

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 31, 2011

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Coulter Bridge

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

And these are the reasons:

During the record flood of 2011, the increased volume of water flowing through the Souris River caused the Coulter bridge on Highway 251 to buckle and become unstable in late June.

The Coulter bridge is used by agricultural producers, local businesses and area residents. It is especially important to the region's multi-million-dollar oil industry.

Motorists are now forced to use a lengthy detour on a gravel road not meant for heavy vehicle traffic. The increased presence of industrial vehicles on this gravel road has created considerable safety concerns, especially for school buses. The detour also results in increased costs and lost time for motorists.

The provincial government has indicated it has no plans to establish a temporary bridge, and construction of a new bridge is expected to take several years.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to recognize the serious safety concerns and adverse socio-economic impact caused by the loss of the Coulter bridge and to consider making it an urgent priority to restore traffic across

the Souris River either by a temporary or a permanent bridge.

And this petition is signed, Mr. Speaker, by G. Williams, V. Prince, M. Renwich, C. Cassils and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And this is the background to this petition:

During early October 2011, parts of southeastern Manitoba were hard hit by wildfires. Thanks to the swift action of provincial and municipal officials, including 27 different fire departments and countless volunteers, no lives were lost and property damage was limited.

However, the fight against the wildfires reinforced the shortcomings with the communications system in the region, specifically the gaps in cellular phone service.

These gaps made it difficult to co-ordinate firefighting efforts and to notify people that they had to be evacuated. The situation also would have made it difficult for people to call for immediate medical assistance if it had been required.

Local government, businesses and industries and area residents for years sought a solution to this very serious communications challenge.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the appropriate provincial government departments to consider working with all stakeholders to develop a strategy to swiftly address the serious challenges posed by limited cellular phone service in southeastern Manitoba in order to ensure that people and property can be better protected in the future.

And this petition is signed by M. Desjardins, M. O'Connor and L. Ciarall and many, many more fine Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): It's with pleasure that I offer to members the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Manitoba Horse Racing Commission.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): I'm pleased to table the 2010-2011 Annual Report for the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister charged with the administration of The Communities Economic Development Fund Act): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present the 2010 Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw the honourable members' attention to the loge to my left; we have Mr. Jim Downey, former member for the constituency of Arthur-Virden. And the loge to my right, we have Mr. Doug Martindale, the honourable former member for Burrows.

We'd like to welcome you on behalf of the members assembled.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Homicide Rate Increase Reduction Strategies

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): As Winnipeggers know, this was a weekend of violence in our capital city once again, with two people who were shot to death, a stabbing and other shootings. We've now tied the all-time record of 34 murders in one year, which was set just seven years ago in 2004.

I want to ask the Premier if they'll acknowledge this government's failure on the issue of public safety to date and indicate what plans he has to ensure that this shameful blight does not continue to exist in our capital city of Winnipeg.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that any murder in Winnipeg is one murder too many, any murder in Manitoba is one murder too many.

And as to the solutions, we are the ones that promised 100 more police officers at the community level on the street working with people to prevent crime and to detect crimes before they happen, including violent crimes—50 in Winnipeg, 50 outside

of Winnipeg—and we will follow through on that commitment. That is a practical commitment grounded in a form of policing that can detect crimes before they happen.

Role of Attorney General

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that they've had 12 years to tackle the problem and we're on track this year to set a record for the most murders of any year in our province's history. This is after 12 years of NDP government and 12 years of annual promises just like the one that the Premier's just referred to.

Mr. Speaker, Professor Linden is quoted in today's *Free Press* as saying, until someone is put in charge of crime control with a budget, staff and a plan, we'll continue to have crimes like this. Until now, we believed that someone was the Attorney General of Manitoba.

I want to ask the Premier: If it's not, what exactly does the Attorney General do?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, Professor Linden has made a very significant contribution to reducing crime in Manitoba with the Auto Theft Suppression Strategy which he was a part of and has done an evaluation of and identifies it as the most successful in the country.

* (13:40)

Professor Rick Linden also is the chair of our Manitoba police commission, which is a new instrument to provide additional civilian oversight to policing and also to provide training opportunities for community policing and other forms of policing which will increase the effectiveness of the 261 additional officers which we have funded over the last 12 years, 261 officers which have made a difference at the community level, 261 officers which the members opposite have voted against allocating resources for every single one of those officers.

Mr. McFadyen: And, Mr. Speaker, we're on track to set a new record for homicides under the watch of this government. And Professor Linden also says that we don't have a master crime plan in place to tackle the myriad factors that are contributing to crime, and goes on to say, and I quote, that we live in a city that has a high crime rate, a city that has always had one of the top homicide rates, and we have no reasonable expectation this will change, if we keep doing the same things over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, they've had 12 years of doing the same things over and over again. Can the Premier indicate whether he has confidence in his Attorney General who clearly is identified by Professor Linden as being part of the problem?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, our Attorney General, Mr. Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), appointed Professor Linden as the chair of the Manitoba police commission. That was a very—and also we've worked closely with Professor Linden in evaluating our successful programs.

Some of the differences that we have made is in over—just over seven years, the Gang Prosecutions Unit has achieved over 1,400 convictions—1,486—or guilty pleas, with 993 of those people convicted serving jail time. Our Integrated Organized Crime Task Force, which never existed before, has resulted, through Project Divide alone, resulted in 170 years of sentences being handed down. And our safe neighbourhoods and communities act has—and we've promised an additional six officers there—have shut down 509 drug dens and prostitution houses in Winnipeg. All of those measures have made a very significant difference.

And when it comes to homicides in Manitoba, we will dedicate the same focused resources to that, that we have, to these other measures. And all of these measures make a long-term difference. Those are the suppression measures. Those are the measures that put more police on the street, and there are other measures that we are taking to do prevention as well. It is very, very tragic. We have 34 homicides. We have to do more about it, and we will.

Homicide Rate Increase Reduction Strategies

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg is on track to set a new record for homicides under the watch of this NDP government. This past weekend alone, two people were shot to death, two more shootings took place, and a man was stabbed to death. This brings the total—the new total of 34 murders in one year, tied with their homicide record, their own homicide record from 2004.

What is the minister's plan to set this violent crime spree under control and get it under control, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Certainly I think the sympathies of every person in this House go out to the families

and the communities of which these individuals were members. The violence that's taken place in our streets is unacceptable, and we have said that the people are entitled to be safe on their streets, in their homes, in their communities. That's why we've continued to invest in police.

I spoke to Chief McCaskill earlier today. He'll be speaking to the media at 3 o'clock to speak about these—that these tragic events—perhaps be able to shed some more light on it.

But we will not take our eye off the ball of continuing to support our police in the city of Winnipeg and, indeed, across the province of Manitoba. We've added 261 more officers since 1999. We've committed, and we will follow through on adding 50 more beat cops, police officers, out in the streets of the very communities that need their assistance the most. We'll be making that investment.

As I've said before, we'll see if the members opposite actually support that initiative and vote for the additional measures in the budget next spring.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, of the 34 homicide victims this year, 11 were stabbed, 10 died from beatings, six were shot, five died in a fire, one was strangled, and one died of undisclosed causes. Clearly they don't have a clue what they are doing. It's been 12 years and things are getting worse, not better.

What is their plan to stop this? Or is it, in fact, that they don't have a plan that's the real problem here, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Swan: As the member opposite has pointed out by her recitation of those numbers, there is no single bullet. The police officers will tell you that; the Crown attorneys will tell you that. What is important is making sure that we invest in our communities.

But beyond that, of course, it's making sure we have the right laws in place. And Manitoba, since 1999, has been a very, very strong advocate, whichever party may happen to be in power in Ottawa, to make sure the right laws are in place. And with respect to gun crimes, of course, it's thanks to Manitoba, thanks to my predecessors, to my department, that the federal government has actually cracked down on gun crimes, making it harder for people who commit crimes with guns to get bail so they're not out on the streets, to increase sentences for smuggling firearms, to make gang-related

homicides first-degree murder and creating further offences.

We've done our part, as the Province of Manitoba, to move the national agenda. We know within our province there are other things we can do, things like The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act has been amended to make sure there's a house that's being used for dealing in guns, smuggling drugs—that is something that can result in the Public Safety Investigation Unit moving in. That is an act that has been used over 500 times to make our—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, from June 1st to October 30th this year in Winnipeg, there were 14 homicides, 34 shootings, 85 sexual assaults, 39 stabbings. At what point is enough enough? Winnipeg has one of the worst track records in homicides in Canada, and the NDP seems to be content to sit back and pat themselves on the back for a job well done.

Well, how many more people have to die before this NDP government sees that there is a crime problem in this city and starts to do something about it?

Mr. Swan: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member for Tuxedo should be aware that Manitoba is recognized across the country as having one of the most robust and effective opportunities by provincial governments to make change.

Of course, we don't write the criminal law. We can influence how it's changed, but we do things to take on gangs, to take on organized crime. Within our control, as a Province, we've done that. And that's why I spoke about The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, which actually empowers communities, like the one that I represent in the Legislature, to help make their streets safer. So the member for Tuxedo should actually learn more about the positive things which are going on.

I have said, earlier today and repeatedly, that violence in our communities is not acceptable. That's why we support the police and we hope they will make arrests as soon as possible. Those individuals can be brought to justice. We know that, thanks to Manitoba, we have stronger criminal laws in this country, and the individuals responsible for this will be brought to justice. We think that's important. We do that by supporting our police, by supporting our Crown attorneys. We don't do that by, as the

members opposite would have, by slashing money out of front-line services, including policing, in the province of Manitoba.

Coulter Bridge Replacement Priority and Funding

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, in late June, waters on the Souris River, floodwaters on the Souris River caused the Coulter bridge over Highway 251 west of Waskada to collapse. The replacement of this bridge obviously falls under Emergency Measures operations procedures where the federal government would cover 90 per cent of the cost.

Can the minister in charge of Emergency Measures operations inform area farmers, oil industry representatives, and local citizens whether he considers the Coulter bridge replacement to qualify for these EMO cost-shared funding and whether or not its replacement is a priority with his government?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, and I know the member's raised this question before, and we've also had the opportunity to talk about this directly.

We were impacted throughout the province in terms of our infrastructure this year. There are a number of bridges that were impacted. Certainly, the Coulter area with Highway 251 has been significantly impacted. What we have done is we have already started to do the required engineering work. We are working on that as I speak.

I know there was some interest in the area in putting a temporary bridge in. Unfortunately, given the engineering assessment, the wide span that's involved, the causeway, and the fact that it would also have to carry very significant traffic, it would be vulnerable in the spring to further flood and ice conditions; it is not the recommended option.

But I can assure the member that we are committed to rebuilding our infrastructure, and, as we speak, our technical staff is working on a priority basis on the Highway 251 bridge.

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, local Waskada area citizens led by Shirley Kernaghan and Betty Miller, who are with us today in the gallery, led a rally near the bridge in mid-September. They wanted to inform the government of their concerns and frustration over the lack of response to replacing this

Coulter bridge, or at least the installation of a temporary bridge, even for light vehicles.

With cars, school buses, and light vehicles interfacing with oil industry trucks and other heavy equipment on the dusty gravel detour, soon to be snow packed—snow and ice packed, will the minister of transport and Emergency Measures operations inform these and other region users of the Highway 251 what procedures he and his department are undertaking to replace the bridge in an immediate time frame, Mr. Speaker?

* (13:50)

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, at the request of the member, I've arranged a meeting with the delegation, with the deputy minister, who will outline the engineering challenges.

And I do want to stress, by the way, that when it comes to dealing with any of our bridges, whether it's the Highway 251 bridge or any of the other bridges that were impacted, our first concern is to do the engineering assessment. Some bridges will have to be repaired, some will have to be replaced. That's the first step.

I want to stress as well that just as we did after 2009—and you can talk to people in St. Adolphe—our department, MIT, made it a priority to replace that bridge and we did what would normally take five years of work. We completed it earlier this spring and I want to commend the former minister of Infrastructure and Transportation who led that project. And just as we did it after 2009, we're committed to doing that now.

