for mediation, for

fixing of the problem. We are working diligently trying to correct the problem.

So I would advise the member that, given the seriousness of the situation that we are faced with, it is going to take some time to fix it.

Manitoba Hydro Selkirk Generating Station

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): To the Minister of Conservation. Mr. Speaker, the guiding premise of licence No. 1645RR is, and I quote: "The Selkirk Thermal Generating Station is to be used to provide security of power supply for Manitoba."

Has the Minister of Conservation declared a power emergency in the province of Manitoba by forcing the director of environmental licensing to approve the station's continued use?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I do not go out there to force anybody to issue a licence.

I believe my job as the Conservation Minister is to provide information to the proponent and also to provide as much information as possible to the people who are concerned with the well-being of the environment and indeed their health. So I believe that is what my job is, and I will continue to do that to the best of my ability.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister of Conservation: Can he advise the House when he will be making public details of Manitoba's pending power crisis, including affected areas, backup plans for medical centres, and what Manitobans should be doing for the duration of this crisis?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): You might want to hear the answer.

Mr. Speaker, we have been advised by Hydro and by officials through the Minister of Conservation, it covers both areas, that from 1997 on the Selkirk Generating Station was producing energy beyond the requirements for

just reliability. The minister has worked with Hydro.

First of all, there is absolutely no question that the licensing people in the Department of Environment are responsible for enforcing the licence without any interference from the Cabinet and the government of the day. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are advised by Hydro, through the minister, that they have decreased the utilization of that plant to conform with the licensing requirement that, if we are to be straight up in this House, should have been complied with from '97, '98, '99, and the year 2000.

We believe that the long-term issues of that plant, whose licence expires the year 2005, is a matter that is before Hydro now.

I would note though that since we have formed Government we have announced that a gas turbine operation will be in Brandon, I believe on line for the year 2003, to provide greater reliability for the hydro system in a clean way.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, then could I ask the First Minister or the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) if they would please table the information that was provided to them by Manitoba Hydro laying out the crisis that would allow the Selkirk hydro generation plant to continue to run by more than 10 percent of capacity? Would they please table that information so that Manitobans know what kind of power crisis they are going to face this winter?

Mr. Doer: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Hydro has worked with Hydro to ensure that the capacity of the plant, which was very high in '97, '98, and '99 is now within the environmental licence as it should be.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Miles Macdonell Provincial Boys Volleyball Championship

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Buckeyes boys volleyball team for winning the AAAA Provincial Boys Volleyball championship.

Last Friday, at the Miles Macdonell Collegiate, I had the honour of presenting the Sports Manitoba Order of Excellence medals to this championship team. Over 1000 enthusiastic students, along with coaches and teaching staff, attended this event in the school gym where the student body gave each player a strong applause.

I would like to recognize and congratulate each team member by listing the players' names, which are as follows: Aron Manuel, Joshua Klassen, Aleen Savangengouthay, Alan Savangengouthay, Kevin Krasowski, Curtis Kohinski, Darren Zacharias, Gavin Panchuk, Tim Mazur, Chad Stasiuk, Oliver Manuel, Colin Lane, Damian Bialkoski, Chris Campbell, and Assistant Coaches Ian McDonald and Frank Klassen, and Head Coach Brian Straub.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the Miles Macdonell Collegiate Buckeyes have won many provincial volleyball championships throughout its history.

If you visit the Miles Macdonell Collegiate gym, you will not only see many provincial volleyball pennants but a cross section of pennants that include many sports.

I would also like to congratulate the players for the discipline, character and sportsmanship they displayed throughout the season and in the provincial championship tournament.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Mr. Brian Straub for his fine coaching, which brought out the best in these young players. He not only taught them volleyball skills, but he instilled good character and sportsmanship in his players.

Again, congratulations to this championship team for their achievement. Thank you.

* (14:20)

Health Care System

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): From September 27 to October 11, 2000, this Government commissioned a poll of 1205 Manitobans about their attitudes and opinions on

Manitoba's health care system. Mr. Speaker, 66.3 percent of Manitobans polled, that is, over two-thirds of the respondents, stated that they think that the health care system is either the same or worse. In fact, when asked about their level of satisfaction with the health care system, only 16.2 percent of Manitobans indicated that they were very satisfied.

Although the members opposite are attempting to convince Manitobans that they have improved the health care system, in fact this Government has failed to keep its health care promises, and this poll confirms that over two-thirds of Manitobans feel that the members across the way have done nothing or have made health care worse since coming to office.

The reality is that the nursing shortage has nearly doubled, waiting lists have not been reduced under the mismanagement of this Government, and clinics are closing because there are not enough doctors. In fact, due to a shortage of doctors, only eight family doctors are accepting new patients.

Manitobans deserve a government with a clear plan for Manitoba's health care system, one which does not make irresponsible promises which it knows it cannot keep.

Dakota Collegiate Evening for Seniors

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Last year the Dakota Collegiate Parent Association hosted its first evening for seniors, which was very well received. The event began as a community outreach in the Year of the Senior that resulted in many positive awards.

On November 28 this year, my colleague from St. Vital (Ms. Allan) and I participated in the second annual evening for seniors. The school gymnasium was transformed into a festive gathering where students performed a community service promoting volunteerism within the school. Students' talents were showcased through an art display, band and choral entertainment and refreshments.

This evening of seniors interacting with students in an evening of fun is another step of breaking down some stereotypes held by the

different generations. With the help of Dakota Collegiate parents and staff, the young people served donated baking and distributed a number of door prizes to the local seniors. Toes were tapping all over the gym as the students shared their music and songs.

Congratulations to the Dakota Collegiate Parent Association, including Pam MacKay and Diane Rainka, co-chairs Ron Guarino, principal, and his staff, and all the student volunteers who made this evening a real delight. May this evening of fun continue in the years to come. Thank you.

Kleefeld School Opening

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, on September 28 of this year, I was proud to join with hundreds of residents from the area for the official opening of the new \$5-million kindergarten to senior Kleefeld School. This project, which was an initiative of the former government, has raised the bar for modern education in our province and has given the schoolchildren of Kleefeld perhaps the most modern school in all of Manitoba.

In addition to a 4800-square-foot gymnasium and a 2100-square-foot library that serves as the facility's centrepiece, the school offers the latest in technology with the computer lab and two science rooms. When students arrived this year for their first day of classes, gone was the former school which had been built in 1973 and which was outdated and bursting at the seams. In its place, they were welcomed to a school that was bright, spacious and which encouraged learning.

Members on this side of the House realize that successful education requires sound instruction as well as a sound learning environment. We recognize the need to give our students every advantage by ensuring they have the technology training to be successful after their years of formal education. The Kleefeld School is above all else a tribute to the community and residents of the Kleefeld area. Their dedication to the education of their children and to this project has been remarkable. The pride that they have in their children and their region was on full display as students sang

and participated in the official opening ceremonies.

I would like to make special mention of Principal Kelly Barkman, his staff and the trustees and administration of the Hanover School Division and of course to the students of Kleefeld School, the first class of the new school. I wish them all well as they pursue their studies and their dreams in a facility they should be proud to call their own.

Rural Manitoba Economy

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today of the measures this Government has taken to address the well-being of the people and the economy of rural Manitoba. The Throne Speech testifies to the very fact that the state of rural Manitoba has been and will continue to be of great importance to this Government. We have moved to provide greater stability to Manitoba's farm community. In consultation with the public, we are building on existing industry regulations and programs through the Livestock Stewardship Initiative to ensure that the industry grows in a sustainable manner.

With Project 2000, we have committed to easing the transition from farming to retirement and to enabling a younger generation to move into agriculture. We have implemented new crop insurance and reduced premiums to assist farmers facing continued low prices for grains and oilseeds; this along with the enhancements to the 1999 AIDA program and the \$70 million spent by the Province in aid last year. We have made major efforts to help Manitoba farmers adjust to the elimination of transportation subsidies during a period of low commodity prices.

Furthermore, we will reinstate the rural farm stress line to provide counselling, support, information and referrals. This Government has made available RN, LPN and RPN refresher courses to rural nurses. We have enhanced physician recruitment and retention plans, and we will move to equalize rural and northern hydro rates, a real benefit to rural citizens.

Premier Doer and our Government have moved to improve infrastructure and services to rural communities by committing \$177 million in our Budget for construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and other transportation links. We are supporting rural gasification projects. Already construction has begun on a \$7.3-million pipeline for the Interlake communities.

These measures and commitments speak to the unquestionable respect and sense of obligation our Government has to serving the people of rural Manitoba.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), who has 39 minutes remaining.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): As always, I am certainly pleased to stand and put a few words on the record in response to the Throne Speech. I took the Throne Speech home with me, and I was reading it and I was trying to find some of the detail and some of the thoughts that were emanating from the new government. Lo and behold, instead of speaking to the Throne Speech itself, I had to extend my congratulatory notes so that I could fill in the time. It seems like there is so little in the document itself of any real value.

I do want to recognize, Mr. Speaker, the new faces around the Legislature. We certainly are utilizing and seeing the great work of the six legislative interns and, also, a new group of pages that come and enjoy the experience of working in the Legislature and learning some of the rules that sometimes tend to get stretched, if not broken. I also want to say hello to the staff that we have not seen for a long time and wish them well in the holiday season.

The Throne Speech is about a vision of the province, and I do want to just comment a little

bit about the communities and the constituency of Turtle Mountain, one of the areas in rural southern Manitoba, I would suggest, that are truly flourishing. We have taken advantage of some of the opportunities that were presented in the previous years from past governments and are now seeing the benefits of the fruits of those labours.

We have seen huge growth in the inland grain terminal industry in the communities that I represent. We have seen a large growth in the livestock industry, particularly hogs, but not specific to hogs. The cattle industry has certainly grown and continues to flourish and do well in the province of Manitoba. As well, many of the people in the communities are seeking and finding second and third opportunities to create income and wealth generation on the farms, and I think in Turtle Mountain, particularly, we are seeing a stabilization of the communities and perhaps are starting to inch forward in our progress.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not congratulate the two newest members of the Legislature. The results are in, in my mind they are final, and they are solid in the fact that we talked about the NDP government recently doing a poll to study how Manitobans feel about health care. I can tell you that the people that we talked to going door to door and the people that voted in the election gave a very clear message to the people of Manitoba how they feel about health care and how this new Government is dealing with it. If I am correct in my numbers, I am told that the NDP have moved from second place in those two constituencies in the 1999 election down to third place, with substantially lower numbers.

I think that is the message that this Government fails to see is what they are doing and what they are implementing are not things that the people in the province of Manitoba agree with or are happy about. I think for them to spend the thousands of dollars on creating and defining a poll that would satisfy their needs, it certainly pales in comparison to some of the things that they could and should be doing in the particular areas of health care. I think that what

people are seeing is that they are recognizing this Government for what they are. They are a government without a vision, without a plan. They only represent the special interest groups and I would suggest in the long term are not working for the betterment of all Manitobans.

It is something that we saw coming, and we see it inching forward more and more every day. I think the people in the province of Manitoba are becoming more and more aware of it and are becoming more and more disenchanted. I would say the wheels have come off Cinderella's coach as far as this Government's honeymoon period. It is over.

Mr. Speaker, I first want to talk a little bit about the health care that was so obviously not in the Throne Speech that we heard the other day. For a government that spent thousands, probably millions of dollars trumpeting to the province that we could solve health care, that we could solve the nursing shortage, we could solve the doctor issues by a wave of our wand, trust us, we can do it in six months, what do we see today?

We see nothing has changed. We see waiting lists getting longer. I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) chants from his chair: No one in the hallways.

Let us change the criteria. When this Government does not get a result from a poll or a question that they ask, what do they do? They change the criteria of the question to get the results. We have seen it time and time again. They laugh at the people of Manitoba and think that they are not paying attention, not hearing and seeing this. I am telling you, you are in for a big surprise because the people out there are becoming more and more aware of this. They are aware of the one-line solutions, the one-line comment that seems to be so simplistic. Yes, the comment is simplistic, but the answers are far more detailed than that, and this Government has failed to recognize that and act on it.

We have a Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) who talks about health care in the province of Manitoba, yet totally neglects the rural regions of this province, holding many of

them to ransom with their budget conditions and forces that they are putting upon these regions to amalgamate, or look at supplying different services for different reasons, none other than the fact that this Government is trying to squeeze the health care. You talk about two-tier health care in this province. We have got it in rural Manitoba with the attention and the attitude that we are getting from this Government and from this Minister of Health. The people out there are unhappy and they are starting to voice their concerns, and they will continue to do so. I think it will become even more and more of an issue again as we approach the next election.

We have talked about it, and people were led to believe that in six months we are going to end hallway medicine and rescue health care, yet the numbers do not suggest that. The numbers suggest something totally different, and we are seeing waiting lists in certain areas of services continuing to increase and people waiting longer and longer.

We have talked about the Premier (Mr. Doer) shutting the road down to the U.S. Instead, what has he done? He has implemented a policy that sends more people out of the province of Manitoba today than ever before in its history. And I would say that is a shame. That is a broken promise, and that was a commitment that was made foolhardily, almost glibly, in his response to a question and to an issue. He convinced, the people believed it and so they should, but now they are certainly starting to see the truth shine through, and they are not happy with it.

I want to talk a little bit about the Health Minister's (Mr. Chomiak) ability to come out and meet in rural Manitoba. He has had several invitations that I am aware of in the communities that I represent and other communities that I visit in my job as the MLA for the area and representing the people. They keep saying: Where is he? Where is the minister? How can we get a meeting to see the minister and put in front of him our issues and our concerns which we as a regional health authority board were set up and designed to do? Why is the minister avoiding us? Why is the minister not taking our calls or not responding to our concerns and to our issues? These are the questions that they will

continue to ask, and I know, from attending the AMM convention in the last week, it certainly, I think, should be becoming more aware of it on the other side, on the Government side, as to what the people are thinking and what they are doing.

It is disappointing for people to have to feel that they have to beg or they have to know somebody or that they have to somehow find a way or a means to get in and see the Minister of Health because as of today or at this point, he certainly is not trying very hard to accommodate the people in the province of Manitoba.

We have a nursing shortage that continues to rise. You can have a long-term plan, if that is what you call it, to bring more people into the system, but the problem is today, and what we are seeing is long-term solutions are fine, but you do need a mid- and short-term solution. Obviously you are walking away from it. There was a doctor recruitment plan in place that had done a tremendous job of recruiting doctors for rural and northern Manitoba. The program was changed to help in specialist cases in the city of Winnipeg and in Brandon, and it was drawing new doctors to our communities. That is the first step in solving the problem.

The second issue would be on the education side, but there again we run into a situation where we are spending the province's money to train people, and we have a Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) who is working against the principle. What is he doing? What is he telling these young professionals when they graduate from the schools in the province of Manitoba? He is saying: You are good and we accept your degrees, but you cannot work here. Why can you not? Because you are going somewhere else where there is a better climate, a better environment, a better tax situation, where you are not the highest-taxed people in the country, and these professionals are leaving us and leaving us steadily.

I think that the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) should make a commitment to the people that he is going to lower taxes, that he is going to address those issues that make us competitive. We no longer are in an environment where we compete for business on cash

giveaways and those types of incentives. We are back into the game where we are competing with every province on tax lines, and we are seeing the provinces with the lowest tax lines and the most movement, the people that are addressing these issues, the provinces that are moving the fastest forward. We are seeing it in Ontario, in Alberta. We are even seeing it in Saskatchewan, a sister to this Government, making changes in their tax policies so that they can create the incentive for people: one, to want to stay in their province; two, when they graduate to stay and work in their province; and three, for more people to migrate into their province.

I know that the Government of the day will stand and talk about migration and that the influx of people are up in Manitoba. I suggest it probably is because I would think that most of the NDP in Saskatchewan and B.C. seeing the future are heading to Manitoba for that last couple of years on the gravy train before the Government is changed again in the next provincial election.

It seems that when we talk on the education side and the Government marks their record that enrolment is up—and I think that is good—why cannot the same principle that they use for increasing enrolment, which is lower tuition fees, why cannot that same principle work in attracting business and entrepreneurs to the province and keeping our tax-paying people in our province? How do you do that? You lower the taxes. The two go hand in hand, and it is ironic that this Government cannot recognize on one hand what they are doing in education and then defeating the purpose on the finance side with a minister who refuses to talk about tax reductions. He talks about balanced taxes. Well, balanced taxes today are not moving us forward and are not moving us into a position to take advantage of all the technology and all the changes that are happening in our communities.

What it is doing is it is forcing the best and brightest young people away from our communities. We have had an outflux of young people from rural Manitoba, and what do they tell us? Why are they leaving rural Manitoba? They are leaving rural Manitoba because they are not seeing the opportunities. It is changing, it is growing, and I respect and make note of that.

The same thing is happening in our larger centres. Why are they leaving? They are going out to further their opportunities and because there are not the opportunities in the province of Manitoba, but, more than anything, they are leaving because there are not the incentives to stay.

* (14:40)

When we have a policy that encourages high taxation on everybody across the board, it concerns me that we are sending the wrong message. We are sending the wrong message to the taxpayer, who ultimately we are responsible to, that we understand the issues and that we know what the issues are, and we are prepared to address them, enhance them, change them, and make us competitive with not only Canada but with North America and indeed the world.

The agriculture issue, again, something in the Throne Speech that was barely touched on, and it is an issue that I think all members of Government have to take seriously. I know they pay the lip-service to it, but we are seeing areas of this province being diminished rapidly by the economic situations within the province not through any fault of their own. They are suffering because of a flood that devastated them years ago. It was not just yesterday or last year now. We are moving into the second year of this cycle. We have seen by the news releases, we have seen by the articles in the papers that it is not getting better. It is an issue that I think this Government has to address. They have to go out there and deal with the people and deal with the issues.

The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) got up and spoke eloquently about the programs that they put in place. What I am hearing in the communities that I represent is it is not relative to what the problems are today, and it is not dealing with the specific issues that they are facing. It is a concern. Farmers today are trying extremely hard to diversify. They are trying to find new and alternative ways of creating income on their farms, not just by working off the farm but by actually working and staying on the farm and taking up new ideas.

It is incumbent upon this Government to encourage that growth, to go out and help in any way that they can. I do not want the Government

to do it for them, because we have seen what happens when a government like this takes charge. It would be a concern of mine, but I certainly wish that they would work with them as opposed to paying them the lip-service that they do, saying that it is Ottawa's fault, it is Ottawa's fault, it is Ottawa's fault. That does not put bread on the table or fuel in the machinery. It does not address it, and they continually try to avoid it.

Mr. Speaker, in previous opportunities that I have had to speak in the House, I have talked about this Government, and I think it is being reflected more and more as we go into the session. I suspect over the next couple of years it will continue to elevate itself to where the public becomes aware of it, things that I am hearing out there. I think if they are not listening or if they are not meeting with people, perhaps they are not hearing the message, and they are not as concerned, and they do not see it as an issue. But the people in rural, southern and northern, I suspect, Manitoba are starting to show concerns with the direction that this Government is taking.

Mr. Speaker, we have had opportunity to see a casino attempt or the attempt to bring Aboriginal casinos to the province completely mismanaged, from the get-go completely mismanaged. People were uninformed. The Government put a gag on people, stopped them from getting answers that they needed, and I blame the Government for doing that.

When you put a cloak of secrecy around something and then tell them it is a public issue—go deal with it—how fair is that to any person out there? We all are well-educated and I think well-read people. The only way we make good decisions in our lives is by getting information. What is the first thing this Government does say? We are going to build five new casinos in Manitoba and oh, by the way, we are not going to tell you anything about it. We are not going to tell you who is involved in it. We are not going to tell you until we have made our final approvals. Then we will put the communities out there and let them fight and divide, not only with the First Nations communities that are attempting to build these casinos, but with communities within themselves, neighbour against neighbour over issues.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

It is not a personal issue. It is an issue that they did not get the information from this Government. This Government refused to share the plan, the vision, the opportunities that are out there. Instead, they hid. They ran and hid. Whenever questions were asked, they deflected the question, and they deflected the question. They just kept saying: Well, the people will decide. Unfortunately, the people decided and whether it is a good result or a bad result, I still think the result is because of lack of information.

I hold this Government fully accountable for that type of mismanagement. As I travel throughout the province and talk to people about it, they are becoming increasingly aware of the inability of this Government to manage the affairs of the province. We have got a Premier (Mr. Doer) who stands up and defends his ministers constantly, speaks on their behalf most of the time. I suspect that song will grow tired as they so often do and the truth will rise to the top.

We had instances in the last Legislature again. Where did the labour bill come in the Throne Speech of '99? Where was it? No one talked about it. No one discussed it again. What this Government did was build a wall between two groups of people in the province of Manitoba, pitted one against the other and hid it in a veil of secrecy. Oh, yes, it is coming. Do not worry, we will table it at the meetings when we have the public consultations. Do not worry, it is coming. Talk about a government trying to bring people together and work for the betterment of the province of Manitoba doing nothing more than dividing, dividing and dividing.

I think it is a shame and I think this Government will be held accountable in future for these types of issues they are raising. We have Aboriginal communities fighting with Aboriginal communities over the approval of casinos. We have communities that are getting a casino or not getting a casino fighting with each other. We have rural Manitoba accusing the Government of listening only to the people in the city of Winnipeg and totally neglecting their needs and their concerns. We have school trustees upset with the Government in their

education policy, and instead of sitting down and negotiating with them and talking to them they basically, as always, say: We will catch you later. Just stay tuned, and we will give you the details.

It is quickly becoming a broken record with this Government, and it goes hand in hand with the broken promises that they delivered or have not delivered to the province of Manitoba.

Another issue that I do want to just bring up briefly, Mr. Acting Speaker, when I am talking about the Throne Speech is a great one. You will love this one. The biggest question in Turtle Mountain a few weeks ago—the government introduces an idea. Autopac is doing pretty well. Autopac is doing very well. Why do we not just take a couple of million, maybe \$20 million or \$30 million out of the fund? They will never notice. The people will not be upset.

The biggest question that the people asked me in my constituency is: What were you thinking? I mean, where were you? Where was the Cabinet at the table when this decision was made? Did nobody speak up on behalf of the ratepayers in this province of Manitoba, the people who pay for the licences that fund the Autopac fund? Was nobody there defending that group of people, the 700 000 people that buy licences and insurance in the province of Manitoba? Nobody defended that group of people? I cannot believe it.

Then we have a minister who says, instead of taking responsibility, it was the chairman of MPI that came up with that idea. Oh, is that not a great idea, and where did that person come from? I guess it is the chair of that board, and what relationship does she have to fundraising for universities in the province of Manitoba? So she says no, no, no, it was not all my idea. I talked to the Government; the Government retracts its statements, retraces its position and finds it is the crumbs in the snow as it is going back over the details of the story, and where they find the fireplace, they all sit down and say, gee, I guess we did talk about it but we still thought it was a pretty good idea, and we almost even thought that the people of Manitoba would not be upset that we would take their money from

them, money that they paid for the lowest-cost insurance in Canada.

* (14:50)

An Honourable Member: Not in all cases.

Mr. Tweed: Not in all cases, I have been corrected; in general I would suggest, and the idea of Autopac in its principle was to provide the lowest-cost service. Now we have a government reaching their hand into that pile of money that has been managed properly, by the way, for the last 10 years, that would create the surpluses that they are talking about taking, and they say, oh, well, we did not think you would mind; we did not think the public would be upset.

You have got a full row of backbenchers back there that I am sure, when they went to their communities, their questions were: Who made that decision? Did Cabinet ever bring it to caucus for a discussion, and, if so, where were you guys? Where were any of you, standing up defending your taxpayer? You were nowhere to be seen because you reflect the way you do business and the way you are representing the province of Manitoba, and as I said earlier, people are seeing through this and they are seeing through it very quickly.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) at a public speaking engagement the other day got up and said we made a tactical retreat. Well, I am not a veteran. I do not profess to be, but I would suggest that a tactical retreat would be move back, gather the troops again and find another area that we can go after to attack and take advantage of. In fact, we find out that one of the first things, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this Government did after they got sworn in was to take a committee to Saskatchewan to find out how they raid their Crown corporations.

Boy, does that tell me, does that send a clear message to me and to the rest of the people in the province of Manitoba. They did not sit down around that Cabinet table and say we have got some tough decisions to make, and, by golly, we are going to hang in there and make them, probably one, maybe two. Maybe it was the same group that got together and planned the Autopac deal; I am not sure. Maybe it is a

smaller group than that, but they said, you know, we do not have to save money. Our revenue streams are higher than they have ever been in the history of this province. We have more people employed in this province than ever before. We have young people working. While everybody is looking at that, let us go into a Crown corporation and just take a little money. Let us just take it. Then if the people catch us, well, we will say we are sorry, but we will not say we will not do it again. We will say we will figure out another way to do it. Do not worry, we will be back.

I can tell you the people in the province of Manitoba will be back, too, because for a government to collapse that quickly on a decision it made just shows me the weakness inside that government. You backed off immediately, and if one person in Cabinet had had the common sense to stand up and say, hey, this is not a good deal for the ratepayers in the province of Manitoba, it probably would not have ever happened, but, boy, let us go spend that money and let us take it from somewhere where we did not have to earn it or we do not have to tell the people how we got it and what we have to do with it. It is beyond me.

They talk, Mr. Acting Speaker, in their Throne Speech about vision and opportunity. After the Throne Speech closed the other day, we were standing out in the round room outside of here, where the interviews were all taking place, and a young person came up to me afterwards. We were visiting—first, no, it might be his second experience at seeing a Throne Speech being delivered, a college graduate looking forward to the future. I said, well, what do you think of the Throne Speech? He said, Mr. Tweed, just because you talk about the year 2020, does not mean you have a vision for the province. That summed up very succinctly to me what he was saying. It is easy to talk about next year and the year after and five years and seven years down the road, but if you just give it lip service and do not put anything, any of the foundations in place to take care of that future, all you are doing is you are just leading people down a path that they are soon going to see that it is the wrong direction. They will turn around, and they will change their opinions of the way the Government has been performing.

There are several things that I have seen or not seen again in the Speech from the Throne and I am disappointed. I am very disappointed that a Government in its second Throne Speech to the people in the province of Manitoba displayed so little vision, so little vision. They talk about what they can do or would do, but they have no substance. They make false promises, false guarantees to people, and really we all know what happens when you create that high level of expectancy when you cannot deliver at the ground level. The house comes tumbling down. The foundation does not stand.

You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have seen examples where this Government has mismanaged issues, and we have seen areas where they have had to stand up and be accountable for these issues and for these mistakes that they have made, but it all, to me, in my analysis of it, comes down to leadership. I think, unfortunately, we are not seeing much in the line of a government, a government that was in waiting for such along period of time, to come in here with absolutely no plan, no vision, to run ad hoc all over the place, put a fire out here, put a fire out there, but do not look at any of the long-term sustainable solutions that are out there. I think that they have failed desperately the people in the province of Manitoba, and I think, when the day is over, people will look at the leadership of the province and I suggest to you that they will think that the leadership of this province has failed them. We have a Premier that so often can deliver an eight-second, a ten-second, a twelve-second clip, but when it comes to putting substance behind the comment or to the commitment, we are finding that it is just not that strong. It is washing away, and it is washing away slowly, but as time goes on, we are seeing the erosion of this Government. I suspect that we will continue to see the erosion of this Government.

They talk about other things that they are interested in getting involved in, and I know that the water issues in the province are a huge issue. We know it. I mean, I do not think anybody in this House is going to deny that the issues are not there and that they are ever-changing and that they are going to continue to change, but all I would suggest is the Minister has to go out and meet with these people and talk to them. He

cannot hide in his office in Broadway or his constituency office. You have to get involved with these communities to understand. If you do not, it is going to reflect poorly on you and your administration of a department, and it is going to look poorly on the Government and on the Premier. I think that is something that we have seen consistent with this Government, with these ministers, is the fact that when they do not agree with the issue or do not have the public opinion on side they tend not to meet with these people, to reason with them, to hear some viable solutions and work with them.

Again, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) does not have to go too far to know that these are the same things that people are telling you. They are interested in the same things, and they are interested in the same things for their communities. Sitting on the side of Government, I would encourage the Member for Dauphin to take a lead role, help out. We have a lot of respect for the Member for Dauphin on that side in those issues because he does understand them, and he spoke several times on them. I, for one, feel that he has a real understanding, and I can tell you that I do not always want to encourage ministers to meet with my constituents but I know that member does, and I think it reflects well on him.

I think the sad part is the fact that we have a Government that after 10 years of being in Opposition decided that they would know what is right for everybody and anybody in the province of Manitoba. Whether we go out and listen to them or not, we are going to do it, we are going to put our head down. We are going to keep plowing forward, and we are going to suffer in the long term. That is my biggest concern, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the future.

* (15:00)

We have seen consistently this Government continue to try and spend its way out of problems rather than dealing with the economic issues. We have a minister that travels to another province to find out how he can raid the Crown corporations. We have ministers calling meetings, cancelling meetings. We have ministers denying that they talked about an Autopac payment, then saying: No, maybe we

did. Then we have a Cabinet that says: Well, it was a Cabinet decision. But it was not. It has just been very frustrating and a very confusing time, I think, for Manitobans, and our job is to continue to point that out.

It makes no difference to me if a person is incapable or not able or unwilling to do his job or do her job to make a commitment to that, then it is our job to point that out to the public of Manitoba. Whether that offends people or not, in the real world that is the way it works. We are talking about our young people and keeping them in this province and encouraging them to stay. How do we do that? By offering them the incentive that if they come, they work hard, they will move forward, they will have opportunity, not that if they come and do not follow the job description or cannot adhere to the rules or regulations that are sometimes put in place, then step aside and let somebody that can because far too much opportunity is being lost in this province right now. I think it is incumbent on this Government to get out and start talking to people and find out what they are really thinking. Far be it from me to give you good advice, but that would be it.

We have seen where the AMM recently held their meetings in Winnipeg and a lot of people disgruntled about cancelled meetings, unable to schedule meetings. It is certainly boiling up out there. I want to make all the members opposite aware of it because it is for the betterment of the province. It is not for one group over another. It is better when we can sit down and discuss the issues and move forward.

I have had an opportunity to look at the Throne Speech. I really felt that they missed the opportunity that they had as a new government, as a fresh government to come in here and take leadership and show direction. What they chose to do was do all the good things that were being done in the past, continue on with them and then fall back into the old ways, the old school. People said it would happen. I said it would happen. I see it happening, and I think it is unfortunate for the province of Manitoba.

I have had several conversations with some of the ministers, and it is a tough balance over there, people, when you are talking about trying

to create economic wealth and at the same time taxing it all away. You have a tough battle to come across because as I see it right now based on the amount of dollars that we are spending and the amount of dollars that we are reducing taxes, we are reducing debt and we are reinvesting in our province, the numbers just do not add up, and you are on a roller coaster downhill. I think it is going to happen sooner than later, because all the indicators would suggest that the American market is starting to slow down. I think no one knows more than myself and the Minister of Industry (Ms. Mihychuk) how important it is to have that American market humming along and finding the alternative.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. We will continue to hold this Government accountable day in, day out and hope that they will continue or will improve in the future. Thank you.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington): Mr. Acting Speaker, my wife was talking with me one time. We were in conversation, and she asked me a question, and I could not answer. She asked me if vegetarians eat vegetables, what do humanitarians enjoy doing? So I retorted and said to her if infants enjoy infancy, do adults enjoy adultery?

Now, on a more serious note, the MLA for Wellington wishes to send congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) on his recent election as MLA for Kirkfield Park and also for the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) and all the pages, the interns and the continuing supporting staff in the Chamber.

The Throne Speech 2000, on page 4 of the Hansard, mentioned and made references to public Internet access sites. It also mentioned government helping individuals and businesses in their emerging industries. There is also a mention of high-speed Internet. Of course, we have the e-commerce legislation coming up. I will only use these passages of the Throne Speech as a starting point to go to the main topic that I want to discourse about.