And I do want to stress again we're still fighting the flood, and I hope the member will recognize the very great news what's happening with the outlet from Lake St. Martin and the work that's going to do in protecting Lake Manitoba—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Member's—

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it took Minneapolis a year to replace a broken-down freeway that collapsed, so I would hope that this—we'd be able to fix this bridge in a shorter time frame. I and local citizens appreciate the minister's concerns for the infrastructure shortfalls that he faces, and local citizens are aware of the ongoing revenue being received by the Manitoba government from the record oil industry activities in southwest Manitoba,

particularly in the Waskada and Pearson areas with—that are well-established drilling locations, Mr. Speaker. Industry representatives and local school boards have written the minister seeking the earliest possible replacement of this Highway 251 bridge, and it is used by local farmers to deliver grain to the only grain terminal in southwest Manitoba region at Elva.

So for a safety concern particularly for the students and to help expand the growing regional industries helping all Manitobans, will the minister acknowledge this urgently needed bridge as an Emergency Measures operation-eligible structure and make it a priority to be replaced this winter or at least in 2012, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that in addition to the situation at 251 bridge, we made a major investment in bridges across this province. When we came into office we were spending \$5.6 million a year on bridges. This year it's a \$114.7 million. And that is over and above any of the replacements that will be funded in terms of disaster financial assistance.

And I want to stress again, we're fighting the flood. We've got huge success in terms of Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. An historic project that would have taken years, Mr. Speaker, is almost ready for completion. But, even as we're fighting the flood, we're working on the rebuilding. We're doing the engineering work on this bridge. We're aware of the inconvenience for residents of that area. We're also very aware of the growing oil industry in this province, that's why we're committed to investing in transportation, investing in—into highways, and repairing these and other bridges that have impacted by the floods.

Gardenton Floodway Dike Upgrade Requirements

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): In 1997 and 2002, the dikes of the Gardenton Floodway were at risk of being breached by the high waters of the Roseau River. Backhoes, heavy equipment, helicopters hauling sandbags and air boats were used to shore up these dikes. This past spring after an inspection, the Gardenton Floodway was deemed unsafe. If a breach occurred it would have flooded Vita. At great cost, a temporary secondary dike was built partially using heavy equipment and earth and the rest using tube dikes.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible acknowledge that the Gardenton Floodway needs to be rebuilt?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the real story again here is the tremendous work that was done under very challenging circumstances in terms of not only this dike, but all across the province. And I want to put on the record our appreciation as Manitobans for the work that was done by, not only the dedicated staff of MIT and the various other provincial departments that were working on this, but also the degree to which contractors and construction workers came together in very difficult circumstances.

I also want to assure the member as well, Mr. Speaker, as we are doing with our bridges, as we are doing with infrastructure across the province, we are not only committed to finishing some of the work that was begun in that period, and I stress again, we're still working in many areas of this province with flood protection. We're also going to be looking very much at those structures in the go-forward situation. And just as we met the challenge this spring and summer, are meeting it in the fall, we'll meet the challenge in terms of flood mitigation in the future in this province.

Mr. Smook: Mr. Speaker, the Gardenton Floodway is an important flood-control structure in southeastern Manitoba, but is really showing its age. Considerable money has been spent in recent years on temporary measures to prevent the floodway from failing, but more work is needed. Since the secondary dike has already been started, it would likely be more cost-effective to complete the work this fall rather than wait till next spring when the water levels could be high again.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible finish the secondary dike that was begun this spring, and what is the plan to repair the Gardenton Floodway?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I realize the member's a new member in this House, but I should explain perhaps some of the challenges with disaster financial assistance, with the lack of a national mitigation strategy.

And I do want to indicate, by the way, we work very co-operatively with the federal government. In fact, I'm looking forward to meeting with my counterparts, perhaps as early as this week, because in many situations we still have a situation with

disaster financial assistance where it is more cost-effective for the provincial government to take down temporary works than to complete them and turn them into permanent works, because temporary works are covered under DFA, permanent works aren't.

I know our Premier (Mr. Selinger) has had significant discussions with the Prime Minister on that. And we're hoping that this year, following the experience that Manitoba—that the federal government, of course, with Vic Toews, who understands flooding and understands the impact in that area—that we can get a change in the way we deal with national mitigation to deal with DFA and make sure that we can complete, in many cases, permanent works that we've started as part of temporary flood protection, whether it's this spring or any flood situation, Mr. Speaker.

RM of Westbourne Flood Mitigation Strategies

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 2011, the Rural Municipality of Westbourne's infrastructure was once again overwhelmed by flooding. There were 200 roads and crossings either cut or washed out in the one municipality alone. School buses, farmers, ranchers and other residents were all negatively impacted. This year marks the ninth time in 10 years that the RM of Westbourne has applied for disaster financial assistance due to flooding.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister today commit to a long-term plan that will actually address the ongoing flooding problems in the RM of Westbourne?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, I thank the member for the question, and I acknowledge that he has raised issues and concerns to this RM and the—generally in the past.

And I think it points again to what I said in response to the previous member, and that is we're increasingly, in many areas of the province, seeing chronic flood situations. We are, as I've said, we've did—we did a lot of work this spring and summer in terms of fighting the flood, but as we go forward, clearly, we will be looking at any and all opportunities to partner with the federal government to come up with long-term solutions.

But in the short term, again, I want to stress the importance of disaster financial assistance. We have been there. We're expecting a very significant

payout to Manitobans this year and certainly we will be there for that RM and for RMs across the province, of what has been probably the most geographically widespread flooding we've seen in Manitoba history, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, this is flooding nine out of the last 10 years. That sets a pretty predictable pattern and yet this government does nothing.

Now I realize DFA is a pretty good deal for the province since the federal government covers 90 per cent of the costs. But wouldn't it make sense to do some preventative work to reduce future flooding and associated costs and disruptions? Would it not make sense to repair the provincial drainage system that is overwhelmed by sedimentation and vegetation?

The Whitemud Conservation District in the RM of Westbourne know what needs to be done, yet, the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) doesn't listen to them.

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister take some meaningful action on better managing drainage so that we can reduce the risk of future flooding?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think one of hallmarks of this government is taking proactive measures in terms of flooding. We built the floodway expansion—\$650 million. One hundred and thirty million dollars to protect the communities in the Red River Valley. And, in fact, in the last two major floods, in 2009 and 2011, we saw, in fact, one home impacted in 2009 because of that degree of protection.

And I would hope the member would put on the record acknowledgement of the tremendous work that's been done to complete the Lake St. Martin outlet, where, within a day or two of opening, something that's going to have a huge impact protecting Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

Shellmouth Dam Leaf Gate Construction

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): In 2003, the Canada–Canada and Manitoba entered an agreement to address upstream damages and to undertake studies to assess the impacts associated with potential modification to the Shellmouth Dam. To date, the ultimate purpose of the agreement, that being to improve water management on the Assiniboine River through installing leaf gates, has yet to be done.

* (14:00)

In February 2007, the SAVED communities, which include Binscarth, Roblin, Russell, the RM of Russell, the RM of Shellmouth-Boulton, the RM of Shell River and the RM of Silver Creek, wrote the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) about the leaf gate project. In the letter, SAVED encouraged the minister to move forward on the matter, noting that uncertainty and lack of communication were a concern.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Water Stewardship explain why—what she is doing to make this work with those communities within the SAVED area—region to leaf—to get the leaf gate project done and to ensure stakeholders like these municipalities are actually treated fairly?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Acting Minister of Water Stewardship): Our government has very clearly committed and has been working to make sure that the water that enters our province, the watershed that we all live amongst, that that water moves as quickly as it can from one end of the watershed right through to Hudson Bay where that water belongs.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made those commitments, whether it be at the Shellmouth or whether it be at the emergency channel near the Fairford area. What members opposite will continue to see is this government moving forward to making sure that all those projects get completed.

Mrs. Rowat: Well, this government's refusing to meet with this stakeholder group.

Mr. Speaker, in November 2007, the SAVED communities wrote to then-minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), asking for a meeting to clarify about long-term upgrades being planned for the Shellmouth Dam. That meeting never occurred.

What is so essential when undertaking a major project like this is to ensure the stakeholders, like SAVED and others, are included in the assessment phrase so local concerns can be addressed. There has been virtually no movement by this provincial government to move forward on the Shellmouth project, causing uncertainty and frustration within the region.

We know the feds came through, Mr. Speaker; why didn't the Province? The SAVED communities were prepared to work on the leaf gates as they did with the Shellmouth Dam in the 1960s.

Can the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) explain why her government appears to be stalled and moving backwards on this project, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, the member needs to be careful about the facts that she puts on the table. Our minister of water 'stewardshab'—or Minister of Water Stewardship has indicated that she will be meeting with the producers in the area, that her—people from her department will, and they'll begin talking about the impacts that, in this case, farmers have had in terms of the amount of water that has come down through that part of our province.

So this government is moving forward. This government is maintaining its share of the responsibilities, and we're doing our part in making sure everything, from the Shellmouth right through the system, to move that water occurs. She'll see that that is exactly what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Rowat: And I guess when the Minister of Water Stewardship actually meets with the group, we'll be pleased to see that, Mr. Speaker, because she has a track record of ignoring rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the SAVED communities were willing to support the leaf gate project. They had formally stated in writing that they were cognizant of the need to enhance the flood protection water supply and inflow—in-stream flows to benefit downstream residents. That was nearly five years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Water Stewardship to share with the House what the timelines are for the leaf gates, and how is she going to ensure that the 'stakehoser'—stakeholders involved will be heard, including the agriculture sector, the recreational sector and municipal stakeholders?

Mr. Struthers: Well, contrary to what we hear from members opposite, who really spend a lot of time defending their cousins in Ottawa instead of defending the farmers in the communities in their areas, Mr. Speaker, when the federal—[interjection] They don't like to hear this, but when—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I'm having increasing difficulty hearing the answer to the question that was posed by the honourable member.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food has the floor.

Mr. Struthers: I know they don't like to hear this, Mr. Speaker, but when the federal government

actually pulled out of this project in the 2008-2009 year, it was our government that stepped up, not the facts that members opposite put on the table. We stepped up when the feds pulled out.

Our minister on this side of the House is committed to this project, as this government is. Our minister has moved forward with all—a number of different initiatives.

If they had paid attention in the Throne Speech, they'd have seen a surface water management commitment that we made that we will follow through on to help make sure that these problems don't amass and that we're not dealing with this in as big a way as we've had in the past, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to making sure that this watershed water moves through our—

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

Freight House Community Centre Funding Needs

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): This government continues to neglect inner Winnipeg while providing generous support elsewhere. The NDP, for example, committed multi-millions of dollars to the Southdale Community Centre in 2007; and the Dakota community centre in 2011 and yet have failed to deliver significant funding to the Freight House Community Centre in inner Winnipeg.

Manitobans expect their government to provide youth in inner Winnipeg alternatives to street gangs. The upgrades to the Freight House Community Centre, which is also used by Rossbrook House, need provincial support.

I ask the Premier: Why has he focused so much community centre funding on Seine River and Southdale and so little funding on the Freight House Community Centre?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Perhaps the member missed it but this spring we made a very significant announcement at the University of Winnipeg for a new fieldhouse and part of the understanding on the new fieldhouse is that that facility will be available to all the organizations and people and young people that live in the inner city. And fundamental to that project will—is its community-use component of it. So that's \$15 million we've committed. The University of Winnipeg will finance the remaining \$15 million of it.

That fieldhouse will be available to all the peoples of the inner city; all the neighbourhoods. I know the member might have overlooked that. It was a very significant commitment. One of many commitments we've made to the University of Winnipeg, who have a commitment, as the member knows, to increasing access to inner-city young people for post-secondary education, including a learning centre for people at the high school and junior high level to come to the University of Winnipeg and have an opportunity to experience new technology, see what post-secondary education opportunities there are available to them.

And, as a matter of fact, even as recently as this summer, in the middle of the flood disaster, additional programming was offered through the university to allow the people that were dislocated by the floods to have summer recreation and enrichment opportunities through the university, so we will continue to have support for the inner city.

Gordon Bell High School Sport Field Update

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): It's taken 12 years to get even this but the reality is that this government has neglected, time and time again, the facilities and the needs of inner Winnipeg.

You know, the Freight House Community Centre is one example. The field of dreams at Gordon Bell High School is another. The field of dreams should have been completed by now, to give Gordon Bell High School students a long overdue, adequate sports field.