It is as follows: If the effort of the private sector to remould the public sector according to

the private sector's own image by whatever means, especially by information and communication technologies, if this effort were to succeed, such transformation of the public sector will ultimately lead to the end of democratic political governance and the beginning of non-democratic, corporate governance by the plutocratic elites. There is, therefore, a clear and present danger imminent that everybody should see this taking over by the corporate private managers of the public functions of sovereign government and nation-states.

If we allow this and if we make ourselves part of this process, we are destroying our democratic society. For example, I was listening in this program that starts at midnight. It is called "From Coast to Coast." I heard that just before the recent American election, upon authorization from the World Trade Organization, the United States Congress passed quietly certain unspecified legislation, legislation which did not receive any debate or attention from the press, from political parties, or from the American public.

If the most powerful elective legislature in the world would not hesitate to do the bidding of a nonelected but powerful entity like the World Trade Organization, how could lesser sovereign nation states resist the onslaught of the plutocrats?

So we better understand the nature of change that is being brought about around us, particularly by the information and communication technologies. Of course there will be many causes of social and political and other changes around us, but primarily now the main cause of these changes is what we call the information and communication technologies.

* (15:10)

To understand the tremendous effect of a change in the communication system, let us look back at history. The Chaldeans used tablets of baked clay to write their information. They sent the baked clay as the letter. The Egyptians used papyrus. The Chinese used parchments of animals to record information for communication. It was not until 1544 that

Johannes Gutenberg invented a movable printing press. Initially he used types that were carved from wood. Then later on he perfected casting the types in metals. So he produced the first book ever written in print, the Latin version of the Bible known historically as the Gutenberg Bible, which of course ushered in the era of the Reformation, a religious movement led by Martin Luther in Germany; Zwingli in Zurich, Switzerland, whose doctrines were embraced by the Anabaptists who espoused the doctrine of the separation of church and state, and of course John Calvin in Geneva.

One most interesting thing about John Calvin is his teaching that all Christians should work hard and use working hard as a gainful employment, honest, hardworking people to gain employment. This work becomes their vocation in life, all being done to the glory and honour of God. This is known and called by the sociologist Max Weber as the Protestant ethic. According to Max Weber, this is the beginning, the seed, the development of capitalism. Remember it was feudal period during those days.

Since Calvin rejects spending money for pleasure, the money has to go either to philanthropy or retained by businesses, reinvested in the business. This is capitalism. Of course, the Reformation spread to England and to Scotland and when the two of them had the same point of view, the unification of England and Scotland becomes an historical reality.

So you can see all the implications of a technological development, the first breakthrough in communication technology. Then, later on, Oliver Cromwell. He led what is known as the Glorious Revolution. It led to the most important practice and doctrine of parliamentary democracy, the supremacy of parliament over the throne. We should remember that, that it is this parliament that has supremacy over the executive, not the executive over this parliament.

Our task then is to understand the impact of information technologies in our current state of political democracy in Manitoba, in Canada and elsewhere. How do we understand the effect, the impact of technology? If breakthrough in technology can result in the development of

capitalism, if the breakthrough in technology can result in unification of great countries, if the breakthrough in technology can result in the emergence of the doctrine of supremacy of parliament, we should be mindful of the tremendous impact of information and communication technology on our democratic society.

So let us use some kind of analysis to understand the things around us. We will use what is known as systems analysis.

Viewed in this light, any given society may be thought of as a complex network of interlapping, interrelated, interpenetrating systems of various types, political systems, economic systems, legal systems, industrial systems, all concentrically working like wheels within wheels operating within its own sphere. While this society of ours consists of many such systems of human interactions, the total societal system itself possesses a relative permanence and persistence among all its component parts, which gives it an identity quite distinguishable from the identities of its part.

It is the total system where the governing of the nerve system resides that has primacy over the other subsystems in our society. Except therefore for the total system, every system of social interaction, industrial, economic, legal, can either be co-equal with each other or one is higher than the other or one is lower than the other, so a co-ordinate, subordinate or superordinate system, and therefore it is possible to conceive of a parallel as well as a hierarchical arrangement of systems and subsystems within our society, wheels within wheels.

Every system and subsystem of human interaction are, of course, maintained by some shared values or beliefs. Otherwise they will not stick together, the elements of the system will not form a part of the system. These values are shared in that subsystem. Any given society, they believe in certain beliefs, and they share it among themselves. Any given subsystem of society shares the same beliefs. For example, ethnic groups have the same belief. They eat the same food. These are subsystems in our society. Some of the shared beliefs in the Canadian total society are internalized in us in our personalities

so that it becomes naturally part of us in our thinking, in our point of view, in our belief.

However, when shared values manifest themselves in the form of specification of prescribed behaviour or prohibited behaviour and society itself attaches certain sanctions, then the individual begins to act according to the expectation of others so that the individual is not bound to obey these preferred norms of conduct in the organized system of order, the womb which gives birth to societal authority.

* (15:20)

Whatever set of values, these are shared by part of the members of the system. Once there is a social organizational system that exists that can enforce these prescriptions and can impose assumptions, there emerges what is known as political authority that permeates the whole total system and all the sub-systems. Political authority, therefore, is the legitimate right emanating from the societal order to do any act necessary to preserve, maintain and enhance the social order, upon the establishment of which such legitimate right has concomitantly come into being. So you could say the BNA Act, the British North America Act, saying that one of the functions of government is the order through government, this is the function of authority.

Cognate to but distinguishable from political authority is the concept of political power. What is political power? Political power is the capacity to get another person to do what the person's subject to power would not otherwise do, or to prevent him from doing what otherwise he would do despite his opposition to the person exercising power. Such phenomena in our organized society where there is political authority enforced by political power, we know that this is the reason why, of all the systems in society, that sub-system, the political system, becomes the nation state. It gives it primacy and importance beyond all the other systems.

No other sub-system in the total society can challenge the nation state because the nation state has both political authority as well as political power. But it is also the responsibility, it exists primarily to protect the entire society and to promote the general well-being of all.

Now, how do we understand changes around us in institutions, in people's interaction? What is reality? Let us talk about this. What is real? How do we understand what is real? How do we acquire knowledge of reality around us, seen or unseen? Okay, let us tentatively define reality as the totality of everything, everything, both material and immaterial, seen or unseen. Because of this broadest meaning, it is indeed difficult to have any accurate knowledge of anything at all because some of the things around us we can only know by means of divine revelation, *exempli gratia*. For example, how do you know there is immortality? You do not know unless it is revealed to you. The other things that are part of reality, we can appreciate only by intuition. How do we know there is gravity? We intuit. We feel it. Some of the things that we know we can perceive through our senses. We can see. We can see the chair. We can hear the sound. We can taste food. Through perception, all these things we can perceive, we call it phenomena, but there are certain things that you cannot even perceive, beyond your senses, but you can still conceive of them in your mind. They are called by the Greeks noumenon. For example, is there such a thing as liberty? Is there such a thing as equality? You cannot taste it. You cannot see it. You cannot feel it, but you can conceive of it in your mind.

The method which we use in order to arrive at knowledge of reality, both material and non-material, is what we call methodology. All the collection of these methods of knowing is the thing called methodology. Therefore to arrive at systematic knowledge we use methods. We can call these methods descriptive, analytical, comparative, even a case-studies method. I am now using the analytical method.

But method has another meaning to the philosophers of science. To them it is the epistemological assumptions concerning the ultimate bases of human knowledge. In this particular case, we can describe method as logical. It can be inductive or deductive or non-logical. We can describe it as normative, that is to say it prescribes or empirical. You can only describe it because you can see it as part of reality around you.

But there is one thing that is used by scientists and sometimes appropriated by social scientists as well. This is known as the scientific method. The scientific method has actually many meanings, various operations, but is basically connected with concept formation, formulation of hypotheses, the testing of those hypotheses empirically, so that what they theorize actually is taking place in the reality around us. If it is a good method, it can make predictions. Predictions are nothing but extensions of the present to the future, projecting what will happen next.

Strictly speaking, the social reality around us, the interaction of people, their culture, their beliefs, these are not subject to scientific methods, but, nevertheless, they can be explained by the use of a framework of explanation known as a theoretical paradigm. For example, is there really democracy? So you create a paradigm, a theory of democracy, and in creating that theory, a framework of explanation, you construct certain ideas like freedom, rights, liberties. These are not observable except they are created by the mind, and then you link those constructs, those concepts, with sense data, information that you collect in your investigation. If the theory is verifiable, then it is a good theory. If it is not, then it is just a theory. If we verify the theory by human experience or human observation, then it is really an explanatory system of certain aspects of reality.

Now, the most difficult thing is if reality is everything and if change is taking place in everything, how do we know that change is taking place and how do we explain it, because some of this reality is not even seen, not even felt. According to the philosopher, George Wilhelm Frederic Hegel, historical change takes place as a result of a dialectical process which is the tendency of any notion or idea or desire to pass over to its negation as a result of the contradictory aspects of reality, a situation or condition.

If it really is the case that reality exists and that reality exists independently of human perception and if what we observe is not necessarily what there is because we might be observing simply illusions of reality, depending on our point of view, depending on our

perspectives, and our perspectives are defined by beliefs and society's system of shared values, there is usually some inherent contradiction in many different perceptions of social reality. These contradictions may exist side by side, and when they do, we call them paradoxes.

For example, when Max Weber asserted that capitalism is the instrumental flowering of the Calvinistic belief in Protestant work ethics, the underlying assumption is exactly opposite of the Marxian assumption. The underlying assumption is that it is believed the determined behaviour, and it is behaviour that determines economic relationships. So from the belief in hard work, they work hard, and by their working hard, they accumulate wealth. When they accumulate wealth, capitalism results, a relationship in the economic aspect of society. That is the opposite of what the Marxist will be saying.

* (15:30)

To the Marxist, economics determine politics. The social and political superstructure and practices are just products of our political ideologists and beliefs. An organized religion according to Marx is just one of the capitalistic institutions of our society to exploit the masses. Those are the Marxian beliefs. So the two beliefs existed side by side. This is itself a paradox.

The Marxian view asserts that if social and political institutions and their accompanying patterns of beliefs and ideas arise as superstructure out of the economic relationship of the means of production, of services and other goods to satisfy material needs, wants and desires of human life, then it may be said that the economic means of life will determine political and class relationships. How come that the poor usually tend to go left and the rich usually tend to go right of the political spectrum? Because of the differences in their wealth, their economic status in life.

Human beings therefore are confronted with these different experiences, and there are contradictions in them. Life indeed sometimes is very contradictory so we describe it as life being paradoxical.

A paradox is nothing but contradictory statements, seemingly contradictory, or a line of arguments that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions from valid deductions from accepted premises. For example, if a person says "the more things change around us, the more things stay the same," he is making and uttering a paradoxical statement. How can things be constantly changing and at the same time staying the same? That is paradoxical. How can we explain that?

The answer lies in the limitation of human wisdom and the unlimited nature of divine wisdom. In the design and the operation of the created universe, a most important part is our earth and its environment, but it is very insignificant compared to the rest of the universe in outer space. King David said: Seigneur, mon Dieu, tu es si grand. Vêtu de splendeur et d'éclat, drapé de lumière comme d'un manteau. Que tes oeuvres sont nombreuses, Seigneur! Toutes avec sagesse tu les fis. La terre est remplie de ta richesse. Le Seigneur a établi son trône dans les cieux, et son royaume domine tout.

Oh Lord my God, thou are very great. Thou are clothed with honour and majesty. Thou cover thyself with light as a garment. Oh Lord how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom Thou has made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches. The Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom ruleth over all.

The son of King David, King Solomon, described in Ecclesiastes why things that periodically change stay the same according to the grand design, according to even the eyes of the beholder in the workings of this universe where order seems to prevail despite changes in seasons, in time, in activities of the natural order of things.

As observed by King Solomon: Un âge s'en va, un autre âge vient et la terre tient toujours. Le soleil se lève et le soleil s'en va: il se hâte vers son lieu, et là il se lève. Le vent va vers le sud et tourne vers le nord. Il tourne et il tourne et s'en va et le vent reprend son parcours. Tous les fleuves marchent vers la mer, et la mer ne se remplit pas; et les fleuves continuent à marcher vers le lieu, là-bas, d'où ils s'en vont de nouveau . . . Ce qui a été, c'est ce qui sera, et ce qui s'est

fait, c'est ce qui se fera; et il n'y a rien de nouveau sous le soleil.

One generation goeth, another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hastens back to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about towards the north. Then it whirleth about continually, and the wind again returns according to its circuits. All the rivers flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. Unto the place where the river come, thither they return again. The things that hath been it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun.

Do you ever wonder why the river stays in its banks, the sea stays in its bank? Even if all the waters and all the rivers are flowing to the sea, it never stops beyond the bank or the seacoast of the river. That is divine design. That is divine wisdom.

Thus, by the process of periodic change, our natural world reveals a dynamic system. It is a system that relies on rhythm, on cycles, on variations and instability, and it changes over time, but it stays the same. Now, recently some social scientists have developed a theory that they call a theory of systemic chaos. This theory relies on variation, disorder, instability and change over time and generates more complex forms of organizations and processes. The citation here is L. D. Keil, *Managing Chaos and Complexity in Government*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Inc., 1994, Preface, page 11.

In general, changes in society and in the political and social institutions take place as a result of the dialectical process whereby one social or political condition, which we call the thesis, generates its own contradiction, the antithesis, and then these two exist side by side until these contradictory aspects merge into a convergence, which we call the synthesis. Once it becomes the synthesis, it becomes a new thesis at the higher level of reality or a lower level of reality as the case may be, and being a new thesis it then generates an antithesis in the next cycle of the dialectical process in the course of historical and social change. *[interjection]* Okay.

* (15:40)

"A" by definition generates a "non-a." The two exist side by side, "a" and "non-a." That will last for a long time. Then they will merge into a conversion. They become a "b." The "b" will generate opposite, "minus-b." They exist side by side again, and then they converge and they become a "c." The "c" generates and so on. You see that is dialectical process.

An Honourable Member: Where did the "c" come from?

Mr. Santos: That is the wonder of it. Now let us apply this.

The existence of the confederation, there is the old Conservative Party, Tory Party. Now there is a movement in the early—after the Depression I remember—the Progressives. They in fact took power in Manitoba. The Conservatives and the Progressives joined. So it is called Progressive Conservative, inherently contradictory. There is a paradox. Now it exists for a time that way and then what happened? It generates another one, Reform. Then it transforms itself, and it seems to be swallowing the old Progressive Conservative.

I do not know what is going on in there, but certainly is a dialectical process. The process of change, therefore, is non-linear. It is dynamic, contrary to Isaac Newton's theory of a machine which is predictably stable and predictable. The new paradigm, the new view is that reality is really bubbling and turbulent. It is seething with uncertainty, instability, unpredictability, but behind all this these are just precursors of a higher order and structure of things. That is the new theory.

Now going back to my main proposition, the private sector is trying to re-create the public sector according to its image. Do you know when that process happened? It happened during creation when the Lord Almighty created men according to his own image. What is the private sector doing here? It is playing the role of somebody else, trying to re-create government according to its own image. It is playing the role of the Almighty. So they are trying to re-invent government, the private-sector managers. This

began with James Barnham Buchold [*phonetic*], *The Managerial Revolutions*, the managers taking over. They have instrumental values efficiency but it becomes of no value.

Now to recap and go back to Throne Speech, I would like to use this one minute recapitulating. There is a danger, clear and present, representative government will vanish, and the rich manager will take over if we allow the private sector based on the bottom-line, power of money and wealth to take over the functions of government. With respect to the Throne Speech, if they vote against it, they are simply doing pro forma the role of an opposition. They cannot have it both ways. But if they vote against the Throne Speech, they are voting against the investment in education, they are voting against improving and maintaining a balanced budget law. They are voting against improving health care in this province. In fact, they are voting against the equalization of hydro rates. Good for the North, the basis of their political power and influence. Are they voting against their own people?

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It is an honour to deliver my third address to the provincial Speech from the Throne. It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to address the members of the House, the people of the province, and particularly the people of Charleswood.

I want to begin by offering my most sincere congratulations to our new leader on his successful election as the new member for Kirkfield Park and to the newly elected member for Tuxedo on her successful by-election. I very much look forward to working with both of them.

I would also like to welcome all of the honourable members back to the House. I am sure that we all look forward to representing our constituents' interests well within the Legislative Assembly. I would also like to extend a sincere welcome to our new pages and the six legislative interns who are working with the Government and the Opposition caucuses. I know their services will be much appreciated by all of us. These positions provide a wonderful opportunity for young people to witness first-hand the

business of this Chamber. I hope this experience leads to a lifelong interest in the legislative process for them.

Throughout the past year, I have had the opportunity to speak with a great many residents of Charleswood, and they shared their hopes and fears with me. I intend to work very hard to ensure that their expectations are met and that their concerns are dealt with expeditiously.

Since my election as the MLA for Charleswood, I have been tremendously impressed by the enthusiasm and community spirit shown by the people in my constituency. They have shown a willingness, in fact an eagerness, to work together on projects to enhance our neighbourhoods. The most meaningful and significant change is a change we effect ourselves. The people in Charleswood truly exemplify this. I strongly believe that the most vibrant communities are those which strengthen themselves with the participation of local residents.

I would like to share a little bit about Charleswood's interesting history with the members of this legislative House. Charleswood developed as a farming community on the outskirts of Winnipeg. Farmers in Charleswood produced grain, hay, cattle and poultry, but they are probably most well-known for their successful mink farms. Charleswood still has a wonderful flavour of being a little bit country, a little bit city. That is most obvious when one walks down the Hart trail [*phonetic*] and you look one way and you can see the city and you look the other way and you can see fields of grain and fields full of bales in the fall. It gives a wonderful, wonderful feeling of being a bit in the country and a bit in the city.

Recently, Charleswood Historical Society also erected a wonderful, wonderful new sign welcoming people to Charleswood. It is a replica of a sign that was up many, many years ago. It was nice to be able to see the fundraising effort that was achieved by the Charleswood Historical Society. A lot of work went into that, and they have done a tremendous job in producing this sign which welcomes people to this wonderful part of the city.

During my tenure thus far as the MLA for Charleswood, I have worked in co-operation with dedicated local citizens to introduce or participate in programs and activities for youth, families and seniors. I adhere to the philosophy that partnerships make a healthy community, and I will continue to work to forge stronger partnerships throughout our community.

Ensuring that seniors in the constituency are informed and aware of options and activities is a community priority for me. During 1999's International Year of Older Persons I was privileged to bring together a group of seniors from Charleswood. We established the Charleswood Seniors Advisory Committee. We certainly found out that many seniors felt isolated, many seniors did not know where to turn to find out what resources were available in their community and elsewhere, and many seniors felt a certain degree of isolation.

*(15:50)

It was wonderful to see how this particular group evolved. Part of their initiatives included taking part in the Charleswood In Motion Days parade, Charleswood In Motion Days Exhibit. At the actual fairgrounds they put on a barbecue that first year. We produced a quarterly newsletter that was distributed throughout the community to seniors by seniors. This particular group has grown and developed since that time and recently incorporated themselves. One of the things that is probably the most exciting thing that happened out of this particular group was the creation of a seniors centre at Royal School in December of 1999.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Through the activities of the seniors and through this new seniors centre there are many, many activities provided to seniors now in Charleswood including art classes, computer classes, lectures by guests, line dancing, barbecues. A newsletter continues to inform people in the community about activities and there is a strong sense of caring about each other and about their community that they exhibit.

It truly does show and exemplify what people can do when they actually get together with a real goal in mind. I want to personally

thank all of the members of the Charleswood Seniors Advisory Committee for their absolutely outstanding efforts since they began their initiative with me. My role with the group has certainly been very fulfilling. It faded out at the end of 1999, at the end of the International Year of Older Persons, and this group has now grown in tremendous ways. They have truly fulfilled the spirit and intent of the International Year of Older Persons for those people in Charleswood.

Another group that deserves recognition for its contribution to Charleswood is the Winnipeg Police Service. I am very pleased that the continuation of the Police Athletic Clubs has continued at Westdale Junior High. There is an incredible amount of effort put forward by the Winnipeg Police Service to make this a strong program. It is certainly a credit to their effort that we have so many young people attending at the club every night, Monday to Friday, giving the young people something to do other than being on the streets and giving them an opportunity to have fun in a non-competitive environment but in a controlled environment where parents know where their young children are and feel a degree of confidence that they are involved in some really good programming that is highly supported by the people in the community.

Another organization in Charleswood that cannot go unmentioned is the Westdale Residents Association that was formed in July 1998 with a major goal of ensuring community safety. This group of people serves as an excellent example of community empowerment. Comments from the community police certainly have shown that there has been a drop in crime statistics since the association began their patrolling efforts as part of the Citizens on Patrol program that they formed. They are all to be commended for their commitment to their community and for all the work they do to ensure that their community remains a safe place to live and raise a family.

We know that a community best strengthens itself from within. That is one of the reasons I have been bringing community leaders together for quarterly networking luncheons. These meetings have been attended by people representing community groups, schools,

churches and businesses in Charleswood. These meetings have turned into very useful information sharing sessions where people connect and share ideas about future opportunities for strengthening our constituency. It is always encouraging to see people with a genuine interest in their community gather together to make plans for the future.

We have been fortunate to hear from the Deputy Chief of Police who spoke to us at our last luncheon to talk about the community's role in crime prevention. We were also pleased to hear from our Oak Park High School student council about reorganization that has occurred in that school which is unique in the city and perhaps even in the province in terms of their ability to get young people involved in student council work within the school and the very, very positive effects this is having on the self-esteem of young people.

We also had the Winnipeg Airports Authority speak to our community leaders in regard to the development plans they had at the airport. I had the opportunity to invite them to make a presentation to get input from our community leaders about what they felt was important as part of this development.

Madam Acting Speaker, the NDP could learn a lot from the people of Charleswood when it comes to sharing ideas and developing a plan for the future. I am disappointed, as are many of my constituents, that the NDP did not share their plans for the future with Manitobans in their Speech from the Throne. After being in opposition for 11 years, I thought that the NDP would have a plan for the future. In fact, this speech tells me that they do not. They are indeed demonstrating that they are the party with little vision and no plan, at least certainly not an obvious one.

As a nurse, I know from first-hand experience that health care also represents an issue of great importance to Manitobans. It is unfortunate that the members opposite did not choose to recognize that importance in their Throne Speech. Health is barely given mention in the Throne Speech, this from the Government that said they were elected to end hallway medicine and rescue health care. Manitobans

now see that their quick-fix solutions were nothing but irresponsible and unachievable promises.

In fact, Madam Acting Speaker, certainly from the election of 1999 many, many promises were made by the NDP as to what they were going to accomplish in terms of addressing the issues and challenges in health care, and certainly the biggest one was to end hallway medicine and rescue health care. But the NDP failed to end hallway medicine and rescue health care in six months. They failed to immediately hire a hundred new full-time nurses. They failed to convert part-time nursing positions to full-time. They failed to hire more doctors and specialists across Manitoba. They failed to implement a physician resource plan within the first year of being in government. They failed to immediately open a hundred new beds. They failed to slash waiting lists. They failed to cut prostate cancer waiting lists in half within the first year. They failed to put the Grafton, North Dakota, clinic out of business for Manitobans. They failed to end expansion of frozen food and pull it from Deer Lodge. They failed to allow RHA board members to be elected, and they failed to establish a prostate cancer screening program in their first year in government.

Madam Acting Speaker, Manitobans were looking for hope in health care during the election. Now what we see, I think, from that election is the First Minister (Mr. Doer) taking advantage of the peoples' vulnerability at that time, their fear for the health care system, and the Premier and his NDP colleagues made promises they knew they could not keep. I find that extremely discouraging on behalf of all Manitobans.

I listened really intently to find their vision for health care within a Throne Speech because that certainly is what I thought throne speeches were meant to do. I was very disappointed that I did not see or hear a vision in terms of health care. They rehashed the few things that were already happening and missed the boat, I think, on a lot of issues that could have been dealt with. I looked and listened for a vision in terms of long-term care. I was looking for a vision and a plan for community care, home care, healthy initiatives for seniors.

Certainly the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) likes to talk a lot about getting rid of SmartHealth, but after 14 months we see no initiative at all mentioned in terms of addressing the issue of information technology in health care, which is a major challenge.

There was no vision in there for the development of workload management tools so we could get a handle on what is happening in terms of the challenges of patient care and the kind of staffing levels we would need to manage patient care.

There was nothing in there in terms of diabetes and cancer initiatives, two huge challenges amongst our many communities. I was really hoping to see something in terms of health prevention and promotion. Instead, I know, in the last budget, we saw a decrease of funding by 4 percent for healthy community initiatives, and I am waiting to find some new initiatives where they could take some of their vision, if they had it, and put it forward into looking at some new things that could be done in Manitoba.

* (16:00)

There was nothing in there, for instance, to even address the issue of a menopause clinic, which could very likely be closing at the end of this year because of no government funding.

There are certainly some challenges to FIA legislation, challenges, I think that certainly were not intended, but have certainly affected the fundraising abilities of hospital foundations. I would have expected maybe to see some attempt by this Government to try to address that particular unforeseen problem, because it is an imperative problem that does need to be looked at.

I was waiting to hear something about the implementation of Phase 2 of the breast cancer program. I was looking for something on children's initiatives from their Healthy Child Initiative. I am very concerned that, when the Children and Youth Secretariat was dismantled and redeveloped as the Healthy Child Initiative, there were certainly a lot of comments being made from within and without that department

that the momentum for all of the children's initiatives in Manitoba had certainly stalled. I think that is what we saw with this Throne Speech. There definitely was a stalling of healthy child initiatives. I certainly think what we are seeing is a government floundering after dismantling this particular area, and we are not hearing anything new and innovative coming from that particular group. Definitely, there seems to be a lost focus and impact in children's areas.

I was very disappointed to see that there was no real human resource planning mentioned. Certainly the one element that was mentioned in the Throne Speech was the physician retention plan. Well, that was announced back in the election. Fourteen months later, it is being announced again. With the challenge in health care in terms of attracting and keeping doctors here, I would have thought we would have seen something far sooner than this in terms of implementing a plan that they lead everybody to believe they had.

Looking back to health clippings in the 1980s, when the NDP were in power, makes for some interesting reading. There was a declared health care crisis of massive proportions. Having been a nurse that worked at that particular time in a hospital, I can certainly attest to it. I would like to share just a few of the headlines with Manitobans: "Bed shortage cited in death of four patients," "Hospital forced to limit admission," "Heart surgery wait worries doctors," "People going blind waiting for eye surgery, doctor says," "Intensive care bed short," "Doctor shortage plagues rural areas," "Aging medical equipment worried MDs and Technicians."

This is déjà vu, Madam Acting Speaker. The NDP have not learned anything, and they have not proven to be better managers of the health care system today. I find it interesting that the NDP are already distancing themselves from one of their fundamental core commitments. They have gone from saying in the 1999 election that they would end hallway medicine and rescue health care to saying that they will now restore public health care in all regions of our province. They have quickly moved away from the health care term that they themselves coined. They do not mention hallway medicine in the Throne

Speech because they have failed to keep their promise. Patients are still in hospital hallways.

It was interesting to note that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) certainly supported our position on this, where he indicated that this particular promise made in the election was irresponsible. It was interesting to note that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) has indicated that hallway medicine still exists. So at least it is somewhat reassuring to know that there are two cabinet ministers that have some awareness that this issue is still prevalent.

Indeed health care has reached a low point in Manitoba. In October when for the first time since 1983 a Manitoban who went to an emergency room died after waiting for five hours. The Health Minister (Mr. Chomiak) says this is not an example of hallway medicine. Well, Madam Acting Speaker, he is wrong. He is absolutely wrong. If this Health Minister knew that waiting rooms in emergency departments are part and parcel of the big picture of hallway medicine—and I wish he would have had a better understanding of that—he would not have made such a statement to all of us. Certainly on this side of the House, we are calling for a public inquiry. When for the first time since 1983, a man dies in an emergency waiting room, I think it calls for nothing less than a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding this death.

Madam Acting Speaker, there are nurses who have indicated that they are very worried and traumatized by this particular event. They say they continue to look over their shoulders waiting for it to happen again. I think with the comments that have been put on the record by members opposite about the importance of addressing situations like this, especially after we saw the Sinclair report that came out and we had the Premier (Mr. Doer) stand in here and talk about the significance of that, I do not see how one could not go the step further and examine this particular man's death, because this particular man's death has a great deal of significance to it. I think what we need to do is certainly look at that particular situation so that we can ensure that Manitobans have all of the facts about it, so that we can be assured that Manitobans will be fully informed about it and

to make Manitobans aware that it is being dealt with as fully as possible to ensure that something like this will never, ever happen again.

We certainly hope that this Government is not talking out of both sides of its mouth when they say at one time that an inquiry works in one situation and then they are totally ignoring it in this particular one. I think this is a critical area, Madam Acting Speaker, that needs to be looked at, and I certainly hope that once the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) have had adequate time to address it that they will call for—which they should, in a responsible way—a public inquiry to address this situation.

Madam Acting Speaker, it was interesting that when we look at the issue of hallway medicine, there is an article in the Winnipeg Sun from September 21, 2000, that indicates the Premier said his Government has taken the culture out of hallway medicine but admitted for the first time yesterday that he does not have the problem beat. It is interesting how he can say that one day, and then he turns around in the House on numerous issues since then and speaks out of the other side of his mouth. He has indicated: We have ended the management style of hallway medicine where it was an acceptable cultural management style. I really, really have to question what he even meant by that because it is basically a ridiculous statement.

I think that what we saw the Premier (Mr. Doer) trying to do is weasel his way out of health care commitments that he made to Manitobans back in the election. He is famous for his billboards where he says he is going to end hallway medicine. Well, his billboards did not say we were going to end the culture of hallway medicine; he actually indicated that he was going to end hallway medicine.

The Premier also goes on to say that there is no question that we feel that the lack of nurses has been a major impediment in fully implementing all the commitments we have made. We cannot just add water and mix to get a trained nurse. Well, I have to wonder what he was thinking about when he made the promise in the election to address the issue of the nursing shortage. He was fully aware of that shortage.

He knew that was the cause of a lot of the problems, and yet this Premier, this Health Minister, this NDP government chose to campaign on solving a lot of health care problems that they knew were directly linked to a nursing shortage, and they knew if they had done their homework in Opposition that there was a nursing shortage. For them to continue on with the election promises they made with that knowledge under their belt is very, very questionable behaviour, Madam Acting Speaker.

* (16:10)

The interesting aspect to hallway medicine numbers these days is the fact that the NDP government is now using different numbers when they talk about patients in hallways. When we were in government we looked at all patients, medical, surgical and psychiatric, and now what we see is the NDP government only counting medical patients. Well, what we have is a situation now where we are not comparing apples to apples. So when the NDP government stands up and says: We have fixed hallway medicine, I would like to suggest that if they were to put the surgical numbers back into that, the psychiatric numbers back into that, I would not doubt that the numbers today would be higher than what they were prior.

It would certainly be nice to see some direct information and some real look at what these numbers would truly be, because I think these numbers have been skewed to suit the NDP's purpose. I think they might be afraid to actually compare numbers from now till a year or even a year and a half ago when numbers were starting to come down. I think it would be interesting if they were bold enough to try to accurately reflect on what all those numbers are. In fact, there was an e-mail sent to a radio station the other day that called the NDP government's promises hollow medicine promises. I certainly agree with supporting that particular e-mail comment that was sent in, because it certainly is absolutely true.

Madam Acting Speaker, the nursing shortage in Manitoba has nearly doubled under the NDP administration. Members opposite have still not offered any concrete solutions designed to attract nurses to Manitoba and keep them

here. In fact, the nursing shortage has gone from 600 to over 1100 since this Government has come in. Unless they have a solid plan to attract nurses to every sector of our health care system, we are not going to solve problems in health care. I am waiting and waiting to see a concrete plan originate. So far they are rolling out with our plan, the \$7-million fund that was put into place for relocation, to send nurses back into refresher programs, to address the provincial nominee program.