Why is there still an empty field instead of being a usable field for sports facilities?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, The member asked about facilities in the inner city and in that part of Winnipeg. The North End Y was shut down when we came into office; it was shuttered. It is now open and it's flourishing because the investments we made, along with many other members of the community to get that facility up and running.

And, he's right. Gordon Bell never had a proper field for sport activities until this government came along and acquired that piece of property from Canada Post. We've bought the property, it is available and it will be redeveloped. No government in this history of this province has ever moved with such alacrity to acquire a piece of property that will help the Gordon Bell students have proper recreation

facilities. We will do that. The property is under our control now. It is available to the Gordon Bell High School and it will be redeveloped.

Recreation Facilities Inner-city Neighbourhoods

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Those who were involved in intense lobbying for many, many months will dispute the alacrity of this government.

But, you know, the question is why, after a year when this Gordon Bell field of dreams was supposed to be completed by now, is it not completed?

Why is this government falling short in delivering a basic sports field to a high school when every new high school in this province has a fully funded sports field?

* (14:10)

The cost of dealing with gangs, the cost of dealing with crime, we've seen it again this weekend. And high school dropout rates in inner Winnipeg is going up and up and up because this Premier's response is slow and is inadequate. Sports programs in inner Winnipeg need support. The Freight House Community Centre has not got it in 12 years; the field of dreams is still empty.

I ask the Premier: Why has he not delivered on the Freight House Community Centre, community centre facilities and the field of dreams facilities? Why is he stalling and stalling for 12 years?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to identify some other facilities that we funded: the Manitoba Sports Federation, which has moved its facilities down into the inner city in the Exchange District on the east side. We funded a major expansion of that facility there for not only high sport—or high-end sport training, but for everybody to come there and have training opportunities with a great variety of sports.

So, we've done Lighthouse projects all over the inner city, 70 Lighthouse projects throughout Manitoba. We fund Rossbrook House. We fund Andrews Street family resource centre. We fund the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sports Achievement Centre. We fund the Boys and Girls Clubs. We've made recreational directors available to the inner city and located them in inner-city neighbourhoods. All of these are commitments that have—we have made to improve recreation, and we will do more of that. We have the After School Matters program which we committed to in the election.

And I have to remind the member again: he has voted against every one of these initiatives over the last 12 years and now he pretends to be a friend of the inner city. That's not good enough.

Community Led Emissions Reduction Program Update

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, as we move into late fall here in Manitoba and the cold weather is setting in, many of us are reminded of the importance of having a warm place to work, live and learn.

I understand that the Minister of Local Government was recently at Providence University College to flip the switch on a biomass furnace that will not only heat student residences and classrooms but will do so in a manner that will reduce carbon monoxide emissions in Manitoba.

I would ask the minister to share with this Chamber and the public how this and other projects under the Community Led Emissions Reduction program are having a positive impact in our communities.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the honourable member for Concordia for an important question. I was pleased to attend the announcement on Friday at Providence College dealing with the new biomass heating unit that was just opened, and it was a tremendous partnership between the private sector and the Province of Manitoba under Community Led Emissions Reductions program.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to inform the House that by this—by using this new heating unit, there'll be 180 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year removed as well as a \$50,000 savings by the college, instead of using gas, by using this biomass.

So again, we partner with southern Manitoba and many organizations, Mr. Speaker, including communities like Notre Dame de Lourdes, Brandon, Thompson, Taché municipality and many others who are really trying to make a difference to this province, as opposed to the grim reapers opposite.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I want to caution all honourable members to pick and choose their words very carefully, please.

Delta Marsh Field Station Flood Mitigation Strategies

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, the University of Manitoba's Delta Marsh Field Station is a very important research and teaching facility. Last week, the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) mentioned how critical the field station is in monitoring both Lake Manitoba and the Delta Marsh. The field station has had to be evacuated this year due to flooding.

Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Water Stewardship aware that no steps have been taken to protect the field station against further ravages from Lake Manitoba, either in fall storms or the spring ice?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Minister of Water Stewardship): Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I hope the member would acknowledge that the construction of a hundred-million-dollar channel that is going to allow us to operate the Fairford diversion can and will have a very significant impact all around Lake Manitoba, including at Delta Marsh, and I think that should be put on the record.

I also want to stress again, and as, I think, as the Minister of Water Stewardship pointed out and certainly at the briefing we held this morning with the member and other members opposite, that we are also—clearly recognize over the next period of time some of the significant challenges in terms of flood recovery. Certainly, in and around Lake Manitoba, there are very significant challenges, although I do want to indicate, thanks to the channel, which is going to make a difference over the winter, and the fact that we've had favourable weather conditions, the fact that we're now at 814.5 feet elevation in terms of the level of the lake is going to assist.

But I do want to assure the member that we are not only at the—fighting the flood, but we are also doing—dealing very significantly on plans for recovery, and indeed this will be part of the recovery, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, on many occasions the Minister of Water Stewardship has spoken very favourably about the work done at Delta Marsh Field Station. Her government repeatedly touts its commitment to wetland research and restoration, however, I find it ironic that this important research facility could be placed in jeopardy during a future storm or due to ice heaving or flooding.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister prepared to work with the University of Manitoba to make sure that this valuable site is not permanently lost as a resource to Manitobans?

Mr. Ashton: Well, definitely, we're committed to that, but I do want to stress, again, that we're still fighting the flood. We have 700 Manitobans that are still away from their homes. We have entire communities that have been either fully or significantly evacuated. And I want to stress again that over the next period of time, even as we continue to work, by the way, because even with the completion of the channel and the opening of the channel, we're going to continue to work to protect the Dauphin River community. But we're still fighting the flood, and there will be Manitobans who will be impacted well into next year.

So I certainly appreciate the member's question. And, certainly, this is a priority for us. But we also have a priority to work, to get those 700 Manitobans back, to clean up the affected areas, to rebuild the infrastructure and get back to normal for many Manitobans who've been impacted very negatively by the flood, Mr. Speaker.

Shoal Lakes Long-Term Water Level Management

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): For a decade now, this government has known that the Shoal lakes-Interlake is a problem. In fact, in 2001, the former member from Lakeside, our leader and myself, and a number of members on this side of the House have asked the ministers time and time again what the long-term plan is in regards to the Shoal Lake. We know from time to time that waters rise and waters recede, but the waters continue to rise in the Shoal lakes.

I'd like to ask the minister responsible: What is the long-term plan? When will you do something with the Shoal lakes to draw it down in a timely manner so these people can get back to their daily lives?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Well, I think something that my friend from Lakeside is—would probably acknowledge is how quick we have moved, whether it be the Shoal lakes, or other parts of Lake Manitoba, or Hoop and Holler, or wherever you happen to live in Manitoba and have been negatively impacted by the unprecedented amount of water that we've had this year.

Whether you're talking about long-term planning and action that this government has taken, like the channel and other projects, or whether you're talking about compensation plans that are designed to meet the needs of farmers—I'm told that somewhere in the area of 56 people have approached our officials in terms of a buyout in the Shoal Lake area. And folks from the Department of Agriculture, Food, Rural Initiatives have worked with those people to make sure that the best possible package can be put forward. And that, of course, is part of the long-term approach that we have to have in place so that these folks can get back to as normal a living as they possibly can, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to working with them to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mossey River Growing Project

Mr. Ron Kostyshyn (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mossey River Growing Project in efforts in a fight to end hunger around the world. Located along No. 20 Highway, in the RM of Mossey River, just north of the hamlet of Fork River, the project is a testament to the generosity of our province's producers. For the past 12 years, local farmers in the agribusiness have worked together to grow crops for donations to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The project started in 2000, harnessing the energy and the resources of the local farmers to provide food and donations for the hungry in developing worlds. The start of—the 40 acres they started has now grown to 70 acres thanks to donations of the Warkentin family. Input supplies are provided by agribusinesses or purchased with donation funds, and the RM of Mossey River forgives the land taxes on the property. From seeding straight through to harvest, all equipment, time, fuel are donated. With the cost of growing the crop of approximately \$150 an acre, and having this covered, means approximately that 95 per cent of the crop that is grown is available for donations.

The dedication of the project volunteers is simply amazing. The past year's crop was canola and, in spite of the difficult growing conditions, the crop yield well and will provide \$19,250 worth of proceeds to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank works to end hunger in developing countries and, in the past, have provided \$38 million of relief in 35 different countries,

affecting 2.3 million people. With a match of 4 to 1, funds from the Canadian international developing agencies and the donation from the Mossey River Growing Project will go far in fighting against hunger.

It isn't all work, though. Every year at harvest time a big barbeque and a raffle for the community is held. Supper is provided by local businesses, and all the proceeds go to charity. I had the pleasure of attending this year's barbeque and had a great time. I can tell you that I look forward to next year's event and to hearing from more from the group in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Mossey River Growing Project would not be a success without countless amount of volunteers—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member for Charleswood.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, so it gives me great pleasure to discuss the significance of this event and to take a moment to honour the courageous individuals who every day continue to struggle with disease.

This year in Canada, 23,400 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, of which approximately 5,100 will die. Further, of the estimated 190 men that will also be diagnosed, 55 will die. These startling figures represent not only breast cancer patients but also a tremendous support network of friends and family whose contribution to fighting this disease is immeasurable.

It is our duty as MLAs to build upon our commitment to this cause, not just in speech but in our actions. We must ensure Manitobans receive the best care possible. That is why I proposed Bill 205 to ensure all mammography machines used in Manitoba have proper accreditation. I'm extremely pleased that Bill 205 passed with the unanimous consent of all honourable members. But we cannot stop the fight now.

Despite vast improvements in cancer research and treatment there is still a long way to go in order to find a cure. Breast cancer, along with all other forms of cancer, requires specific attention to ensure continued medical progress. Fortunately, although rates of diagnosis have been going up in the last few decades, the rate of death among patients has been

decreasing. The Canadian Cancer Society has done great work in educating the public about breast cancer and with working to find a cure by sponsoring many research initiatives.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and to the thousands of participants who took part in Winnipeg's Run for the Cure. Participants across Canada raised \$30 million, which will go a long way to helping find a cure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate the importance of active engagement in Breast Cancer Awareness Month, as it is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women. The courage and resolve shown by these women is an inspiration to all, and they deserve our very best efforts to support them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

National Foster Family Week

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Canadians celebrated national forest family week—Foster Family Week—sorry—a time to recognize foster families and their dedication toward children and communities. In Manitoba we believe that foster families are the foundation of the child welfare system. I know many foster parents in my constituency will contribute every day to the well-being of our children and youth.

Many of these children go on to serve their communities as volunteers, growing up to be loving, responsible parents themselves. Florence and Johnny Constant raised such a family. They were married in 1967 and started taking in foster children soon after.

Over the years they have cared for more than 60 boys and girls, fed them, housed them, clothed them and loved them. They opened their homes and their hearts to these children with complex needs, helping them overcome challenges and celebrating their strengths. Florence has 13 siblings of her own and was happy to have a large family at that time.

She made every child feel welcome, and her older children proudly accepted newcomers as their brothers and sisters. Whether early placements are for a few days or many years, the patience and generosity shown by families like theirs is truly remarkable. Though Florence and John have recently retired as foster parents their sons and daughters continue to work to make sure local children receive the best possible care.

In Manitoba, we take a team approach to protecting our children; a task that forms the basis for a caring and safe society. With input from the Children's Advocate, we recently launched a plain-language website that breaks down some of the barriers that foster parents have struggled with in the past. It is called *Helping Keep Kids Safe*, and there we answer questions from both experience and would-be foster parents. We have also secured a 1 per cent increase to the foster rates again this year to further support the essential services these families provide.

We are working on a province-wide foster care curriculum, as well as a mentorship program and enhanced training for foster parents which will be available next year. We want not only to support foster families, but to express our gratitude for the heroism they show every day. All across the country, people have been gathering to thank foster families, and I would like to add—

Mr. Speaker: Honourable member for St. Paul.

Andrew Chudley

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to acknowledge my constituent, Andrew Chudley, who's been selected for the legislative page program this year. Andrew is the fourth student to be selected from Springfield and St. Paul to serve the Manitoba Legislature as a page. He joins pages from the past Laura Collins, 2006-2007, Hugh Crawley, 2006-2007 and Blake Zawanda, 2002-2003.