In fact, the only real thing that the NDP can take any credit for is the two-year diploma program, which they implemented. The Minister of Health indicated that that was the best decision he made in his first year in government. It is interesting that the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses has not approved that program yet, so what we have are 90 nurses taking the course that has not been approved. In fact, the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses has only given it conditional approval, and in fact in February they will be looking at the development of a contingency plan to see what they are going to do with all of these students if this program does not meet the approval of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, because there are a number of competencies and standards that it failed to meet.

So if this is what the Minister of Health is so pleased about, I have some big concerns, because if a contingency plan has to be put into place, what are we going to tell 90 young people who have spent a lot of time and effort to get into the program, started taking this program, invested money in it, and almost a year into the program they may find that this program does not even proceed. I do not know how that is anything that a Minister of Health can be so proud of.

I certainly have some concerns, because he fast-tracked this through. He did not give it time. If he was so worried about the nursing shortage when he came into government, why was this not one of the first things that he did? Why did he not address this issue right off the hop so that he would not have compromised these 90 students? And then to hear him turn around and indicate that he expects a 25% attrition rate, if

one adds the numbers up, that means out of 90 students he is only expecting 63 graduates out of this program. How does he figure this is going to address a shortage of 1100 nurses in Manitoba? He himself has said that 1500 more will be retiring over the next few years. How can this minister be so excited about a plan that is only going to put out 63 nurses when the challenges before us are absolutely much beyond what he has put into the system.

It was interesting, all through the summer and through Estimates, the Minister of Health was constantly seeking my approval for what he did. He seemed to be very, very insecure about this decision. As I had said at the time, it is not up to me to have to approve a program. It is up to the regulatory body. That is their role. They look at new programs that come in to be sure that they meet the criteria and meet the standards.

Having said that, though, it has put the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses in a very untenable situation between a rock and a hard place, because the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses has on their books a resolution as having a degree program as an entry-to-practice criteria.

What the Minister of Health did was politically interfere in a regulatory body's decision to regulate their own education programs and created, as I said, an untenable situation for this group of registered nurses.

I have to also wonder what is the minister's hidden agenda in not proclaiming the nursing acts. I have become convinced that there now is a hidden agenda. Royal assent had been given to this clearly some time ago, in fact in about June of 1999. Now we are still sitting with the regulatory bodies waiting for the act to be proclaimed. I have to believe that we have another hidden agenda from this NDP government, and now it is affecting nurses.

I think that this blatant lack of respect for RNs, LPNs and psych nurses is very obvious and certainly demands some answers. I know the regulatory bodies will be proceeding to address this situation with the minister, and I look forward to hearing more of their comments.

During the 1999 campaign, the Member for Concordia promised to shut down Grafton, and we know that that has not happened.

The Throne Speech is silent on community care, a concept the NDP certainly spoke about during the campaign. One has to wonder if they are turning their back on their commitment to community care. Long-term care and community care cannot afford to be overlooked in this government's hasty, haphazard approach to managing health care in Manitoba. In fact, what it seems to be right now is management by crisis du jour. Without a long-term plan in place, I think that is only going to continue.

I have spoken earlier about all of us waiting anxiously for the physician resource plan and certainly wondering why it has taken this minister 14 months to move on this, especially when we are hearing of clinics closing. We have seen a net loss of 13 specialists in this last year. I am anxiously waiting. I hope it is a comprehensive physician resource plan. I hope it is not just fast-tracking of IMGs, because I do not think that is going to be adequate to meet the needs in this province.

I certainly have some concern too about the inequity of payment of physicians, bringing back physicians into Manitoba with big salaries when the minister originally said that that was not what he was going to do. Apparently there is a group out there now, who even have a name—they call themselves the Committee for Fair and Open Remuneration—who is very, very distressed and question this minister's fairness in terms of dealing with issues out there. Certainly they have raised a lot of very valid concerns.

Then we have the Transcona situation, and here is another one where I think we have seen the citizens of Transcona extremely upset. In fact, a letter to the editor in Sunday's *Winnipeg Sun* is labelled "NDP betrays Transcona." Certainly the people there do feel very betrayed, Madam Acting Speaker. They felt there were no public consultations to address the moving of a very valued health care centre from their community. All they are asking this Government for is an opportunity to keep the centre in their community. They are very afraid that if the centre moves out, even for five years—which

seems like a pretty long time for just a temporary decision—they have great fears that this clinic will not be coming back to their community.

* (16:20)

We now have over 200 signatures on petitions coming out of that community. This is a very, very strong community-driven initiative, and all they want this Government to do is listen to them. They feel very betrayed that it was not until they went public that all of a sudden phone calls started to be returned to them.

I certainly hope that this Government, as they have requested—they have said we have supported the NDP for years and years. The first thing they do when they come into government is turn their backs on us. They betray us.

All they are asking for is for this Government to listen to them and at least give them a fair chance and a fair opportunity to have this topic, this concern of theirs, addressed.

We have seen waiting lists for radiation therapy go up in both prostate cancer and breast cancer. The radiation therapy waiting list in November of 1998 for prostate cancer was 10.6 weeks. In September of this year, it was up to 16 weeks. The breast cancer radiation therapy waiting list in 1999, November, was 6.4. September of 2000 it was up just over 12 weeks. So this is not a government, Madam Acting Speaker, that is anywhere near adequately meeting its election promises. In fact, in Estimates, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) said he was stunned to see that prostate and breast cancer waiting lists were at the dangerous level. Well, I guess he must feel a little bit stunned still that they are staying up.

Certainly we have concerns about the financial management that is occurring under this Minister of Health. There does not seem to be an attempt to control spending. During Estimates when we were asked what would happen if RHAs ran deficits, he did not have an answer. There does not seem to be any commitment from this Government to deal with burgeoning health care costs, and that, too, raises a huge concern for me and makes me wonder

why more was not addressed in the Throne Speech.

Rural health care—it seems we have had to fight quite hard in this last year to bring attention to rural health care issues. Everybody is still anxiously waiting to see what is going to happen with the template and anxiously waiting to see if we are going to have forced amalgamations of regional health authorities. Is this Minister of Health going to close rural hospitals? He is certainly making everybody wait on pins and needles before he comes up with any comments to the public one way or another. A number of the people in rural Manitoba are certainly feeling short-changed in terms of the emphasis being placed on rural health care issues. In fact, the Minister of Health did not even attend the prestigious opening of a rural hospital in Carberry recently.

Madam Acting Speaker, there are certainly issues of concern that have been raised recently with the Manitoba Medical Association putting forth an arbitration request to have MPI situations funded on a separate scale raising a lot of questions and certainly made us feel that this Health Minister is ducking major policy decisions and turning things over where they should not have.

Madam Acting Speaker, there are a number of other issues, but this Government's record on health care is best characterized by mismanagement and broken promises. Manitobans have seen that the commitments that were made indeed were empty promises, promises that have already been broken. To close my remarks I would like to call upon the Government to live up to all of its promises that it has made to Manitobans over the past 14 months. That is a challenge that I am issuing to all of the members opposite. For Manitoba's sake, I hope you can rise to that challenge. I look forward to serving the people of Charleswood as we move into a new legislative sitting.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): It is indeed an honour to rise to speak to our latest Throne Speech, the second one for our new provincial government. Of course, there are many issues that one would like to speak about, and I know there are many members of this House that

would like to have the opportunity to speak to this Throne Speech, including all of my colleagues, so I will try and be relatively brief in my remarks this particular session.

While there are a number of issues that have been raised here by the colleagues opposite, I first want to start off by welcoming and congratulating the new pages to our Legislative Chamber. A member of my family had the opportunity to be a page in this particular House this last session, and we think in our family we are quite proud of the work that she was able to accomplish and the experience that she gained by being a member of this Legislative Assembly. She looks back quite fondly on her time in this House and the experience that she gained in working with the members of this Assembly and in fact for the people of Manitoba. She asks us to convey to the members of this House her thanks for that particular opportunity.

I also hope that the new pages that are with us here for this session will enjoy their experience, and they too will gain broad experience and knowledge about our particular democratic process here in our province.

I would like to welcome the new interns that have been assigned to work with the various caucuses. The caucus of the Official Opposition and the Government caucus. We know that their work is very much valued and appreciated, and they do a fair amount of planning and research for us. We know that they too will gain valuable experience through the course of this coming year, at least up until the end of the summertime in which their particular term will expire, but I too hope they enjoy their experience in their new duties. It will be a positive and rewarding experience for them.

There are a number of issues relating to the Throne Speech, and I know members opposite have referenced particular issues relating to a community health centre. I will comment on that particular centre in a few moments, a bit later on in my speech here today. I thank the members opposite for raising this issue, but I can provide some background information. I will go into it in a few minutes just because I know the member opposite who raised it chose not to or was unable to participate in the public meeting to which she

had been invited by a member of our community. While I do appreciate her comments and sentiments about the health centre, we do know there were other circumstances that may have prevailed in this regard.

First I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). Without his particular support and guidance over the course of this last year we would not have been able to achieve a level of services that had been sorely lacking from the previous administration, in fact had been allowed to deteriorate quite significantly as a result of the previous government's inaction. I am referring specifically to the ambulance situation here in the city of Winnipeg. Many members of the Government caucus I know will be aware and perhaps some members opposite, although they come from many rural communities, recognize that ambulance services were deteriorating within the city of Winnipeg. In fact, there was going to be a problem where there was going to be interruption of ambulance services.

* (16:30)

Our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) immediately recognized this as a significant challenge and undertook to bring about a restoration of the services. In fact, our Minister of Health, in conjunction with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen), and our Premier (Mr. Doer), spoke on behalf of the citizens of Winnipeg in saying that we recognize that there was a problem and that there was a responsibility on the part of the provincial government to restore those ambulance services that had been so badly eroded by the previous administration. Our Government injected a little over \$4.5 million back into the ambulance services for the city of Winnipeg, restoring the ambulance service to the community of Transcona. I can tell the Minister of Health and our Government that the people of Transcona are very appreciative that our Government recognized the deterioration of ambulance services and that we restored the funding for that, and once again we have the ambulance service that Transcona and so many other communities of Winnipeg need and want and require to ensure safety of themselves and their family. So I thank the Minister of Health

for recognizing that and for injecting the funds into ambulance services.

Now I also want to talk a bit about the graduated licensing program. I know this past week when the Throne Speech was introduced by our Lieutenant-Governor, it was referenced that a graduated licensing program would be an initiative of our provincial government in this session. I know some members opposite are interested in this. I will not go into great detail because when the legislation comes forward we will be talking more at length, but I do want to thank members opposite who have been involved and interested in the graduated licensing proposal. I would also like to thank very warmly the people of Manitoba for their interest and participation in graduated licensing. I would also like to thank the members of our task force who so openly gave of themselves and participated in the process whereby our task force travelled through 14 different communities around the province of Manitoba in February of this year, consulting widely and broadly with the people of Manitoba about whether or not there was a need to have a graduated licensing system in our province.

Lastly, but not least, I would like to thank the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) who has with his assistance provided some support for this initiative. I know there are some issues that still need to be addressed, and we hope to address those in the coming weeks with respect to the items that have been identified by members of the public and also different groups within our province. We do hope to address those particular issues to represent the needs and the viewpoints of Manitobans. We definitely want to see the graduated licensing program move forward because we think there will be lives saved and injuries reduced as a result of these efforts. We will talk more about that as we move to the legislation, and we will talk more in detail about the process that had been worked through by the GDL Task Force.

In the Throne Speech, Madam Acting Speaker, we talked about equalization of hydro rates. Now I do not know if many members on the Opposition side of the House have had the opportunity to travel to northern Manitoba.

Perhaps they have not had that opportunity. Perhaps only a handful of them have travelled, but I know all of the members of my caucus have had the opportunity to talk with and to travel and to see first hand the different northern communities and the conditions under which many of these communities live. It seems unconscionable that any government would have in place a hydro rate plan that would charge more for hydro rates in northern Manitoba than they do for the larger communities of southern Manitoba like Winnipeg and Brandon.

Many members of this House will know that our hydro is generated in northern Manitoba. If you have had the opportunity to travel to see the vast infrastructure program that has been developed by Hydro which is owned by the people of Manitoba, investments are retained within the province for the benefit of the people of Manitoba and yet the hydro rates charged the residents of northern Manitoba where those dams are constructed, utilizing the land in northern Manitoba, are higher for the northern residents. So I congratulate our Government on their efforts to restore some balance and to equalize hydro rates for all Manitobans because we think it is important to have an equal opportunity no matter where you live in our province, whether it be in the city of Winnipeg, the city of Brandon or any other community of the province of Manitoba, including the North where hydro generation occurs. So I congratulate our Government on moving to equalize hydro rates throughout our province because I think it will provide economic opportunities for all of our communities, not just those in the larger centres. I can say that I am very proud that our Hydro has the lowest hydro rates in all of the world. Now I think that is a significant accomplishment, and I am quite proud to be part of the Government that is going to equalize those rates to make sure all Manitobans have that benefit.

Madam Acting Speaker, I do know that there has been some debate about whether or not the Crown should be involved with respect to the development of our communities. I know the previous government thought that Crowns were not a vital part. They would rather see the profits go into private shareholders' hands, and any shareholders' holdings would, of course, be

probably in southern Ontario or perhaps across the line in the state of New York. That is where the members opposite would like to see the profits go. I do not think that is the right way to be, and I can tell you that the members of my community, the people that I represent, very much believe in Crown corporations and the role that they can play in the development of our province.

The people of Transcona were quite distressed when the previous administration sold the Manitoba Telephone System. As many members of this House know, and members of the public know, Manitoba Telecom Services is now significantly higher in share value. So you obviously, as a previous government, undervalued the shares when you sold them, short-changing the Treasury and the people of Manitoba as a result of your actions. So we say that, as a representative of the people of Transcona, we believe strongly in strong, accountable Crown corporations.

We know Manitoba has played a significant role by the investments that they have made in our university, and we encourage Manitoba Hydro to continue to play that significant development role within our province. I personally believe in that. I think that is a role for our Crowns to play in this province. Now others here in this House think that that should not be the role and there are other issues that need to be looked at, how those decisions are arrived at, but that will be open for debate at some other time.

I also want to talk about the issue relating to Workplace Safety and Health. I do know and I want to congratulate our Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) for the initiative that she brought forward whereby our Government restored the number of inspectors in the Workplace Safety and Health branch of our Department of Labour. If any member of this House looks very clearly at even the newspaper today talking about the accident, the explosion at the smelter in Flin Flon, you will note that there are some serious problems that need to be addressed in the different workplaces of Manitoba, and we need to use the workplace inspectors we have to prevent injuries, not only to do education programs, but to go out and inspect and to

prevent the injuries from occurring. So I congratulate our minister on increasing the number of inspectors.

It is unfortunate that the previous administration had chosen to decrease the number of inspectors from I think it was in the range of the mid-30s, 35 inspectors, and you reduced it down into the low 20s for the total number of inspectors for our province, which seems strange. We have got—what?—40 000 businesses in Manitoba, and you decreased the number of inspectors, only looking to go at the so-called bad actors as identified under the Workers Compensation system. I think that is the wrong approach that your Government had taken, and I congratulate our Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) for increasing the number of inspectors.

Will it address all of the problems? No, but it goes a long way towards addressing the issues that are out there. We still have a responsibility on the parties, the employees and the employers, to ensure safe workplaces, and where the legislation requires Workplace Safety and Health committees mandated under legislation to make sure that they are functioning in the way that they were intended to do to prevent injuries and to deal with concerns in the workplace.

I also want to talk about the education and the education funding. I do know that education has been very much in the news over the course of the last year. I do want to thank our Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) who has worked very closely with issues that I have brought to his attention, to the attention of his department.

The families that are within my community where we have identified those concerns, the department has worked very co-operatively, and we have achieved some successes whereby we can help families that are in need. *[interjection]* While there is still some way to go—yes, and I will get to the busing question in a moment. There was an issue that was dealing with special needs, and I know that many of our communities have special—*[interjection]* Sorry, I did not catch that. *[interjection]* Well, perhaps the Member for I think it is Turtle Mountain—is that his constituency? *[interjection]* Well, it is interesting you say that, but the proposals that

came forward are very much out of the books that you have as a party with respect to contracting out. That was something that you very much believe in and you want to abolish all the unions in this province, but I think that is the wrong track to take, and I think that the parties can work co-operatively and resolve this particular issue. I have been trying to work with them now for some time to bring the parties back to the table to make sure that they try to resolve this in a fair and equitable manner for both sides, and I am hoping that there will be some progress on that issue this particular week.

With respect to the Throne Speech, going back to the Throne Speech, Madam Acting Speaker, I was quite happy to see our Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) and our Government make the announcements with respect to a downtown campus for Red River College. We think that that particular project is long overdue. It will help to rejuvenate the centre of the city of Winnipeg. It will give opportunities to young people. I know the people of Transcona who access the services of Red River College had to travel to the far side of the city for their education which in inclement weather, as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) will know, can make it very difficult because the people would have to travel on icy highway conditions, which I know the Member quite openly recognizes.

We are quite happy to see that those educational opportunities will be brought closer to the centre of the city which will help to rejuvenate the downtown Winnipeg area. We know that as a result of that, there will obviously be small businesses that will open and start to help service those new educational facilities. So there will be greater small business opportunities for them as well as increased educational opportunities for the people of Winnipeg, including the people of Transcona.

I would also congratulate our Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) on the decisions that were made with respect to our last provincial Budget. I know we are in the process of going through the Estimates process now, as members opposite will know who are no doubt familiar with that particular process, but I do want to congratulate our Minister of Finance for the 10%

tuition fee reduction that our Government brought forward in this last provincial Budget, and I encourage our Minister of Finance to consider new and innovative ways where we can help to lessen the financial burden on our young people as they wish to achieve their post-secondary education levels.

There are other opportunities that will arise as a result of the small business tax reduction. We think that this is a significant investment opportunity for small business, and I hear that there are businesses that are relocating to the province of Manitoba from other jurisdictions to the west of us, and that is good news for the province of Manitoba. I do know that the many thousands of the poorest families of Manitoba will no longer be on the tax rolls of our province as a result of our latest provincial Budget, and we think that is good news for our working poor in Manitoba.

There is an issue that is occurring within my community relating to an industry, New Flyer Industries. New Flyer Industries had been an operation of the provincial government in the '80s and the previous, previous provincial government chose to sell that Flyer Industries to owners who were in Holland. Of course, Mr. den Oudsten has since relocated to Canada and is living here in the city of Winnipeg and owns New Flyer Industries.

New Flyer Industries, when they started they were an innovative and still are the leader in the manufacture of buses, transit buses, for all of North America. New Flyer Industries I think has gone through an expansion. I know the previous government, to give them their due, recognized that New Flyer Industries had an opportunity to expand, to increase their product line and to reach new customers with that particular product, the low-floor bus that was being manufactured which was innovative and was the cutting edge of bus technology in the world. I know I had encouraged the previous government to require or attach some strings on the money they were giving to the City of Winnipeg to encourage the City of Winnipeg to purchase this particular technology in the new buses, but they chose to ignore that and left it to the City of Winnipeg to make their own decision, which took a number of years before the City finally

realized that this new bus technology was important and would better serve the citizens of our city.

New Flyer, of course, manufactured the complete bus from the ground up. We thought that, as a result of that, we were going to see expanded opportunities, since about 80 percent of their particular product they manufactured actually is sold to the various different municipal and state governments in the United States.

What we have seen over the course of the last few years is an erosion of the manufacturing that occurs on these buses. In fact, as a result of the pressures that the U.S. federal government has brought to bear, a fair amount of the production now of these buses is required to transfer across the line into the United States. I know or hope that your Government had been aware of it. It is an issue that we are going to have to address.

When the buses were first manufactured, the low-floor buses that went across the line, they were a completed unit, seats, windows, power trains, axles. They were shipped across ready to go into service. As a result of pressures brought about by the American federal government, they would not allow grants to occur to various municipalities in the states or state governments unless there was a buy-American policy attached to it.

So the New Flyer buses had to take the step of transferring some of their work. In fact, they actually had to build a plant in the United States to complete the buses, because power trains were not allowed to be included in the finished product. They had to be final assembled in the United States. Then, as a result of that, the bus manufacturers were no longer allowed to put the seats—New Flyer was no longer allowed to put the seats in the buses that were being transferred across the line.

Now the latest revelation that has occurred is New Flyer buses are no longer allowed to put axles on these buses. In fact, these bus shells now are transferred on flatbed semitrailers to the United States to another new plant that has been built, transferring 900 jobs out of the province of Manitoba. The previous government had

allowed this to occur. So this is a problem that we are going to have to deal with now in our Government to make sure that these jobs no longer—*[interjection]* Yes, free trade was sure working well under your Government, I can say that. You transferred 900 jobs out of the province and out of the city. Shame on you, I say. We lost 900 jobs in the community of Transcona as a result of your inaction and inability to deal with this particular concern. So we are going to be left with the challenge now of trying to stop the erosion of the assembly of these buses to the United States and to try to bring back some of that work into the city of Winnipeg here.

You may not care about that, but there was an announcement that came out last week where people are going to be laid off in the month of January as a result of the inability to complete these buses. So now you need to know that the inaction of your Government is creating some problems further down the road that we are left to deal with. We are going to have to deal with that as a government to protect the jobs here in Manitoba. *[interjection]* Well, that is an issue we are going to have to deal with.

I am glad to see the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) recognizes that we should buy back the company. At least it seems that he is encouraging us to do that. That is obviously one of the many, many options that needs to be considered. I think we need to address between our Government, the federal government and the American federal government that free trade is not working in these circumstances and that we are seeing an erosion of jobs and business opportunities here in our province as a result of that buy-American-only policy.

I want to talk for a few moments further to the Throne Speech. I know the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) has raised this issue relating to the community health access centre in Transcona. I have had the opportunity to work with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority with our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). The Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and I have worked to try to resolve this particular issue. I know the Member for Charleswood chose not to or was unable to attend the public meeting that was held a week

ago Thursday in the community of Transcona, whereby the Member for Radisson and I had the opportunity to go out and relate to some residents of Transcona the issues surrounding this particular decision.

It was in the summertime of this year that we realized that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority had made the decision to keep a commitment that they had made to the employees of that particular health access centre. I am infuriated and embarrassed that the previous government allowed this access centre in Transcona to deteriorate to the point that it is currently is at. You allowed that access centre to sit there. It was your government that allowed the current health centre to deteriorate to the point that it is at right now. You have no wheelchair access for that facility. You have leaking roofs, no doubt with mould building up in the wall. You have employees working back to back, shoulder to shoulder in cramped conditions for the last 10 years.

You did not realize, obviously, or did not care about the conditions that were there under which the employees had to work and the lack of services to the community of Transcona with respect to home care and health care. So I say to you, you have to take some responsibility for your inaction and the inaction of your Health Minister when you were in government.

* (16:50)

Our Winnipeg Health Authority—and thanks to our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) who combined the long-term care and the Winnipeg Health Authority into the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority—recognized immediately that Transcona was at a disadvantage with respect to health care services and the substandard conditions under which we were asking the employees of that health centre to work. So the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority made the decision to relocate and to bring new services to the people of Transcona because we are expanding the level of services to our community.

Now we could not find space comparable to match the needs of that health centre, so we have temporarily made a move to a new location.

Now that location is a temporary relocation. I know our Minister of Health has talked about it here on the record just when he made his own Throne Speech comments here. Now I know there are a number of hoops that have to be jumped through here. There is a Treasury Board process. There is Cabinet and Premier (Mr. Doer) and then there is caucus that have to make the final decisions. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) obviously has to make his budget announcement, so I know there is a whole series of decisions that have to be made.

I can tell members of this House and the members of my community, the MLA for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and I are working very diligently to make sure that that health access centre is realized and is built in the community of Transcona, and we will not give up our efforts to make sure that that is realized. I thank the Minister of Health for his comments that were made just recently with respect to that centre. I know that he has left the Winnipeg regional people to provide the best advice with respect to health care services because after all they are the experts. They have brought us the plan. They have told us that Transcona has proudly stood on its own merit with respect to the services that are required and we will continue to work within our Government to make sure that that new health access centre is realized for Transcona. So I thank our Minister of Health for his support, and we will continue to work to make sure that that becomes a reality.

There are a number of other projects that are on that list. As we have told the public openly in the public meeting a little over a week ago, Transcona is standing on its own merit and is second on that list of projects. We think that that places it well for the near future. So we will be encouraging our Government to carry through with that particular commitment.

Now there are members of our community who say, well, do not relocate that health centre, just leave it where it is. I can tell you I have had the opportunity to go and to see that particular facility on many occasions. In fact, for members of this House who may not know, that particular health centre used to be an old credit union building complete with vault. So we have employees who are working in and out of the

vault, and they are working back to back in cramped quarters, substandard conditions. If members of the public want to come in and have a private health meeting with members of the home care or health care staff in that building, there is no place that you can go to have a private meeting in that structure. There is no place that you can talk about your private health care needs.

So I know that the health staff in that particular facility currently want to see a relocation. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has made a commitment to the staff, and they are keeping that commitment, something that we value very highly. I know if there is any failing in this process, we wish that there had been broader open public consultations before the decision had been made. But looking at all of the facts surrounding this case, I think that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority in looking for appropriate facilities recognized—and we have the lists that were made available to the public showing that there were no appropriate-sized facilities contained within the community as it presently occurs with respect to vacant space when the decision was made. Therefore I think the regional health authority made the decision at the time based on the knowledge and the facts that they had available to them. We hope and know that Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has recommended the new health access centre and that we will continue to work towards that end.

Madam Acting Speaker, there are, of course, many other members of the House that would like to have the opportunity to speak on the Throne Speech, but I can tell you that I am quite encouraged by what we see and hear contained within this Throne Speech. I know that we made some significant steps in our first Throne Speech. This goes another step towards the achieving the goals that we have set out. We have achieved a level of support from the people of the province of Manitoba in the last provincial election. We are working towards those commitments that we made to the people, and we will continue to work towards those goals.

So I thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to stand here today to speak to

the issues that are important to the people of the community of Transcona and to congratulate our ministers on the work that they have undertaken on behalf of the people of Manitoba and encourage them to continue down that road and to do the things that we know that the people of Manitoba want to service all of our communities. So I thank you for the opportunity to add my comments here today.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I am pleased to be able to rise today to add my comments to the Throne Speech. I begin, first of all, by thanking or congratulating my leader, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Murray), for being elected and welcome him into this Chamber along with the new member from Tuxedo, who has joined us in the Chamber, and certainly want to wish both of them well in their endeavours and in their work to represent their constituents and indeed to represent Manitobans in the Chamber here.

I also want to welcome the new pages that we have in our Assembly, in our Legislature this term. I know they are a very important part of the work of this Assembly, and indeed I want to welcome them into this Chamber and wish them well as they carry out their responsibilities.

I begin my remarks not specifically to the Throne Speech but to a process, because the process that we embark on in this Legislature has been one that has been historic in the Province of Manitoba, and indeed each year the Throne Speech begins by a reading of the Throne Speech from the Throne.

There was some mention made about some noise that was happening here in the Chamber during the reading of the Throne Speech at the beginning. Just as the Lieutenant-Governor stood up in his place, the former leaders of our Chamber, the former speakers of this House said this is an unusual process. What do we do? The parliamentary tradition throughout ages is that when the representative of the monarch rises in the presence of his subjects, the subjects rise. Unless he commands them to be seated they remain standing during the time that he or she is standing as well.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

We in this Chamber had a responsibility, in my view, to uphold the tradition that has been here through the ages, one where the representative of the monarch, the Lieutenant-Governor, rises in his place at the Throne, then all of us as his subjects and the subjects of Her Majesty should rise as well. We should remain risen in that position until such time that we are commanded to take our places or commanded to sit.

That particular day there was a bit of confusion in terms of whether we should rise or whether we should remain sitting, whether we should rise with the Lieutenant-Governor as he rose from the Throne or whether we in fact should remain sitting. I think that all of us in this Chamber made a bit of an error that particular day, because I think that indeed we should, when the representative of the monarch rises, I think all his subjects should rise until he gives the command that perhaps we should be seated. I do not know, Mr. Speaker. I may be wrong, but he is indeed a representative that is not just simply a representative chosen by the people of this province. He is appointed by the Government of Canada for a specific purpose. I think that is something maybe I can be corrected on. Maybe I can have some knowledge passed on to me in terms of whether in fact my observations in that regard were correct.

However, having said that, I move on to the essence of the Throne Speech. This is the second Throne Speech that we have heard delivered from this Government, and one that in the first few sentences probably talked about a vision, establishing a vision for the direction that our province under the leadership of this Government would go, because the first words of the Throne Speech looked at a student living in the year 2020 and where would this student be and what would be happening to this young individual. In that regard, one would have believed that the Throne Speech would have set a direction, set a vision for our province in terms of how we should proceed over the course of the next 20 years or so. So there was a huge emphasis in the Throne Speech placed on the whole area of education. That is an area that I would consider an important area for me because

of my background and because of my interest in the subject. I looked very closely and very carefully at what was being said with regard to education and educating our students so that they are equipped with the tools necessary for them to take their place in society in the workforce in the year 2020.

Sadly, I have to say that I was somewhat disappointed in what was in that whole section on education, even though it took a large part of the Throne Speech. Now I am not going to condemn every aspect of it because I think I can see beyond that. I think there were elements that could be supported in the Throne Speech in terms of some of the issues as they relate to education because all of us support the concept of better education for our students. If that were the only part of the Throne Speech that we were asked to vote on, there would probably be elements in there that all of us would agree should be supported. But if you look at the overall picture, the overall thrust, there were nice words there, but there was nothing concrete in terms of how we were going to measure the ability of our students to compete in tomorrow's society, how we were going to establish standards that would allow our students to compete in tomorrow's society. It was more of a wishy-washy approach to how we were going to achieve some of these noble goals that we want to achieve.

* (17:00)

I want to talk about education specifically because that is a topic that is near and dear to me. We see a huge controversy out in rural Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg about the issue of the Grade 3 assessment. Now I remember very well the first Throne Speech and the fact that education under this Government was going to start taking a different direction. As a matter of fact, they objected to the whole concept of standard testing. They wanted to go to something that was called an achievement test, an assessment test that was going to measure the progress of students at the beginning of a Grade 3 year so that teachers could then address the shortcomings over the course of the year. The Premier (Mr. Doer) promised Manitobans that every child would be

reading at a Grade 3 level at the end of their Grade 3 year.

We begin the second year of their mandate, and what do we find? Yes, there is an assessment test at the school level, but that assessment test is one that is now being administered and being developed by local teachers. Now the teacher has to spend the time to not only conduct the test but to make the test, to conduct the test and then correct the test. Here we are in December, and some of these achievement tests have not been completed yet. I ask the question: How is it that we are going to administer those tests in December, then try to address the shortcomings and have the students tested by June so that in fact the Premier's guarantee of having each student being able to read at a Grade 3 level can be achieved? I do not think that is feasible. I do not think that is possible. I think it is a hope that this government had but did not have an idea of how they were going to administer and how they were going to carry out, unfortunately, the old promise that was given to Manitobans.

That is just the beginning of it, because I talk to teachers a lot. A lot of the people that I associate with are educators. There is a deep sense of frustration in terms of the lack of support that is coming for implementing new programs in our schools, for implementing new curriculum in our schools, for even the department coming out and giving any specific direction on how we are supposed to achieve some of those goals that we have in education.

That is the shortcoming of this Throne Speech in terms of education. Although there are some lofty goals that are put into words here, there is no critical path in how to achieve these goals. That is what is missing from the Throne Speech. There is no way in which one can identify taking a course of action to ensure that the ends are achieved, that the goals are achieved that are set out in the Throne Speech.

Over the course of the next two or three years it is my sincere hope that our students are not abandoned, that indeed they are going to be given the skills that are required to be able to give them every opportunity to compete in the

new world, to compete in the new global economy, to compete in our new society.