Andrew is currently a grade 12 student at Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau in Transcona. He began his French immersion training in École Dugald School in Springfield, and is one of many students who's benefitted greatly from the continuing partnership between these two school divisions. This contiguous relationship was forged through the efforts of many of my constituents, one of whom, in fact, happens to be Jennifer Chudley, Andrew's mom.

Andrew is a very accomplished and well-rounded young man. He is a member and provincial representative of the UNESCO pilot committee and is involved in clubs promoting French language, as well as his high school's student council. Andrew is also well-travelled, having visited Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to volunteer at Stansberry's Children's Home and Daycare there, and attend a human rights conference at the UN Headquarters in

New York City. He is the recipient of citizenship and municipality of Springfield community service awards, and has received the highest mark in many of his classes.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not only his political and social activism and French language promotion that is so impressive. Andrew's passion for music—especially drumming—has yielded many exciting opportunities for him. He has played percussion with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble multiple times, and has been chosen to play in Manitoba Honour Bands. Andrew has—Andrew was the recipient of a scholarship that I instituted to a summer school band camp at Vincent Massey High School, and has received the Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau's outstanding musician award for the past three years. Andrew utilizes his musical talents to give back to the community, not only through music playing, but also through his drum teaching at Rage Music. He works on his school radio at lunch, and is extremely passionate about playing the drums and discovering new music.

As the MLA for the new constituency of St. Paul, I am pleased to welcome and congratulate Andrew on being selected for the Manitoba Legislative Page Program, and am very proud that he is a member of the St. Paul constituency. When I look at young individuals like Andrew, who are hard-working, kind and generous and successful, I am encouraged that the future of our communities—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park.

**Localized Improvement Fund
for Tomorrow Program**

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Mr. Speaker, as a—an MLA-elect earlier this month, I attended a community consultation meeting for the Weston LIFT program at Cecil Rhodes School. LIFT stands for Localized Improvement Fund for Tomorrow, and it is a new initiative coming out of our celebrated Neighbourhoods Alive! program, which now provides core funding to organizations in 20 neighbourhoods across the province doing community development work. These organizations are tasked with working directly with area residents to develop priorities and plans for the neighbourhood and find solutions to challenges together. Across the province, this work has resulted in housing programs, community gardening initiatives, programs for youth and families, safety organizing

and initiatives that support community economic development. Indeed, through Neighbourhoods Alive!, we are supporting communities to become more self-reliant, healthier and safer places to live and raise a family.

* (14:30)

I would like to thank those who attended the meeting, which included residents, representatives of local organizations like the Explorer's Children's Centre, St. Thomas Anglican Church, Weston Seniors Club, Salvation Army church and child-care centre, and Weston Memorial Community Centre, and the government representatives from the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg.

Engaging in community development can be hard work. We bring passion and commitment to the table and the issues we face are often very serious. But they know that working together is the best and the only way to move forward, and that our combined strengths will ensure our success.

I look forward to reporting back to this House Weston's accomplishments with the support of the LIFT program.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH

(Seventh Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers),

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

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us in this First Session of the Fortieth Legislature of Manitoba, and the amendment thereto, standing in the honourable name of the honourable member for Tuxedo who has 27 minutes remaining.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): As I was saying on Friday, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to welcome you to your position which I did. I welcomed the new pages to the Legislature and the table officers back, and I wanted to—I unfortunately ran out of time at the time, but there a few other people that I want to recognize and thank.

I'd also like to thank Hansard and translation services, and all of those people in the Chamber who

also help us on a day-to-day basis to—for us to be able to debate and so on in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to thank all of those people too.

And I also wanted to take this opportunity to welcome all the new members to the Chamber on both sides of the House. We've heard some great opening addresses from many of the newcomers, and I look forward to getting to know all of them a little better throughout the course of the next four years that we'll be in the Chamber together, Mr. Speaker. So, again, welcome to all of the new members. Also welcome back to all of the—I don't like to say old members, but to more seasoned members of the Manitoba Legislature, and so welcome back to everyone here.

Mr. Speaker, of course, we have just come through a general election in Manitoba and, with that, I do want to take a few moments of my time, with your indulgence, Sir, to thank those members of the people in Tuxedo for re-electing me into the Manitoba Legislature. It's indeed an honour, and I find it very humbling to be here and to be selected by them to be back here in the Manitoba Legislature. So I am deeply grateful and forever humbled by the incredible generosity by all those people in Tuxedo who supported me in the last election, and I'm proud to be a part of the constituency that represents so many hard-working and caring individuals from a diversity of backgrounds in our area.

And I know from time to time, Mr. Speaker, we, in Tuxedo, get criticized and—for who we are and what we stand for, and I think it's really unfortunate. All I can say is—to those people—is that they don't really know us very well, and I'd like to personally invite those people to come out for a visit to Tuxedo sometime and see what a beautiful part of our city it is and how gorgeous and supportive the people are in our community. The beauty of our parks, our golf course, the community centres, the businesses that keep our community thriving and growing, there is so much to celebrate in Tuxedo and it's indeed an honour for me to be a part of this incredibly vibrant community.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a few moments just to thank my campaign team, of course, without whom I would not be here today. As we all know, it's the volunteers and our campaign teams that work endlessly and effortlessly to ensure that our campaigns run as smoothly as they can, and we are just one small part of that. And so, indeed, I just want to thank all of the people who helped out on my

campaign, and there are a few people that I would like to single out.

I want to thank my campaign team, again, without whom I would not be here today. In particular, I want to thank Jillian Currie, my amazing office manager, who knows me better than, perhaps, I know myself sometimes and calls a spade a spade and lets me know exactly what she's thinking, which is great. I just want to thank her for all of her hard work and dedication in this—in the past election campaign.

I want to thank my campaign manager, Michael Diamond, who worked tirelessly, Mr. Speaker, day in and day out to ensure that the only junk food brought into our office was in little packages marked with 100 calories or less on them, to ensure that I didn't over indulge and—as we know how this can happen during campaigns. But, seriously, to Michael, he was a tremendous asset to our team, and I want to thank him so much for being there for me in this election.

To Trevor Sprague, my official agent, who, perhaps reluctantly, Mr. Speaker, took on the role of official agent and is probably even more reluctant to maybe take that on the next time around. But, in all seriousness, I want to thank Trevor for being there for me and for being such an integral part of our campaign.

To Lori Shenkarow, our volunteer co-ordinator, thank you for all of your help, Lori, and for sticking it out with me to the very end. I know it was a very difficult time for Lori personally, Mr. Speaker. Her mother was—became quite ill during the campaign and, ultimately, ended up passing away. And to Lori, words cannot express enough how much your help means to me, especially during such a difficult time in your family life.

To Linda Radcliffe, who came into the office every day and helped with data entry. It was always so great to see her smiling face in the office when I came in from canvassing. And to her husband, Michael, a former Cabinet minister, Michael Radcliffe, who came canvassing with me several times, I just want to thank him as well, Mr. Speaker.

To Ken Mason and Jim Moore, who have helped out on every campaign since the beginning, thank you so much for being there for me.

To Immanuella Oppermann, who, every day I came into the office, Mr. Speaker, she was diligently there working on the phones, calling and calling and

calling. And it was every single day that she was in there making those phone calls. And so I just want to thank her so much. It's people like Immanuella that really make a campaign work and that—it's all those jobs that everyone works together, and she just did such an incredible job in this campaign.

To Tracey Maconachie, my election day co-ordinator for all of my elections, she was back with me again and it was great to have her involved. Tracy and I started off with—when we first worked in my first by-election in 2000, and neither one of us had kids then. And so we've had a chance, throughout the course of the elections over the years, to watch our kids grow in each election. And each time they would be taking on a few more tasks during the course of the election. And now, Mr. Speaker, they are ready to run, I believe, their own election campaigns. They may be young, but they have a great deal of experience. And those are the things that are great; it's great to have our children and our families involved as they are in the campaigns.

To all my canvassers and phoners and election day helpers, to all our donors, and importantly, to our friends, Mr. Speaker, our friends who, at the end of the day, never lose sight of who we are and make sure we never lose sight of why we're doing this. Thank you for keeping it all very real for me.

To the grade 11 students from St. Paul's High School who volunteered their time on my campaign, thank you for bringing your debating skills to the doors with me. I learned a lot from them, Mr. Speaker.

To the grade 9 students from SJR, thank you for your interest in my campaign and good luck on all your projects. And thanks again for all your help. Many of them went door knocking with me, stuffed envelopes, did all sorts of things, and it was just great to have so many young people involved in our campaign, Mr. Speaker.

*(14:40)

And, certainly, last but definitely not least, a thanks, a special thanks to my family. We all know how much families contribute to our lives here in the Legislature. My husband, Jason, travels a lot with his job and—but he was able to take most of the campaign off to be with me and the children and help out on my campaign. So I want to thank him for that, Mr. Speaker. To Victoria and my Tommy—and

Tommy, my two children: You were born into this, and perhaps it would not be your first choice in life, but I hope one day you are able to look back and recognize the importance of giving back to your community and standing up for what you believe in because these are the things I think that we all, in this Chamber, strive to achieve to teach our children and our grandchildren, the importance of living in a free and democratic society.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we are so incredibly lucky to live in such a free and democratic society. With the right to vote for whomever we choose. This is a rare thing in the world we live and I think we often take it for granted. And I especially want to thank, to single out all those people who fought hard and died for us in order to protect our way of life and give us that very right to vote.

I'm extremely disappointed in the people who chose not to vote in this election. For whatever reason: they may have not liked anything they heard from any of the political parties, they may have been too busy, they may have had other things going on. But I think it's important for all of us to exercise our democratic right in this free and democratic society and I hope that, and certainly I believe that there are many people who are waiting in our communities to earn that right to vote, who want to be new Canadian citizens. And I think we owe it to them to show how proud we are to live in a free and democratic society with that right to vote.

I'm—hopefully we can all work together on both sides of this House to bring forward this issue. The issue of this campaign where there were a number of people who didn't get out and vote and I'm hoping that we can all work together to ensure that we instill in our children and our grandchildren and help them remember how lucky we are to live in this free and democratic society. And I hope we can all work together towards ensuring that more people get out and vote in the next general election.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, again, I just want to thank all of those people that helped out on my election campaign. To all the people in Tuxedo: I really look forward to working with all of you over the course of the next four years and ensuring that we bring forward all of your issues and concerns into this Chamber for debate.

The Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. The reason that we're here to debate today. This is my 12th Throne Speech, and, unfortunately, I have to say that, of course, we are technically voting, or we

are debating the amendment right now which I am in favour of and I hope all members in the Manitoba Legislature will join with me in—and the Leader of the Opposition and members on this side of the House to support our amendments because I think they are very good amendments to this Throne Speech. But, unfortunately, I have to, I have to let everyone know, that I will for the 12th year be unable to vote in favour of the Throne Speech.

Unfortunately, I don't see a lot of vision and hope for the future in Manitoba and, of course, that's why we're here, to debate, and that's why we're here to talk about this and to bring our own views forward and to ensure that. And I just don't believe that this Throne Speech accurately reflects the values of people in my community and provides—I don't believe it really provides them with any hope for the future in this province. I think there could have been a lot more, Mr. Speaker.

I think the Throne Speech was actually tired and out of touch with the people who just elected them into government. I don't think that people voted for higher taxes and more debt. I don't think that people voted for the title of the violent crime capital of Canada. I don't believe that that's why they elected this NDP government in. I don't believe they voted for prisoners to be accidentally released from jail. I don't think they voted for thousands of warrants to be deleted from the criminal database and I don't believe that the policies that are causing our most vulnerable in society, our children, to fall through the cracks and die. I don't believe that that's what the people of Manitoba voted for, Mr. Speaker.

I also don't believe that they voted for Winnipeg to be one of the worst—to have one of the worst track records in homicides in Canada, and, I—you know, this is a track record that they have brought forward under this NDP government. The—they have—actually, they're on track to beat their own record, which was 34 homicides back in 2004. We've already reached that and we're surpassing it; there are still two months left of this—of the year, and I think it's unfortunate. I don't think that Manitobans voted to be the violent crime capital of Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe they voted for people to wait for 34 hours in a waiting room to—in a hospital to die.

I don't believe that Manitobans voted for poor management in flood water predictions, Mr. Speaker. They didn't vote for increased red tape in order to make it difficult to claim for flood compensation.

I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that the—the people didn't vote for a government who ignores agriculture and rural development, not even mentioned—this is not even mentioned in the Throne Speech.

I don't believe they voted for increasing funding to health-care bureaucracy over front-line services, Mr. Speaker, which has been something that this NDP government has been doing for the last 12 years. More money for health care has been their common theme, more money but the money is going into the bureaucracy and not into the front-line services for the care for the people that really need it.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that Manitobans voted for increasing wait times for diagnostic services.

I don't believe that they voted for the lowest graduation rate in the country, Mr. Speaker. It's extremely unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe they voted for the designation of our province as the poverty capital of Canada. I mean, this is a government that claims to be there to—this claim—they claim that this is one of their *raison d'être* here, but yet we continue to be the poverty capital of Canada. So clearly things are going in the wrong direction.

I don't believe Manitobans voted for a government who thinks it's okay to live in conditions infested in bedbugs in the very homes that they live in in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and that is a very serious issue. Door to door, we found that going into our Manitoba housing complexes in all of our—many of our communities, there is one thing I've heard for years, and I have yet to see any real solution to that problem from this government.

And I don't believe that people voted for the crumbling infrastructure that we have in the province of Manitoba, our roads and highways and so on, Mr. Speaker.

It's been 12 long years and, unfortunately, this government is tired, out of ideas. They had an electorate that voted them in as—for government, but I don't believe that they were voted in. There's many things that Manitobans, I don't believe, voted for. And I think that, Mr. Speaker, I could go on, but I think, as a province, we can do better, and we can be better than what is offered by this NDP government in this Throne Speech.

It's time that this NDP government start living up to their promises. We have seen and heard so

many promises over the last 12 years since they came into government. There's press release after press release after press release, and yet, what we don't see is a lot of results from—and action as a result of those press releases. Some of those press releases are often re-announcements of things that were announced five, 10 years ago. And, unfortunately, after 12 years, we've heard a lot about this government plans to spend, how much money they're putting into various programs, but they talk very little about the outcomes and what they want to get from those programs, and what they're getting for the money that they're spending. We don't hear a lot about that.

*(14:50)

So I think it's time, Mr. Speaker, to throw a challenge out to the NDP. Instead of telling us how much money the government is putting into a program, can they please tell us what they are trying to achieve, in what period of time, and report back to the people of Manitoba on a regular basis about whether or not they are on target to achieving the goals that they set out? Now, I think that would be a very refreshing way of this government, and I was hoping to see that in this Throne Speech. Unfortunately, we didn't see a lot of that.

So, again, we will continue over the next four years, I'm sure, to see announcement after announcement about how much money and how many millions of dollars they're putting into various government programs that may, on the surface, sound great, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes down to it, are they really helping the people that those programs are put in place to help? And, at the end of the day, that is how a government should be judged, in the end, as to whether or not they have actually achieved the goals that they set out to achieve.

So I'm hoping over the course of the next four years, Mr. Speaker, that we can hold the government's feet to the fire. And each time they make a government announcement, it's not just about how much money they're putting into a program, but it's what that—what the goals are of that program, what the time frame is to achieve those goals, and what are the various checking mechanisms along the way to ensure that they are on track to achieve those goals. Because I think that's what the people of Manitoba want to know; they want to know where the money is going into the programs that these—that the NDP is announcing.

So, Mr. Speaker, for these reasons I'm afraid, once again, that I will have to vote against the Throne Speech. But there are many things, I believe, amendments to the Throne Speech that our leader has introduced in this Chamber, and I would hope that members opposite would look at those each individually, and see that they do offer—they are good amendments to this Throne Speech. And I would encourage all members to set aside their partisanship and see fit to, perhaps, support some of those amendments because—and all of those amendments because they are good ones.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I—again, I want to thank the people of Tuxedo for re-electing me into the Manitoba Chamber, into the Legislature, and I look forward to the debates over the next four years. Thank you.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): It is a pleasure to rise today to speak to my ninth Throne Speech since I've been duly elected to represent the citizens of the Gimli constituency, and I thank them for that opportunity to do so.

I'd like to start, as many have over the course of the Throne Speech debate, Mr. Speaker, and welcome you in your new role as Speaker. And I would also like to welcome the table officers and the pages. I listened very closely to the congratulations from the member from St. Paul to one page in particular, and I can attest to his musical prowess. I was at a CD release party in the band that he drums for last week, and he is an excellent musician.

I do want to start by thanking, again, the community of Gimli and Winnipeg Beach, Dunnottar, St. Andrews and the new part of my constituency, Riverton, part of the RM of Bifrost, Hecla and Grindstone. And it's very special to me that I would now represent Hecla in my new boundaries in the new constituency of Gimli, because my long, long—or great-great-grandfather—was the first European-descent child born on Hecla Island in 1876. So we have deep roots in Hecla, and I'm very pleased to have that opportunity to represent that beautiful part of the province of Manitoba.

And speaking of family, I'll start by thanking my family. As we all know, elections are a very gruelling exercise. I called it 28, 14-hour days for the privilege of four years of 14-hour days, but something that I would—I can't think of anything I'd

rather do, Mr. Speaker, than have the privilege of serving the people of the Gimli constituency.

But, during that time, of course, our families do pay quite a price, I know. And for me it was very difficult missing my brother's 50th birthday, missing my mom's 70th birthday and, of course, my 14th wedding anniversary. I've since been able to atone for the first two; I'm not so sure I've atoned appropriately for the latter—but the jury's still out on that—but that is, unfortunately, what happens during an election campaign.

But it was also a time to say goodbye to my uncle, John Bjornson, who passed at 84 years of age, who had been a lifelong resident of the West St. Paul—or a long-time resident, I should say, of the West St. Paul area, and a very big supporter of myself and our party. And I was—it was great to see the family there supporting Uncle John, but it was certainly not the circumstances under which we wanted to gather for that reunion.

But I had great team, as many members in this Chamber have talked about, the many hours of volunteer labour that go into an election, whether it was pounding up the signs, taking down the signs, whether it was making those phone calls, making those phone calls again, making those phone calls yet another time and making those phone calls a fourth time and a fifth time, if necessary. Whether it was going canvassing door-to-door or attending debates with myself, and all the things that went on during course of the election, I was always in awe of that incredible volunteer effort and the tremendous support that I received over the course of that 28-day exercise in democracy.

I'd also like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Minto and the MLA for Kildonan, who were two colleagues who joined me on the doorstep and joined me at events over the course of the election, and certainly a pleasure to be on the doorstep with my colleagues. One thing that we did note, though, at approximately 6-7 and 6-4 we thought it was advisable to step down a step when we knocked on doors when we did meet and greet people at the doorway.

Now some people have often asked me, well, why politics, because I had a wonderful job teaching in Gimli High School. And I think for some of the new members here I'd like to tell a little story as to what it was that brought me to this Chamber, and that of course was the politics of the 1990s and how it impacted me as a professional in the classroom and

the modus operandi that I had witnessed of the government of the day in the 1990s. And I guess if you ignore a problem, you don't admit that there is a problem, you don't try to address the problem, then you don't accept any responsibility for the problem. Well, one of the problems that we had in the schools was bullying. In fact, we did a survey through the Manitoba Teachers' Society about the concerns that teachers had in the classroom and it was violent behaviour and aggressive behaviour and bullying issues. That was the number one issue that we raised with the government of the day.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they chose to do nothing about it. In fact, the way they approached teaching in Manitoba was to cut the funding, was to introduce a bill that locked teachers out from professional development, was to strip teachers of the collective bargaining rights that they had bargained for over five generations—pardon me, five decades, and to me, the government of the day ignored bullying. In fact they were among the biggest bullies towards the education profession. But they ignored the problem. They didn't admit there was a problem. They didn't try to address the problem. They didn't take any responsibility for the problem. In fact, in this very Chamber, I heard one of my former critics for the Education portfolio say, there wasn't any bullying in schools when we were in government. So, again, ignoring the problem.

Same thing about the teachers' pensions. Eight consecutive years where the advice had been given that the pension adjustment account should be adjusted because the account was at risk of running out, essentially. Eight consecutive years of letters from the actuary. But if you ignore the problem, if you don't admit there's a problem, if you don't do anything about the problem, you don't accept any responsibility for the problem. We as a government, on the other hand, have been doing a lot to address both those issues in education. Bringing in a Safe Schools legislation, bringing in, I believe, seven changes to The Teachers' Pensions Act, including two that are going to have a very tremendous benefit to retired teachers and the pension adjustment account, the sustainability of that account, because we accept the responsibilities for both those problems. We've taken a stand to address those problems, and yes, there's still work to be done to continue to address those problems, Mr. Speaker.

Auto theft, another great example of what was happening in the 1990s, and I do recall a member in this Chamber standing up and saying, well, there was

no auto theft when we were in government. I remember that statement very clearly as if it was only yesterday. If you ignore the problem, if you don't admit there's a problem, if you don't take any action to address the problem, then you don't take any responsibility for the problem. And what have we done in our tenure as government? Mr. Speaker, 83 per cent reduction in auto theft with a strategy working with all the stakeholders to make that a reality and similar strategies that will be working with stakeholders to address other issues of crime in Manitoba.

* (15:00)

Gangs: Well, this is a bit different. I mean, like I said, if you ignore the problem, you don't admit there's a problem, don't take any responsibility, the members opposite are a little bit different on this. They're talking revisionist history saying, well, there were no gangs in Manitoba when we were in office. So you ask the question: Why did you build that \$3-million courthouse to deal with court cases with—that were designed specifically to deal with court cases with gangs? But they didn't exist when they were in office, so it's a bit of revisionist history from members opposite on that particular issue, and it's an interesting position to take, when we know that they built that courthouse for the purpose of trying these gangs. But, again, it's kind of not admitting that there's a problem, it's not trying to address a problem and not taking any responsibility for the problem.

But we have strategies. We, on this side of the House, have had strategies over the course of our 10 years in office to address gangs. And we've done so with intervention programs, prevention programs, starting where the kids are most vulnerable, and trying to address those children who are at risk of becoming engaged in gang activity and those children who are risk of becoming involved in any criminal activity, and we'll continue to work on the intervention and prevention side.

And then, of course, on the enforcement side, with laws that will take property achieved by crime, and have that property confiscated and sold for the purpose of generating funds for the purpose of supporting our police, things that we have done.

Unlike members opposite, we didn't ignore the problem. We admitted there was a problem. We've taken steps to address those problems and we accept responsibility for those problems because that's what

we need to do to make this province a better place, and we'll continue to do so.

So, those are just a few things that inspired me to get involved in politics and I was absolutely overwhelmed in 2003 by the support that I received in the constituency of Gimli. Again, very appreciative of that continued support in 2007 and thrilled to be here to be a part of the team of New Democrats, of 37 New Democrats, as we move forward with our renewed mandate.

Now, it was interesting to hear the member from Tuxedo talk about what did Manitobans vote for and what she didn't think Manitobans voted for. Well, Manitobans did vote for 37 New Democrats. They did vote for a record number in a majority government and they did vote for a fourth consecutive New Democrat majority. We made history on the election night of 2011 and I'm very pleased to be part of that history.

What did they vote for? Well, let's look at health care. Health care was a very important issue and continues to be a very important issue and it had been an important issue throughout the election.

Now, I recall in the '07 election, Mr. Speaker, when I stood in front of the Gimli health centre, which was redeveloped under our government, by the way, a beautiful \$13-million facility. I recall standing in front of that facility with then-Premier Gary Doer at my side, to announce a commitment to six dialysis beds in a brand-new dialysis unit in Gimli hospital announced in the '07 election.

I also recall being accosted by the opposition candidate's manager, and other members of his campaign team, saying what the—are you announcing this for? Expletive deleted, *Hansard*. What are you announcing this for? We cannot afford this. We don't need this. And that was their position on rural health care in 2007.