The area of health care was another important area that I noted in the Throne Speech. That is an area that I was somewhat amazed that there was very little mention of. It was almost an avoidance of discussion of the health areas in the Throne Speech. I think I was not the only one shocked in the province of Manitoba. As a matter of fact, any Manitoban who look at the Throne Speech will see that health was absent in the issues of the Throne Speech.

Now, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) says to me that no it was not. Well, she should identify where the health section is in the Throne Speech and highlight how many initiatives this government has really announced in health care. She would find that she could probably count them all on one hand even with a few less fingers. She says they are not doing a good job of health care. Well, I agree. They are not doing a good job of health care. I think that is being noticed by Manitobans. Manitobans are telling us that this government is not committing its promises.

I want to talk about the issue of broken promises. Health care is one of the areas where we have the largest number of broken promises by this government of any other area. I go back to the time when we were campaigning in the last election, the election that our side lost, and I noticed that the now-Premier said we will fix the health care system and we will do it in six months. Six months have come and gone. We have changed hallway medicine into highway medicine. In other words, people from rural Manitoba, from my area, from the Member for Dauphin's (Mr. Struthers) area are finding it much more difficult to get in to see specialists in the city of Winnipeg than they ever have in their previous past. I can tell you that people in rural Manitoba today are finding that they almost have to get on their knees to beg to be admitted into the major facilities here in the city of Winnipeg.

I can give you several illustrations of where people have been denied access, people who have suffered cardiac arrest have been denied access to the facilities here in Winnipeg. Now, that is a cute way of reducing the waiting lists

and reducing the people in the hallways, but it is certainly not any way to deliver health care to the rural people of our province. I hear almost on a weekly basis of issues of this nature regarding health care.

Just yesterday I was in the presence of some health care professionals. I did not broach the topic because this was a social event, but a couple of them approached me and said: "We have just about had it with health care in Manitoba. The sooner we can get out, the better." And I said: "What is your issue?" They said: "The system is going down the tube." They said: "We cannot take this anymore."

Admittedly, nobody can fix health care in the flash of a moment, in the wink of an eye. You cannot fix it in six months, although that is what the Health Minister (Mr. Chomiak) promised. That is what the Premier (Mr. Doer) promised. They said they would fix it in six months. We know how erroneous that kind of promise is.

Finally, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) admitted that it was a short-sighted promise. The Minister of Finance, in his address regarding health care, said that if they had had to do it again, they would not have made that promise, that indeed it was not a reasonable promise to make. Somebody finally came clean and put on the table what the reality of the situation was.

I do not care what stripe of government it is. I do not care which minister you have in that chair and in that position. Healthcare is not something that can be fixed overnight. Health care is not something that can be fixed by one person or one government. It is an approach that we have to look at very carefully. Every government is going to make its changes regarding the system to try and improve and modernize the system and make it more responsive to the needs of Manitobans.

I will applaud initiatives where that is done, Mr. Speaker, but when one makes unreasonable promises just to get the votes of Manitobans, I think that is a misleading of people, leading them in the wrong direction, and giving them a lot of false hope.

* (17:10)

I can see why there was an avoidance of the health care issues in the Throne Speech, because I do not believe the Government has a plan. They said they would come forward with a plan. We have no plan to date. We are still waiting for a plan. Whether it is with regard to the recruitment of doctors, whether it is with regard to an overall plan for the system to be more responsive, or whether it is a plan to address the deficits that our health care facilities are facing, we see no concrete evidence. No plan has been put forward to the people of this province to show them how we are going to address each and every issue. Yes, every day we listen to this Government tell us what a fantastic job they are doing. When we ask a question of this Government, the only thing they can do is hark back to the days of the previous administration. They now understand they cannot fix the problems overnight, that indeed it is a far bigger problem than they had ever imagined and that indeed it will take some time to fix it.

I want to address one other issue in health care. That is the issue of health care professionals called nurses. From time to time we see comments made by the Premier (Mr. Doer) and by members of the opposite side that we cut a thousand nurses in this province. That is a falsehood. I have to call it a falsehood and that is what it is. If you go back and take a look at the number of facilities that were open under our administration, the number of beds that were open, the number of long-term beds that were open, beds where people had to work, those beds were filled with professionals who were hired and who worked in those places.

When you talk about firing a thousand nurses, one may think that really happened, but show me where that happened. Show me where it took place, Mr. Speaker. You will find that indeed anybody who makes that kind of an offhand comment is spreading a falsehood, is spreading an abject falsehood. I ask the Government to start being fair with the people of this province and not misleading them, and not leading them down a road where we will see this whole area of health care become a disaster in our province. We cannot afford a disaster in health care in Manitoba.

No government can adequately address all of the issues that we have before us in health care in a short period of time. Those are issues that are going to take the brains and the will and the work of many people to try and resolve, and we have to work together to resolve some of those issues, not apart. I call on this Government to put aside the blame tactics that they have used, and they have used these for 12 years. In fact, if you take a look at where health care is in Manitoba and compare it to any other jurisdiction, and you start asking people whether or not they have been looked after adequately over the course of the last decade or two, they will tell you that they have really not had a lot of problems with health care in Manitoba.

There are instances, and under this minister there are instances as well, but I do not blame him for that. I mean it is an ongoing system. It is an evolving system. There are problems, and there are going to be challenges, and he is going to face probably the most number of challenges of any minister on that side of the bench in his portfolio of Health. I also have to say that, despite his aggressive criticism when he was sitting in this chair on this side of the House, I think he has learned that indeed there are issues that cannot be solved right away, he has learned that some of those issues may never be solved, he has learned that in six months he cannot fix the system as he thought he could. I bet when he becomes the Opposition critic for Health again in the next few short years, he will not address himself in the way he did previously because he has learned a great deal in the last few short months.

An Honourable Member: Tell us about Russell's chemotherapy unit.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Dauphin wants me to talk about—

An Honourable Member: Roblin.

Mr. Derkach: Oh, well, he kind of represents Roblin, too, I guess. He represents part of Roblin, let us put it that way. The member from Dauphin-Roblin tells me from his seat that I should talk about the chemotherapy unit in Russell, the chemotherapy unit in Hamiota. Those are good initiatives, but those initiatives

are ones that started long before this Government came into power.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Derkach: Well, now, listen to the aw's, but the member from Dauphin-Roblin was at the cutting ceremony, ribbon-cutting ceremony, and indeed he heard that day that this was an initiative that had started four years ago. So some of these initiatives started long before this Government came into action. They have had the opportunity to cut the ribbons on some of these new initiatives, but indeed those were initiatives that were started by the previous administration and basically fulfilled by the former administration.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say to my friend the member from Dauphin-Roblin that he is a very kind and reasonable person at these opening ceremonies, and I was happy to join him—and he invited me to join him—in the cutting ceremony. I give him full marks for that because that is what representation as an MLA should be all about. I tried to do it when I was minister, and indeed I congratulate him as the representative of this Government in doing that as well. Members of that side do that. I give them full marks for that because I think Manitobans do not want us sparring every minute of the day. They want to see that we can work from time to time in a collaborative and a co-operative way.

The member from Dauphin-Roblin almost put me off my address here. Before I know it, I will be commending him for everything if I do not watch myself.

An Honourable Member: Careful.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I will not go that far.

I would now like to turn my attention to another area I worked in for a large part of my life, and that is the area of agriculture. I did not start my career out as a farmer or as an agriculturist; I started my career as a teacher, spent a good number of years there, and then somehow I ended up in farming. I have not regretted it. I have actually enjoyed it. When I look at the whole issue of agriculture today—and

that again presents a real challenge for all of us in this Assembly. Now I know that the people in the agricultural sector, Mr. Speaker, are looking to Government for leadership. They are looking for Government to show them how it is that we are going to survive in agriculture over the course of the next five to ten years. This cannot be a short-sighted approach. We have to have a long-term strategy on how we are going to address the problems, the challenges that exist in agriculture.

Federally, unfortunately, we have not had a lot of support. As a province, as a provincial government, whether it was our government or this Government, we have not collectively had a great deal of support from Ottawa, and to a large extent that has been very frustrating to the ministers, very frustrating to the governments and has not given the kind of support to our producers that they require. I guess when we had the flood of the century, because it was during the election period, the federal government became very generous overnight and just poured money in to try and help people who were in trouble, and that was the right thing to do.

An Honourable Member: Chrétien even put up a sandbag.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, the Prime Minister even threw a sandbag. But, Mr. Speaker, that was a time when people were in desperate straits here in Manitoba. Although we did not know how long a duration that would last for, we did come forward with immediate help.

* (17:20)

Mr. Speaker, two years later, that same kind of disaster, but one that was far more severe in terms of its lasting impact than the '97 flood, was the 1999 flood. Unfortunately, I, as a southwestern Manitoban, was caught in that flood as well, so I have some first-hand experience in the kinds of pain that that inflicted on the families, on the community and on people in those areas and the enterprises in that area. When the flood of '99 came about, we as a government went out to Brandon after calls for help, and we did announce a help package to the farmers of Manitoba, \$50 per acre. We said we will pay it out now and we will try to collect our

money from the federal government in the interim.

At the same time, we launched a task force, and it is referred to now as the Bob Rose Task Force, the late Bob Rose Task Force, I might say, and that task force went around to the communities in southwestern Manitoba and dialogued with people as to what kinds of programs might be targeted to help the people who had the hurt. That report came back to us in late September—as a matter of fact, it was two days after the election was called that I received a copy of that report—and in that report there were certain recommendations that were made that were impressed upon government to be carried out immediately.

Mr. Speaker, we could not carry those out because we found out one month later that indeed we lost—I said September 21; I think it was August 19 that I received the report—the election on September 21, and therefore there was no way we could implement any of those changes. That report was turned over to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) to carry out either the recommendations or to implement the strategies that were suggested in that report. But to date we have not seen that implemented, and indeed we are waiting to see whether or not the Government will act on any of those recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, what is more disturbing to me is that provincially our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has not acted on any of the recommendations of that report, but neither has she come forward with any meaningful help to the people who suffered the flooding situations in 1999. If you look at the Throne Speech here, there is no evidence that indeed the Government is going to act in any meaningful way on initiatives that will help the flooded victims of the 1999 flood, and since then the people of southeastern Manitoba have suffered a flood, and they indeed are waiting for some compensation, and nothing has been forthcoming in that regard.

In an overall sense, I do not know what the Minister of Agriculture's plan is for agriculture in our province. I do not know what this Government's plan is for agriculture in

Manitoba. They talk about a mentoring program. Well, Mr. Speaker, the best mentor for agriculture in Manitoba are the parents of young children who want to begin farming, because it is their parents who can give them the direction, can give them the support, can be the mentors in establishing and continuing on with the farm families in our province.

The day has long gone when a family can survive on a quarter section or a section of land. Those days are long gone. Today, in order to be able to succeed on a farm, to be able to sustain yourself, you need far more than a quarter section or a section. You need to be diversified. You need to have an ability to be able to bring other income, either from an outside source or from that farm, to help you survive.

That is why we as a government had a thrust in diversifying the agriculture economy, and that is why we drove some initiatives such as providing an environment that was friendly to invite a diversified industry into our province. Yes, there were experimental projects that were done. Some were more successful than others. Some will continue to exist; some will not. I can point at some. Our rural economy can only survive if we give it the opportunities and if we support it to be able to diversity itself, to be able to attract processing, to attract manufacturing into every jurisdictional part of this province. If we do not do that, our province, our small communities are going to die.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is incumbent upon the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) to lead the way in showing how our farm economy can be diversified, how we can start producing other products that are needed in the marketplace, how we can get away from the old traditional ways of farming which are not relevant today and get into the new economy, if you like, and become competitive with other producers across this world.

You know I say this every time I speak in the House that our producers in Manitoba are some of the best in the world. They produce the best product in the world, the highest-quality product in the world. Yet, collectively, we do not support them at the level that they should be supported.

When I used to travel to other parts of this world, especially to Europe, I could not believe the supports that the agriculture community was getting in those regions of the world. I know that we do not like subsidies, farmers do not like subsidies, but when you are competing against the American government and against the economic European community you have to be able to call on the assistance of your government to help you to fight these forces. Until governments, provincial and federal, get their act together our agricultural producers are going to continue to suffer in a terrible state.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture leads me into conservation. I looked at the announcements that were made in the Throne Speech with regard to the Department of Conservation. I would have to say that it is a fairly aggressive agenda that has been put forward to the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin). I do not know how one minister is going to be able to manage the additional work that was assigned through the Throne Speech in addition to what he already has. We have amalgamated two departments and now we are demanding that this minister carry on his shoulders a greater load yet. Well, when I look at the record of the minister and the fact that he has not been able to fulfil his responsibilities under his former responsibilities under the Department of Conservation I just do not know how he is going to be able to address the issues of the Throne Speech.

Farmers, people in Manitoba, have been crying out to this minister to give them some direction. They have been crying out to him to show some leadership, to tell them how they are going to address some of the issues and some of the concerns that lie before them. So I hope that there is going to be some support in terms of dealing with these issues as they have been laid out by the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about industry. Now industry is an important part of our province. In order for us to be competitive to attract industry in our province, we have to have a tax system in our province that is going to be attractive, is going to be competitive, and it is going to be one which attracts industry to it. What we have seen over the course of the last Budget and the Throne Speech, there is no relief in sight for the

taxpayers of our province. As a matter of fact, our families that are earning \$40,000 or more are going to see themselves at the top of the heap in terms of the amount of taxes that they pay to government. Why is that? Because this Government has not addressed the issue of tax relief. We see every jurisdiction in Canada talk about the importance of lowering taxes, of giving some relief to the taxpayers, and yet in Manitoba we seem to be going the other way. I think that is a wrong-headed approach. I do not believe that we can ever present ourselves as an attractive province for people to live, to work, and to raise their families if we continue to reach into their pockets and take those hard-earned tax dollars out of their pockets faster than any other jurisdiction in Canada. You just cannot do that and expect that you are going to be an attractive province to people from outside of our province.

If we want to invite back the people who have left our province over the course of the last two decades, we are not going to be able to do it with a tax regime that is more aggressive, that is higher, that takes more money out of your pocket than any other tax system in Canada. That is what we have become, Mr. Speaker. That is why in 1988 people chose a different path because we were the highest taxed province in Canada at that time and people voted out a government because of that reason.

We see this Government going in exactly the same direction. Should we be surprised when I see that in the back rooms of this Government we have Mr. Eugene Kostyra and Mr. Vic Schroeder who are holding the levers of this Government and directing this Government in the direction that they are. It was under Mr. Kostyra's leadership as Minister of Finance that this Government and this province went to the extent of having the highest taxes in all of Canada. We are going that way again.

Companies are going to avoid Manitoba as a result of that. That is a sad thing to say because we all want our children to find jobs in Manitoba. We all want them to stay in this province, but if companies that employ these people are going to leave Manitoba, then what hope is there left for those Manitobans who want to fulfill their dreams here in this beautiful part of the world?

* (17:30)

So I call on the Government to re-examine its priorities, to look again at how they are addressing the whole issue of taxation. The Premier (Mr. Doer) announced that we were decoupling our tax system from the federal system one year early. But what did that do? That meant that the tax savings, the tax credits that were being passed on by the federal government were not going to be passed on in Manitoba. Instead, they were going to end up in the pockets of this Government rather than in the pockets of Manitobans who know how to spend that money best.

It is a sad day when government begins to use that kind of a tactic to enrich its own coffers. I think it is a wrong-headed direction. It is a direction that cannot be sustained. It is a direction that Manitobans, quite frankly, are not going to tolerate for a long period of time.

I think it is a sense of poor judgment on the part of this Government in doing that. I think it is a hidden agenda that they are heading in. I think it is a hidden agenda in that this gives them the extra funds to be able to carry out their agendas, but indeed it does nothing for the ordinary people who pay those hard-earned tax dollars to this Government. It does nothing for them.

I think this is going to be an interesting session. I think we are going to have some rocky times in this House because of the fact that this Government is not going in the direction that it had indicated it was going to go in when it was elected. We see hidden agendas. We see broken promises. We see a Premier (Mr. Doer) who says one thing and does another and that cannot be tolerated and will not be tolerated by Manitobans.