So what did Manitobans vote for in 2011? When we were in the Gimli constituency, we announced, Mr. Speaker, that Gimli health centre, with that beautiful new dialysis unit, will now also become a CancerCare hub with a dedicated cancer pharmacist, with a dedicated CancerCare patient co-ordinator. That's what we voted for in 2011 election.

What did we vote for in health care, Mr. Speaker? We also voted for the fact that there will be Telehealth links now at the Riverton health centre and the Gimli health centre. That's what we voted for in this 2011 election.

And what does that mean for the people of Riverton, the people of Gimli? Gimli, statistically, is the oldest community in Manitoba. We have more seniors living in Gimli than any other community in Manitoba. And health care was an issue that I kept hearing about on the doorstep and the ability to get better health care closer to home, and sooner. Of course, Telehealth, and the CancerCare hub, and the dialysis unit are all part of that. That's what Manitobans voted for in the 2011 election, Mr. Speaker.

What about education? I heard that a lot on the doorstep as a former teacher, who had, as I said, been through the dark days of the '90s, when we were being beaten up by the government of the day. And I've had the privilege of serving as Manitoba's Education Minister for six years, and I continue to work with a great team of people who are continuing to increase funding to education and provide more opportunities for students all over the province.

And during the election campaign, I was very pleased to be joined by our leader when he announced that there would be more money for technical vocational equipment and resources and programs in Gimli High School and Arborg high school, and the fact that we're going to be bringing more opportunities for our students closer to home. The fact that we're also going to allow for those students, when they do go on to university, better opportunities under the student loan program, where they won't be penalized for owning a car or having a job, where they can pay interest at prime, I believe, was our commitment, keeping education affordable.

And I know how important that is for rural Manitobans, because, Mr. Speaker, when I was going to university, I held no less than two jobs, had been involved in student politics and—well, actually, three jobs, now that I think of it. I took a full course load and had to pay the mortgage when I was going to university. So I know how difficult it is for rural Manitobans. When you offer rural Manitobans affordable education and when you offer rural Manitobans more bursaries to support their education, that's what Manitobans voted for in '07. That's what they voted for 2011.

Now, I know that we also talk about class sizes, the only party to step up to the plate and make a commitment on class sizes. And the members opposite—it was interesting to hear the member from Tuxedo talk about setting targets to achieve our goals that we have set for ourselves here in Manitoba.

Well, we have set a target in terms of the capital, in terms of the human resources that we'll need to make this happen and working with the stakeholders to make this happen. And we will work towards that goal of classes between kindergarten and grade 3 and cap the size at 20.

Now, I know we've been successful at capping the size of the Conservative caucus over the last two elections. As far as the class composition is concerned, we don't really have control over that, Mr. Speaker. But, certainly, I think when you look at what Manitobans voted for in 2011, they voted for a government that not only is the government for health care in Manitoba, but this is the education government here in Manitoba. And we'll continue to find ways to support and enrich our opportunities for our students in our schools.

In fact, I had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, of attending the 30th birthday of the Manitoba Theatre for Young People on Saturday. My sons and daughter are all very artistically inclined as actors, musicians and singers—evidently, it skips a generation—but we've had the privilege of going to Manitoba Theatre for Young People and my children have all been engaged in theatre and musical theatre class. And I see the member from Burrows here who also was at that celebration of 30 years of a very nurturing, inclusive environment that allows kids to explore the many gifts that they bring with them each and every day. And I believe that every child has a gift that they bring into the classroom every day, and it's incumbent on us to ensure that they have that opportunity to explore that gift.

Now, I recall members opposite in the '07 election—or was it '03? I think it was '07—where they said, oh, we don't need phys. ed., we don't need the arts, we don't need music, we need to go back to the basics in education. I was waiting for them to announce the return to slate boards, where we're looking at SMART Boards. We're looking at technologies. We're looking at ways to resource our schools and our communities properly so our children have the best possible tools available to them for the best possible outcomes.

Well, let's talk about infrastructure. I know members opposite, they have quite a wish list on infrastructure. And it's interesting to hear them revisit the history of how they would have done things when they were in office as far as infrastructure is concerned. I—you know, I don't recall exactly how many per cent times more money

we've been investing in infrastructure, but I see a wonderful example of that.

And it was rather interesting during the election, because here we are debating just off of Highway No. 9 in a community centre, we had a debate where I was asked about the status of Highway No. 9. What are our plans on Highway No. 9?

*(15:10)

Well, Highway No. 9, as those of you know who have had the opportunity to drive from Winnipeg to Selkirk lately, you'll know that in a very short eight-year period, we have done a lot of work on access and egress issues, on safety issues. And the access and egress that we've spent a considerable amount of money on in Selkirk on Highway 9A, as it loops around Selkirk, is because of the tremendous growth that's happening in Selkirk. The access and egress issues that we've been dealing with and the safety issues that we've been dealing with, straightening out that curve on Parks Creek and putting in a much larger, better bridge on Parks Creek, has been an important project for our government. Taking that six-kilometre stretch from Lockport to—right to Selkirk, where we've resurfaced that area and diamond grinded the concrete, it's absolutely a beautiful stretch of highway now. And there have been a lot of efforts made over the previous eight years to ensure that a lot of blacktop has gone down that particular stretch of road.

Now, I was curious, because my opposition candidate stood up after I gave that answer about over \$20 million of money invested in access-egress safety and resurfacing, and he said, well, we had a plan to do the entire highway from Winnipeg to Selkirk and we were even going to pave the shoulders. We've had that plan in place when we were in office and we even had the money in place. So it is really interesting revisionist history because I do not believe for a second that they had the plan or the money in place to do exactly what he was saying that they would have done in the 1990s. But that's the coulda, woulda, shoulda party and, you know, I think our record was very clear in terms of our investment in infrastructure.

Well, let me talk about one more very, very important piece of infrastructure—and I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition mentioned that the City of Winnipeg does not need to upgrade that North End waste-water treatment plant, and I told people who had said, well, they're supporting the Tories, that they said they were going to cancel

that north end waste-water treatment plant. They're not going to force the City to do this, that it was an incredible waste of money to do this. And I told them about that day in July, or pardon me, June of 2002, where 426 million litres of raw sewage was spilled into the Red River, and they say, we don't need to fix this? I have to tell you that I even had people take signs down when I told them that this is what was going to happen if they voted in the Conservatives.

Now, as somebody who lives by Lake Winnipeg—I've lived by that lake all my life and I've seen the many moods of Lake Winnipeg. I like to characterize it as the serene, the surreal and the savage lake because I have seen that lake incredibly serene, where you're walking along the lake and you see the—a very gentle breeze and you see the sun shining on it. It's absolutely beautiful. Then you've seen the surreal, where you're walking late in the evening and you can't tell the difference between the lake and the sky, the horizon. They just blend. It's absolutely surreal. And, of course, I've seen the savage nature of that lake, where we've seen the lake go from that very calm, serene moment to that incredible torrent and that weather bomb that we experienced over a year ago, now, when it's done incredible damage in a very, very short period of time.

And I've seen a bit of that this year, but, thankfully—thankfully—working with the municipalities, talking to municipalities about replacing those dikes—that we were the government that built and criticized by the opposition by for doing it—the dikes that were first built under Premier Schreyer and second under our government in 2005, I believe, was a very ambitious south basin diking initiative. And getting the municipalities to rebuild those dikes and restore them to pre-weather bomb conditions, and in areas where they were concerned about being a little bit more vulnerable, perhaps because of the condition of the dike, to make sure that they had a plan in place to ensure that people's property and personal safety were addressed with other plans. And, Mr. Speaker, it's been very successful. There are some individuals who will be having their houses raised, who will be having ring dikes built around their properties and to ensure that they will not have to endure another high water episode and the loss and the stress of those particular episodes that we have seen all too often.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's not just what's happening on the surface of the lake, though; it's what's happening in the lake and our government having the

plan to address what's happening in the lake. And to hear members opposite say that they thought that our water regulations were wrong-headed and that we had water police who were out there, and that we would cancel that North End waste-water treatment plant that I was referring to, people in my constituency were extremely concerned. And it was curious because, during the election, we had a debate on the health of the lake, and every candidate was given an opportunity to respond to every question. And my opposition candidate choose not—chose not to respond to a number of the questions. He chose not to say anything, and when he talked about their platform on Lake Winnipeg—the first thing we're going to do—the first thing they were going to do was expand on two programs that we had initiated. They had no plan for Lake Winnipeg, none.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've been working with people who live along the shores of Lake Winnipeg in permanent residences, who live along the shores of Lake Winnipeg in temporary residences, who make a living on Lake Winnipeg, and that's what we'll continue to do.

Now, community safety. Been a lot of discussion about community safety. And we were waiting: What were the Tories going to promise on community safety? And it was almost as if they said, well, let's wait and see what the NDP promises and we'll promise the same. It was almost as if that was their strategy, because we have been committed to community safety.

We continue to invest in community safety: 261 police officers since we've been in office, the cadet program jointly with the City of Winnipeg, and we're going to enhance that cadet program. We're going to increase the number of police officers on the streets, Mr. Speaker.

And we also talked about the special resource officers that we have in our schools and how that is such a great opportunity for students to get to know police in a very different way. This came up in the debate as well, when I talked about that as an intervention and a prevention mechanism, having special resource officers in our schools. Now, somebody actually took exception and said, isn't it sad that we have to do that, and I had to explain exactly what that was all about. That was an opportunity to have a student's first experience with a police officer be: Hi, how are you? I'm here to help out coaching the basketball team, or, I'm here to talk to you about some of the choices that you might

make in life, or, I'm here at your teacher's request to come and talk to you about law, or, I'm here at your teacher's request to talk about a career in law enforcement, or, I'm here to be a part of your community, rather than a first experience of a student to be being read their Miranda rights.

We need to have more intervention and more prevention, and that's what sets us apart from the members opposite. They're the tough-on-crime notion, but they don't get the prevention-on-crime side of the issue; they don't get the balance that we bring to the table. And when the member from Tuxedo said, Manitobans, what are they voting for? They voted for a team of committed social democrats who are going to not only be tough on crime, but we're also going to be smart on crime. We're going to provide opportunities to prevent and intervene, and we're going to get to the social ills and work with our stakeholders to address those social ills that lead people to make those choices that they make in going down perhaps the wrong path.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a pleasure to be a part of that team. It's a pleasure to be a part of history. It's a pleasure to be part of a fourth New Democrat majority government, and I'm looking forward to what we will do in the next four years.

In fact, in my Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, yet again we were the only party that was talking about the importance of training, the only party that was talking about apprenticeships, the only party that's been delivering on apprenticeships, the only party that's been engaged with the community to address labour market demands and labour market issues. And that's been our commitment.

It's a privilege to work with the many different sector councils that we have here in Manitoba, including one that is an example to all of—all other regions, in terms of the volunteer sector council, because we recognize how much people volunteer and how much these non-profit organizations contribute to our economy. And we've set a new standard in terms of that particular sector council and working with them to address their issues of concern and capacity.

Working with the many different small businesses has been a pleasure, that I've really gotten to know so many small businesses and go to so many celebrations to celebrate their success stories. We have 106,000 businesses in Manitoba; 102,000 of them are small businesses, and that—they account for

one in every three jobs created in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, the growth in these businesses has been phenomenal. The number of women now that are starting businesses—more women are starting businesses in the last couple of years than men. That really speaks to the entrepreneurial spirit. It speaks to the belief that they have in the future of this province. It speaks to the growth that we are seeing and the fact that something big is definitely happening here in Manitoba.

*(15:20)

Now, I heard one of the members refer to red tape. We've been working on BizPaL; we've been working on TAXcess; we've been working on a number of different initiatives to make it easier for you to set up your small business here in Manitoba. And I've used that example: If you're sitting in your kitchen in Halifax or in your living room in Vancouver and you want to set up a business in Manitoba, you go online and you enter in the name of the business in one of the over 70 different municipalities in the province that are hooked up to BizPaL, and it'll tell you exactly all of the rules and regulations and all the permits that you would need to set up your business here in Manitoba. We're making it easier for people to do business in Manitoba.

And you can also file the business taxes online on TAXcess, a 24-hour secured access because I know people just love doing their taxes at 4 in the morning, as do I. But they have any given time of the day they can go online and do that. We're making it easier for people to do business here in Manitoba.

And it's not just small businesses here that are thriving in Manitoba. I know the member from Kildonan referred to the fact that Rolls-Royce and General Electric are—or pardon me, Rolls-Royce and Pratt & Whitney at the Thompson weather testing facility made a substantial investment in that community in a state-of-the-art winter weather testing facility and General Electric is going to be doing the same. And I was very pleased to be at Magellan to open a 140,000-square-foot composite centre at the Magellan Aerospace site where we were told, in no uncertain terms, that it was working with our government and the federal government that made this happen here in Manitoba.

Small business, big business, medium-sized, they're all thriving here in Manitoba because we know how to work with our companies. We had a—we know how to work with our business community

and we're looking at how we can expand the opportunities for those businesses and international markets and the trade department, or the Trade Council, with the participation of many stakeholders to come up with recommendations to make that happen.

So, Mr. Speaker, it feels great to be here. It is fantastic to have this opportunity and the rumours of my political demise that were flying around from members opposite some short six months ago have been grossly exaggerated. It is indeed a privilege to serve in this Chamber and be one of 57 people who had that privilege to do so and I'd like to congratulate every single one of you on both sides of the Chamber for being elected and being granted that privilege, and I look forward to working with and, I guess, we can expect working against some members but we'll certainly work together every opportunity that we can to make Manitoba and even better place to live

And I have to say, I don't think anyone's partisan when we're all going to be cheering for the Bombers as they move forward, and I'm telling you, after touring that new stadium on Friday, something big is definitely happening in this province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, so, thank you very much.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm—I also, too, want to just, first of all, offer my congratulations to you on your election as Speaker. I think you probably won't tire of hearing that and I know even talking to you just after you were elected and chosen that you were, perhaps, even shocked yourself. And—but we do congratulate you and look forward to working with you. I always welcomed the opportunity to have some chats with the former Speaker, Mr. George Hickes, who was an incredible Speaker for the House for the 12 years that he was, and wish you many more years of reign in the Speaker's chair, Mr. Speaker.

Also, to the table officers and the member—and the officers of the Legislative Assembly, thank you for the work you do. It's always very helpful when we're doing our jobs to know that you're supporting us behind the scenes, so thank you very much. And to the pages, well, I hope that this experience for you will be rewarding. I hope that you will take some learning experiences from this time in the Chamber and take it sometimes, too, with a bit of a grain of salt. You have to sift through these things a little bit, but I'm sure that you're going to enjoy the time you have with us as pages for this term.

I also want to thank all of my constituents for returning me to this Legislature and the people that helped on my campaign because that is really what it's all about. It's the people that help you because they believe in you. They come, they volunteer, they're not coerced, they're your friends, they're your neighbours, they're your family, Mr. Speaker. It's not somebody that you have to drag in from another group that doesn't really want to be there helping you; these are people that genuinely want to be there to help. They're not paid. They do it because they believe in the candidate and, in my case, they believed in me as the candidate, and they believed in the conservative values that emanate from the constituency of Morris.

And I can't thank enough some of the volunteers that really stood out on my campaign. I have to single out Karen Glavin who was my volunteer co-ordinator, who did such a fabulous job of recruiting so many people. It became such an easy job because there was just so many people. And people did things even outside of their comfort zone because I'm sure everybody knows some—I mean for us it's easy to make phone calls and to go door knocking and make a cold call at the door, but for some people that's a little bit out of the comfort zone. But you ask them to do it and they were very happy to do it, and they really, really at the end of that said they enjoyed it very much.

We just had a volunteer appreciation night on Friday at my house and we had about 65 people there and that was only half the people that were able to come because everybody has such busy lives, and I think there was a football game on that night too. But it was a great, great evening to celebrate with the people that helped me, Mr. Speaker.

I also not-want to mention my constituency assistant, Wendy, who did an incredible job in helping, my official agent Bob Hyde who, of course, very important role, who takes care of the money, Mr. Speaker, and also I have to thank my husband, Wilf. He ran my campaign, you know, some people say you shouldn't have a family member running your campaign. Well, we did it and, you know, I can still say we started talking again last week. So we're all good, it's all fine. But it was iffy there for a while. But—and I want to thank the people for returning me. I won every single poll and increased my vote count incredibly. So thanks to all of the people of Morris for that.

I also do have to mention I guess though that the NDP candidate was missing in action in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, and for a person with the name of Mohamed Alli, he sure didn't put up much of a fight.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I also want to just say to all of the new candidates here, welcome to the Legislature. It's a daunting place, I think, when you first walk in this Chamber because we all recognize that there are very few people that get the opportunity to actually come and sit in this Chamber, because this Chamber is where the laws in this province are made and debated. It's where everything that we live by happens and starts here. So it's a very important role. And whether that role be government, or whether that role be opposition, there are the two distinct roles to play here in a democratic society. And I just want to remind the new members to reflect on that because even if you are in government you may find yourself at some point in opposition, and in opposition, hopefully at some point, you will find yourself in government. So I need to stress that no one side has all of the good ideas and does all of the work, there are roles to play from both sides. I think that having had the opportunity to know some of the members that have been in this Chamber for a fairly lengthy time and have served in opposition, I find them to be much of a more rounded individual because they've experienced things from both sides. So I just want to say to the new members, be mindful of what your government is doing and make sure that you don't accept the rhetoric and the arrogance as absolute truth.

You know, I do also—I want to just say, not only do I want to commend all of the people that won their seats in the election, I think it's important to thank all of the people that actually ran in the election, Mr. Speaker, because I know from our side we had some excellent candidates, some very excellent candidates, who worked extremely hard and when they went to the door they told the truth. When they were asked a question, they didn't bend the truth, they told the truth, and, you know, that was commendable for them to do that.

* (15:30)

I want to just reflect on the fact, though, that, you know, we have come through this election and finished this election. And, you know, it was—even though the members opposite might not want to think about this, but it is true that with 44 per cent of

the vote—44 per cent of the vote—was a Conservative vote; 46 per cent of the vote voted for the NDP. But I want to remind people that because of that—you can do the math—54 per cent of people did not vote for your policies, for the policies of the NDP. *[interjection]* So, Mr. Speaker, well, I can see that I've touched a nerve over there. They really don't like the fact that 54 per cent of the people in Manitoba voted against them, but that's the truth. That is the truth; that's what the numbers say.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I think that we saw some really dirty and negative tactics in this campaign, and I think that these American-style attack advertising that, as the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) talked about, how Pandora's box is now open and this is what we're going to experience now, initiated by the NDP. I think that bending the truth and fearmongering, out and out personal attacks, I just don't feel that they had a place here in Manitoba. But, unfortunately, that's what the NDP resorted to. and I can't imagine that it feels good to win that way. I can't imagine that. I think that if you win fair and square, when you win fair and square, that's a victory to be celebrated. That is a victory to be celebrated.

But, when you win by negative campaign tactics which bent the truth, Mr. Speaker, were absolute falsehoods in many cases and were just plain out and out ridiculous, I don't see how any person with any moral compass can clap for that. You can celebrate when you win fair and square, but when you don't win fair and square, nobody with any moral compass can celebrate that.

And I think you have to remember that when 54 per cent of people vote against you, you have to remember—to member that you have to govern for everyone and not just the people that voted for you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech said, it's a great time to be a Manitoban. I think that in some ways that may be true, but I thought it was a very insensitive comment to be made when still thousands of people are out of their homes due to flooding throughout this province. *[interjection]* Yes, it is true. So I think when you say things like this, you have to remember we're talking about a lot of people in rural Manitoba that have been affected by this, and I think that clapping and cheering just showed that this government doesn't recognize the people outside the Perimeter Highway that have been so negatively affected by this flood.

I know in my own constituency I have flooding issues every single year, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the Red River, which we narrowly avoided a flood this spring, and then we turned our eyes west to the Assiniboine and saw tremendous flood waters come down the Assiniboine River, and, in fact, flooding has inundated a large portion of this province. And it's very, very unfortunate that there was some poor communication, poor forecasting and some mismanagement of this flood.

I do want to also say, at the same time, how thankful we were that the military, municipal and provincial officials were there and did an excellent job, Mr. Speaker, but there was still political interference and still mismanagement by this NDP government.

I have toured the dikes—the diking area along the Assiniboine River in my constituency throughout the spring and summer and the fall, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, there's good news that those dikes did hold, but, of course, bad news that they didn't really hold and they did leak quite a bit. And the destruction along that area is profound, with the heavy equipment that came in and scraped up the topsoil, used people's farmland as borrow pits.

And, you know, I know that in speaking to these people they recognized that was necessary. It was an emergency. But they were told, don't worry, you will be compensated, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I mentioned this just the other day in the Legislative Chamber here, where a Mr. Willi Foth, who—whose—the Premier (Mr. Selinger) came and stood in his yard and watched the destruction going on and said, don't worry Willi, we'll take care of you.

Well, Willi believed that, Mr. Speaker, but he hasn't seen or heard from anybody since then. And, you know, when you take away a person's farmland, that that's how they make their living, in fact, they grow vegetables. That's how they make their living and if they don't have that soil and all they have left is a big pit, then they can't do that. They can't support their family. So it's imperative that there be compensation put in place for these people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess it won't be a big surprise when I say that I will be voting for our amendment and not voting for this Throne Speech. And again, you know, I hear this time and time again from the members opposite where they say, oh there's this big myth about—well, you voted against

something. Well, I need to really clarify this and say it's not just what's in the Throne Speech, because what this Throne Speech is, is a rehash of the NDP election campaign, so of course I'm going to vote for it; 54 per cent of Manitobans voted for it. I'm not—voted against the Throne Speech because they didn't vote for you, so why would I? Why would I vote for that?

But it's the things that we identified that are failures of this Throne Speech. That's the things, I think—if they vote for that, for our amendment, and include steps to rectify some of the problems, Mr. Speaker, then we could probably agree.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech does not recognize that we have record debt in Manitoba. The debt here is \$25 billion and growing. Now, that is a huge debt and we—not only do we have that debt, but we have this ongoing dependency on Ottawa—the transfer payments that come from the federal government. And, by the way, the NDP like to slag the federal government whenever they can but, you know, they're biting the hand that feeds them. They get 40 per cent—45 per cent of their money comes from the federal government, and yet every opportunity they want to attack the federal government. That's just insane.

Mr. Speaker, there's no plan to make Manitoba a have province. Instead, let's depend on our neighbours. Let's depend on our neighbours to do well so that they make more money, so that they pour may—pay more money to Ottawa so that they can give it to us. So let's keep ourselves low so that we can get more payments from Ottawa. I just—philosophically, I guess we differ on that perspective, but I just cannot see why you wouldn't be wanting to take responsibility for your own self instead of relying on your neighbours to do things for you.

*(15:40)

We have the highest income taxes west of Québec, Mr. Speaker. We're not competitive. If someone was to do the same job here or in Saskatchewan, they would take more money home working in Saskatchewan. We still have a payroll tax. This Throne Speech doesn't address any of these things. I think what is going to happen, in the NDP plan, is they are going to increase taxes. They are going to increase taxes and when I say that, sure, they're not going to go out and put out a press release that says taxes are going up, but we are going to see an increase in fees, and we're going to see

more fines and an increase in fines, and we're going to see more permits that are—cost more money.