Our responsibility as an Opposition is to keep the Government accountable. That is our whole agenda, to keep the Government accountable for the programs, for the actions that they take on behalf of Manitobans. That is the Opposition's role. As an Opposition member, I will continue to do my job to ensure that indeed this Government is accountable to the people of this province, that it is accountable to the people

of the Russell constituency whom I represent. Indeed, every day that I work in this Chamber, I will ensure that this Government is held accountable.

I thank you for the opportunity of addressing the House this afternoon in terms of the Throne Speech for this fiscal year.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): It is indeed a pleasure to be able to address the Manitoba Legislature again. Last year I had the opportunity as my first speech in this Legislature and indeed it was a pleasure. I certainly look forward to addressing the Throne Speech again this year. Before I do that, I certainly want to congratulate the new members from Kirkfield Park and Tuxedo. I know that they are going to find this not only challenging but really a worthwhile thing that they are doing in their tenure in this Legislature because even the short year that I have spent here, Mr. Speaker, I have had an opportunity to meet so many delegations and groups that I would not have normally met in my profession as a teacher. I know that certainly Mr. Murray's challenge ahead of him is great, being not only a new member to the Legislature but also the Leader of the Official Opposition as well.

I thought about my address today, and I was wondering about the approach I might take. Last year as a new member I went through my background and what I bring to this Legislature and I believe what I bring to my constituents of La Verendrye. This year I thought I might address some comments that have been made by other members with regard to the Throne Speech, but also I thought that I would certainly want to make some comments on what we as a government have done in the past year and certainly what this year's Throne Speech attempts to address.

First of all, with regard to last year's Throne Speech and where we have tried to go as a government, obviously coming in as a new government and facing the challenges that we had, not having been in power and in government for a number of years, getting to know what governing is all about and getting to know the different departments and so on was a big challenge. We were able to do that and

certainly come up with, I believe, a good Budget, a very responsible Budget. The commitments we made to the people of Manitoba, I believe, were reasonable and balanced. The people of Manitoba, certainly my constituency and constituents, have passed this on to me, and I am sure members on this side have received those kinds of comments as well.

If I might, I just want to touch on education a little bit and move on to a number of different issues. With regard to education and the funding that we provided into education, I believe the amount certainly has been talked about, \$10 million-plus, depending on what figures you use. The influx of those dollars that we put into education has really been received positively—because the institutions themselves, whether they be community college or University of Manitoba or University of Brandon and so on, or University of Winnipeg—was drastically needed. We, in last year's Throne Speech, talked about young people and the importance of young people to Manitoba. Now education plays a key and important role in that particular commitment, and with regard to the young people of this province, a strong education, a good education to them indeed is something that not only do they depend on but in order to have Manitoba prosper and have this province prosper, I believe is a real key.

So our economic policy is really linked very closely with our education policy, and it is something we believe strongly in. I know there have been comments from members opposite about cutting ceremonies. I do not want to get into cutting ceremonies because we all know the cutting that took place over 11 years, but we certainly got into a lot of ribbon cutting. One particular example was a fibre cutting that I was involved in with a company that invested in Manitoba, approximately \$80 million or so. They just decided to come to Manitoba because of our diverse workforce. The people of Manitoba, they feel that they can count on those particular workers to fill the void that is there. I know in my own particular constituency, Mr. Speaker, a number of different projects and challenges that lie there were really not addressed with the previous administration. This is something I want to thank the Minister of Highways for (Mr. Ashton), for example.

We often heard comments—and this is not meant to be a point which will cause debate necessarily—but we often hear comments from members opposite about the lack of consideration for rural Manitoba. We have a number of different members on this side of the House who are from rural Manitoba, and we are very proud of that fact. The point that I am getting at is that the Minister of Highways and other ministers and our caucus and people on this side of the House feel strongly that we want to serve all parts of Manitoba, not just certain areas of Manitoba.

I want to give one particular example in southern Manitoba which is the twinning of Highway 59. I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) for listening to the constituents in the southern part of the province who regarded that particular highway as a death trap. There were many, many individuals who have been seriously injured and a great other number who have died as a result of the traffic on that highway. The Minister of Highways realized there was a need there that had to be addressed and made sure that through his budgetary processes there were monies to fund that highway, not promises, not stakes, not surveyors just going out a month before the election but actually doing something about it. So I want to congratulate him from the people of southern rural Manitoba for doing that.

* (17:40)

Also, just giving a couple of examples from my own particular constituency, in a small town called Ste. Anne, Manitoba, there is a personal care home there that needed a lot of work, 66 units to be precise. This is something, again, I am pleased to see the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) here today, because a delegation came from the eastern side of the province, the rural eastern side of Manitoba and raised a number of concerns with the personal care homes. I know there is a long list of concerns, but these concerns were raised.

The reason I am stressing this is because the Bethesda Home in Steinbach—the member from Steinbach is here today, and I am pleased to acknowledge that because he knows the importance of that home. The Minister of Health

did not look at a New Democratic Party constituency and say, "Let us do something about that." He looked at the need in the eastern side of Manitoba and said, "The personal care home in Steinbach, the personal care home in Ste. Anne, there is a real need there." So I want to thank him publicly for that in my address to the Throne Speech because he addressed the need there.

Now the member previous who had just spoken, the member from Russell mentioned all the challenges in health, and there are a great many challenges. There is no doubt about it. This Minister of Health has a plan. The two items I just referred to about his fairness and balance with regard to addressing the concerns on the east side of the province, the southeast side, were really imperative because many of those people, whether they be from Steinbach or Ste. Anne, were not sure whether or not those particular projects would go ahead at all. They know the challenges in health, and they realize that it is a large task and it is an awesome task to try to address, but this particular Minister of Health is certainly taking the right steps, the right initiatives that are going to address the concerns that are in health care.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to digress slightly. Last year as a new minister in this Legislature, there was a portfolio, a gaming portfolio that I was responsible for, and the comments I want to make to that is that I have had opportunity to speak to the member from Kirkfield Park with regard to issues raised in this Legislature and issues raised about decorum. What I would like to do is by digressing slightly in the decorum of the House I really felt that last year, as a new member sitting in for the first time, there should be something done in that regard. I thought that the level of respect and so on was not being shown which I thought that all members in this House deserve, whether they be in Opposition or on the Government side. I know that the member from Russell commented just shortly ago that it is going to be a rocky Legislature and it is going to be possibly a raucous one at times and so on. I still believe that a lot of work has to be done amongst all members.

Mr. Speaker, certainly with regard to the respect shown your Chair, I believe we still have

a long way to go. I would certainly like to be able to see that. As long as the tenure I have here, I would hope by that time that not only the decorum in the House and the respect shown not only to pages but other staff that are here certainly needs improvement.

What I have seen over the last couple of days, and this is where I guess I am going to be touching on a couple of issues with regard to personalities, I think there is not a person in this Legislature that would agree with regard to policy. We have differing views. People may feel there are different things that may be done in health care, education, to address the needs of Manitobans. I believe when you are talking about policy, talking about issues, I think that is fair ball for anyone, but when you start bringing personalities in, about times they have spent in meetings, whether or not they should resign because of certain issues, that is where I really draw the line, because I really believe that what you are doing, the moment you start dragging down a member of this Legislature, I believe what it does, it taints all of us, and I really believe it is something that is not healthy for this Legislature, for that matter I believe anyone involved in politics.

On that particular note, I mentioned the member from Kirkfield Park. As a new leader, I understand the challenges he has. I am asking not only the Leader of the Opposition but the Leader of the Government as well and the Premier (Mr. Doer) that it is something that I think we have to address sooner or later. I think the public has seen at the last federal election that this certainly is not something that the electorate or the people of Manitoba in particular want to see continue. They do not want to see mudslinging. They do not want to see attacks of a personal nature, and I believe it just harms all of us.

Anyway, I wish to get away from that. I do not want to use this forum to belabour that particular point, but I want to put that point in because as a new Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) I believe it is incumbent on that leader to certainly try to address that. I understand we also have an obligation on this side too. The debate I have heard thus far, and there are other members who are going to speak, I find at least

that we have a good understanding of one's role and what is necessary as an opposition member. They certainly do have to keep the Government accountable but I think there are respectful ways to do that through pointed questions and very good questions dealing with issues and on policy.

I just want to talk about a couple of things in the Throne Speech. Just taking a look at the clock, I just want to make sure I want to talk about this year's Throne Speech without digressing too much further. Taking a look at a couple of items mentioned in this year's Throne Speech, one dealing with rural Manitoba and that is Manitoba's energy leadership. We often talk about rural Manitoba and all different parts of Manitoba and the importance of equality and a balance for all Manitobans. What was noted in the Speech from the Throne was hydro rates and residential hydro users. What we have tried to do in this Throne Speech has been noted numerous times. We are trying to get a balance for rural Manitoba. More importantly, I believe this is symbolic. It is symbolic in nature, but I think what it does, it gives a very, very important message that your Crown corporation is yours, and, regrettably, as has been mentioned numerous times as well about Manitoba telephone system and the increase in rates and so on that is happening, that what happens when you lose a Crown corporation, you just do not get it back.

The reason I raise Hydro now is because it shows the importance that Crown corporations can play in the lives of all Manitobans and, certainly, Manitoba Hydro being, I believe, one of the more important ones. Certainly members opposite in their own way have stated that Crown corporations are there for all Manitobans and to benefit all Manitobans. The Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province has stated that repeatedly, that as a government, as a philosophy, we believe that the Crown corporations are there for the overall well-being of all Manitobans, certainly Hydro, and what we have tried to do with regard to hydro and energy in Manitoba, we have taken, I believe, many proactive steps that are not only going to encourage certainly hydro-electricity use and so on, but certainly to show Manitobans that Crown corporations such as

Manitoba Hydro are thinking of them and want to treat all Manitobans fairly.

With regard to workplace safety and health, there have been a number of different issues raised with regard to the safety of Manitobans, the safety of workers. I believe my colleague from Transcona certainly touched on this, and I wish to touch on it a little bit myself. What I want to state with regard to workplace safety and health is that I was under the employ in the mid-'80s for five years with the Department of Workplace Safety and Health. At that time, I believe it was Environment Workplace Safety and Health. Mr. Speaker, I was an education coordinator there, and I worked with workplace safety and health and had the opportunity to work in two administrations.

Certainly, I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that with this particular item many members in this Legislature may look at it and say, well, workplace safety and health, we all think workplace safety and health is important. A healthy worker, a safe worker is a more productive worker and so on, which is the truth, but I believe there is a difference in philosophy between our Government and the previous administration, not the issue with regard to safety and whether they believe safety is an issue. I believe that all members in this Legislature believe that workers are at risk in any workplace, in any fashion of work, which is not right and should be addressed.

* (17:50)

But the only point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this issue—well, at least the first point—is the reduction of staff. I will try to temper my remarks, but they have to be stated. The number of inspectors that had been reduced within that particular department was a little bit disconcerting to me when I was employed there. The issue with regard to education, the education branch that belonged to Workplace Safety and Health was removed. All the educators there became inspectors. It looked good on the surface initially, but then the inspectors were cut back as well. It was just a different philosophy, and they felt it would work. I think the opposite was proven, and I think the previous government recognized that

and they were going to do something about it, but an election came and we decided that we have to do something about it; we cannot wait.

The number of inspectors have been increased, and the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) should be not only thanked for that but certainly applauded for it because this is something that the Minister of Labour came forward with upon becoming the new Minister, realized it as an issue that had to be addressed and that there were just too many cuts in that particular area.

So there are a number of different initiatives related to safety. Every time we see a worker injured or hurt on the job site, you do wonder whether or not sufficient inspections are being made, whether there is proper scaffolding, all the proper safeguards in place. Certainly the Minister of Labour should be thanked and congratulated for those moves with regard to safety inspectors and the continuation of trying to address a lot of difficult issues.

I am certainly trying to be respectful of the previous government because they had a lot of challenges, and yet not all of them could be met, to be fair. I am just trying to state here, Mr. Speaker, that these are particular ones that were outstanding that we had to address within our first year, our first mandate, which we did. Also, within this year's Throne Speech, we comment on how safety and health in the workplace is imperative, and we are certainly going to be addressing that matter. There are going to be a number of different items that the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) will certainly be discussing throughout this year, and a number of different initiatives which she will be putting forward to try to address safety items in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to address the issues, if I might, related to agriculture and the continued work of this Government on behalf of agricultural producers. Everyone knows, and I believe most members of the Legislature, indeed I would say all members in this Legislature have an appreciation for our farming community and the return they get on the produce they have or production that they are involved in, whether it be milk or whether it be vegetables or whatever area of agriculture they are involved in. Not long

ago there was a buffet came on. I think it came to the realization of many of us, if we certainly did not have an appreciation beforehand, about cost and what it costs a producer to produce whatever it may be, whether it be potatoes or vegetables or a litre of milk, for example. If they knew that the producer of those products received the monies directly, I think a lot of Manitobans would not object so vehemently, but obviously there are a lot of people in the middle that certainly take their share of those particular profits or those monies. The person that is most deserving of those monies does not receive, I believe, their fair remuneration for their products.

I want to say that when we are talking about agriculture we are certainly talking about new markets. New products, new technology, are really the building blocks and really make agriculture, in a sense, more resilient and make a more resilient rural economy. To that end I think that you are looking at alternative crops, organic productions, premium livestock options. There are many, many other areas I believe that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) certainly is trying to address.

We know that to be involved in agriculture is a real challenge. I certainly never had wanted to make that my profession. I looked at someone who has to pray for sunshine on some days, has to pray for rain on other days, and has to pray for someone in Europe not giving subsidies. When I took a look at that, many of my family and relatives who are involved in agriculture as well as many, many others in this Legislature who have relatives who are involved in the agricultural agribusiness really have to be complimented for that because truly it is not only a worthy career but certainly one for Manitobans. That is where we started in many ways was in agriculture. I do not believe that there is enough credit given to people who farm and who take all those gambles and all those chances and depend on weather, depend on markets and so on to make a livelihood.

When we see what is happening right across Canada with the agricultural community and the challenges that they face, it is really difficult for governments. I know the previous administration attempted in their way to address that. I believe

that this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk)—and I do not think there is a person in this Legislature that should doubt or question in any way her sincerity with regard to the agricultural community and what she hopes to do. There may be a differing of opinion on dollars. There may be a different opinion on policy, but the sincerity that she has with regard to agriculture I think she has to be commended for. I know a number of different members opposite were ministers of Agriculture and other ministers and also members of the previous government who are not ministers who come from rural communities. They know the hardship that people faced and are still facing now.

No easy answers—I certainly do not profess to have the answers, that is for sure. I know that certainly the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), her sincerity in wishing to do something and to address the plight of many farmers should not be questioned. *[interjection]*

Now, the member opposite said sincerity does not save farms, it does not save individuals, but what it does do, if we are agreed that a person does care for the rural community, does care for young farmers and wants to make sure that farming is not only a break-even but very viable and the farming community is thriving, I think it does start at whether or not a person truly is sincere about making changes. I hear often about how the Minister of Agriculture, when have you ever been out there? Well, the Minister of Agriculture not long ago toured the whole southeast, met with many, many different community leaders and did not go out there and say: Well, this is what we are doing. She went out there and said: I want to hear from you. You tell me where we can improve. Where can we help you? What can we do to assist you in your plight? She has an open mind with regard to attempting or certainly trying to address those problems. She worked awfully hard in trying to also work for the people of the southwest.

The federal government, I believe, really turned their back on the farmers of the southwest. We had our money on the table then. We have the money on the table now. What we wanted was members of the Opposition to join us hand in hand to go down to Ottawa and tell the federal politicians that we are hurting in

western Canada, we are hurting in the southwest, come and join us and let us work together.

That is what I mean by sincerity, Mr. Speaker, that I believe that sometimes it does go a long way, because I believe that people of rural Manitoba are very trusting. They will also give you the benefit of the doubt to give you an opportunity. They will say: Well, we are going to watch, and we will see what you can do. I just want the members of the Opposition to give this

Minister of Agriculture an opportunity to show what she can do.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will have 13 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 11, 2000

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