And, in fact, the member from Gimli who was talking about permits, he's talking about BizPal. Again, you can go to BizPal and find out all the permits that you need. Well, he just admitted that you need all these permits, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of thing that the CFIB is trying to fight against: getting rid of all the red tape that is unnecessary. And, of course, we're not talking about health and safety regulations; those, of course, are all necessary. But it's the red tape that businesses spend literally hundreds of hours on every year, and it's very unproductive for their business. And the member from Gimli also said, doing his income tax at 4 o'clock in the morning. Well, that's what small businesses have to do because they don't have time to do it during the day when they should be dedicating their working hours to running their business. And that's what we're talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that we're going to see hydro rates going up after—if this government continues on this ill-fated decision to go on the west side of the province. We've seen hydro rates go up already, but they could increase by as much as 140 per cent. And it's very interesting, bundling of rates, hydro and MPI, and there was one other one, but bundling? Bundling is just exactly what we heard them do before, how they got around collecting money from the unions.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess they're going to probably try and raid the \$2-billion excesses that MPI holds onto to try and regulate hydro rates. But, you know, they don't fool the public. The public weren't fooled. The public were not fooled when they tried to give them back their own money. MPI tried to give them back their own money which they should never have taken from them in the first place. If there's excesses in MPI, they should not be used to mitigate any rate increases in hydro; they should be given back to the motoring that have to pay auto insurance. They're two different things.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech does nothing to tackle crime. And I heard members talking about their plan; they have no plan. There are six sentences in the Throne Speech, six sentences about crime. Really? My goodness, we're the violent crime capital of Canada, for goodness' sakes. We've just—today, two more murders, and people that are very badly wounded, in the hospital as we speak, as of accidents—crimes over the weekend. Thirty-one

prisoners just let out of jail free. Accidentally? Accidentally let out of jail? I mean, I live just a few miles from Headingly Correctional Institute, and people in my community are not happy that a murderer was released into the—our own community, and no one ever even made mention that this had happened. Of course, they don't stay there long. They go pretty quickly, but they're still going from this community to this community to this community, so every community needs to be aware of things like this when they happen.

They unplugged the gang database. They deleted arrest warrants. I'm just kind of wondering who's side they're on. They're on the side of the criminals, but we're on the side of the victims. You really have to wonder, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I—there's a few more things to say. I—in reviewing what is said in this Throne Speech, the words “agricultural and rural development” are missing from the Throne Speech, and I represent an area which has a large agricultural component. My area also has a number of bedroom communities, but I know that they feel that agriculture is getting a—pretty much of a rough ride from the NDP.

And, you know, there's no mention of redirecting services away from the bloated bureaucracy of health care to the front lines in health care. We need to have a more patient-centred focus, which means more people on the front lines and—instead of concentrating on increasing the number of vice-presidents in the regional health authorities, Mr. Speaker. Right now, we're sitting at 52 vice-presidents, and yet we still have people waiting in the hallway, we still have people waiting in the parking lot and we still have people waiting at home for care. That is not patient-centred health care.

And there is no mention of a stroke strategy. There's no mention of an Alzheimer's strategy, and these two diseases and conditions affect a large number of people in Manitoba. And there's no plan to reduce the wait times for things like MRIs and CAT scans, Mr. Speaker.

And talking about education, talking about capping class sizes, well, it might seem like a laudable goal, but what is the cost of that, Mr. Speaker? Is it tent cities around schools? How many more teachers are going to have to be hired? How many more portable classrooms are there going to have to be? What is the cost of that? I guess what will happen is the school divisions will have to raise

the education portion of the tax bill—municipal tax bill, and the NDP can say, well, we didn't raise the taxes. But there's only one taxpayer. It comes out of our pocket, and if it's coming out of our pocket, through a backdoor method, it's the same thing as raising taxes.

We're the child poverty capital of Canada, Mr. Speaker, not something that this government should be proud of, but they've had a long time to address this, and they haven't done it. We also see record number of children in care; record number of children in care. I think we must be approaching nine or ten thousand children in care, and I just feel very badly that this situation is the way it is. And, yes, I know that there are children that need to be protected, because there are parents that are unable or unwilling to look after their children, but this is unprecedented, to have this many children in care. I think whatever the government is saying that they're doing isn't working. And they need to re-examine how to fix this problem before the children get into care. It's very disheartening when you hear about this.

The word "infrastructure" never occurred in this Throne Speech. Well, I—I'm just absolutely shocked by that, Mr. Speaker. I suppose, though, that we will be seeing more in terms of—under the heading of infrastructure, because I think there may be a plan to eliminate companies that are not fully unionized from bidding provincial contracts. I think we'll see more of that coming. I think what—we're revisiting this forced unionization that we had during the floodway, so we'll be watching for that.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I listened to the member from Gimli who spoke before, and he said if you don't admit there's a problem, and you don't take any action, you don't—you're just ignoring the problem, you don't take responsibility. Well, I would like to throw that back at you and say, what have you been doing for the last 12 years? You've had 12 years. You haven't taken any responsibility. You've ignored any problem. You criticize things that happened two decades ago, and yet you've had 12 years to do something, and what have you done? You've done nothing. Instead, I hear them stand up and say, well, they criticize the previous governments, but they never stand on their record of what we've been doing over the—they never stand on a record, because they don't have a record.

* (15:50)

And that's typical. I guess, if you haven't got a good leg to stand on, then you slag somebody else for it. But that's not responsibility. So I just want to throw that back and say, you know, you've got to admit, you guys, you've got a problem. If you haven't dealt with it, deal with it, because you haven't dealt with hallway medicine in 12 years, Mr. Speaker. We are still the crime—violent crime capital of the world. We are the child poverty capital of Canada, I should say. I'm going to correct myself on that: we're the violent crime capital of Canada.

And yet there's so many things or—you know, we don't have a very good record in terms of our graduation rates from school, Mr. Speaker. There's so many things that need to be worked on, you'd think that they'd have a plan. But, as we've seen from this Throne Speech, the plan is just to reiterate what they did in the election. But I have to say, 54 per cent of people did not vote for the NDP. They did not vote for their policies. They did not vote for their election campaign.

So, I'm telling you today that it's not a big surprise that I'm voting for our amendment and voting against the Throne Speech. I don't think there's anything else I can do, Mr. Speaker, because when 54 per cent of the people vote against the policies of the NDP, I'm with them. I'm voting with the 54 per cent of people of Manitoba who voted against the NDP.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to say a few words about our government's Throne Speech. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your new position. I know that at times it can be challenging in this House, but I'm sure that you will have lots of advice in regards to how to keep things calm in here. I'd like to thank the table officers, who, I know, will provide incredible experience for you and have—keep—do an amazing job of running this House for us, and I'd like to welcome the new table officer to the Chamber.

I'd also like to welcome the pages. I'm sure this must be an amazing experience to have this incredible opportunity to work right here in our Legislature, which is known as one of the most beautiful legislatures in Canada, to have this wonderful opportunity to work here where laws are made in the best interests of all Manitobans, and I encourage the young people that are here today. They must obviously have an interest in politics, and

that truly makes me happy because I believe that we need to have young people interested in politics, because I believe politics is a profession that should be highly regarded in this day and age. So, hopefully, young people that have the opportunity to come through this Legislature and through this Chamber will have an experience that might interest them in one day taking up the challenge of becoming an elected official, which is a pretty amazing privilege these days.

I'd like to congratulate the new MLAs to this House. We have five new members of the Legislature on the opposition benches, and we have 13 in total, and we have eight on our team, and it's just been an honour to be here with them in this Chamber listening to their maiden speeches. It's an opportunity to learn more about them and why they have taken up the challenge of running for political office and what inspires them. Some have chatted a little bit and talked a little bit about their family history and what brought them to this Chamber, and it really has been wonderful and inspiring to live—to listen to their speeches and we certainly welcome them to our team here in the Legislature.

I'd like to congratulate our Premier (Mr. Selinger) who got elected for the first time as our Premier by the constituents of Manitoba, and I'd like to thank him. He has worked tirelessly on—for the last two years on behalf of Manitobans. It certainly hasn't been easy; it's been very difficult. He's had to face many challenges: first of all, our economic recession that dug in shortly after he got elected Premier, and, of course, as well, the flood of the century, a flood, the—a historic flood, the worst we've seen here in the province of Manitoba for the first time in 350 years. And he has obviously won the hearts and minds of Manitobans. And we are very pleased that, on election night, when we made history, that our Premier was there to, you know, bask in the glory of the hard work that he has done in this Legislature for many, many years, and also as the Minister of Finance and also, the last couple of years, as our Premier.

I wish my mother had been around on election night to have seen the incredible history—historical evening that, you know, we accomplished by winning four mandates and winning the largest number of seats ever in the history of the province. My mother ran; she was a long-time New Democrat. I found it interesting to listen to some of new members talk about how their fathers, their mothers were Conservatives and supported them during the

campaign. I thought that was really quite interesting. I'm very fortunate. My mother was a long-time New Democrat and she ran in 1953 and in 1958 in Lakeside and she ran against Premier Douglas Campbell. So, obviously, let's just put it this way, she didn't win, but she certainly paved the way for women to run in this province, and I know she would've been thrilled with the historic success that we had on October 4th.

And I also want to comment—I think she would also be thrilled to see how politics has changed for women over the years. You know, we're very, very fortunate this Legislature has more women elected than any other jurisdiction in Canada, from a percentage point of view. We have more women in Cabinet, I believe, percentage-wise, than any other Cabinet in the—in Canada, and we also have women that hold senior Cabinet positions. And we had a deputy premier who was a woman, and I believe that we also have a lot of women that are now playing senior roles in our government. And I think that my mom would really be pleased with how we have progressed as a society in regards to women and the role that they play in politics and in government.

I'd like to thank the St. Vital constituency for the privilege of representing them again as the MLA for St. Vital. I absolutely love campaigns. They are—I'm just one of those weird people who just really loves to canvass and go door to door. It's not for everybody, but I think it is the way of canvassing. I think it is the way of getting in touch with constituents and this campaign was, without question, the best yet.

I met so many wonderful people on the doorstep, in seniors' blocks, in apartment buildings and I met some brand-new people to my community. I have a very high population of newcomers in St. Vital. And I also met some constituents who I hadn't seen for many years, and it was an opportunity to catch up with them in regards to, you know, what had changed since I'd seen them last and how they were feeling about how we were doing as a government. And they never shied away from giving me advice in regards to how they thought we were doing and many of them just said, keep doing what you're doing. So it really was a terrific campaign, and one that I kind of miss, in a way, some days, but not altogether. I'm pleased it is over and it was such a great campaign.

* (16:00)

I'd like to thank my campaign team, obviously, who worked tirelessly during the campaign in St. Vital. I'd like to also take this opportunity to thank the incredible volunteers that I had that supported our campaign team and supported me. There was many of my—many—I had many volunteers who wanted to canvass with me and usually that's the job that people don't—that they really don't like to do, but I had an incredible number of people going door to door with me. I had volunteers making endless phone calls and really enjoying working in the constituency office, making the calls and being part of the excitement of the campaign office. I had campaign volunteers who loved delivering brochures, and that was what they wanted to do. They wanted to be outside because, of course, it was glorious weather.

And then, of course, I had my incredible sign crew who put up 350 signs. We ended up taking the signs off of the walls in the constituency office because we'd put up all the signs, and then, of course, the wonderful challenge of taking them all down again the day after the campaign, and it really was a monumental task of putting up those signs and taking them all down, but a very, very important part of the campaign because the sign campaign is so visible and gives the campaign such a boost during the campaign. And I'd just like to say a special thanks to the resident baker of our campaign, Aurore Sawka, who just when, you know, we really needed a pick-me-up, she would drop by the office with some muffins or some cookies just to keep the campaign crew going strong. So I really wanted to thank her specially.

This campaign was really exciting as well because it engaged young people in politics. I had more young people working in this campaign than I ever had before. *[interjection]*—I don't know, the MLA for Morris just spoke, but apparently she's chirping from her seat and I'm not sure what she's asking, but I'll catch up with her later.

An Honourable Member: I just asked if you declared those cookies.

Ms. Allan: Yes, we did declare them all. We kept a book in our campaign office and we wrote down absolutely everything that everybody brought into the office. Yes, you don't need to worry about that. There was no \$250 cheques that were unanimously brought into campaigns like they did in recent campaigns.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The member for Morris, on a point of order?

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I believe I heard an accusation of fraud or something from the member for St. Vital, and I think that we're all honourable members here in this Chamber, and I think that making such a statement that she just made is perilously close to making an accusation. I think that she needs to withdraw that remark.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I heard the same comments and I don't think that the member has a point of order. In fact, I think there was a report that had recommended, in fact, because of some campaign discrepancies during the 1995 election, I believe, that there was recommendations that perhaps criminal charges ought to be laid, and it was a discretionary matter left to the Attorney General whether or not those charges were to be laid. So, notwithstanding that it's not a point of order, it's not even an actual fact, I think, that the member is referencing.

Mr. Speaker: I thank honourable members for the advice.

I believe this is not a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts. But I want to take this opportunity to caution all honourable members. Please, please pick and choose your words very carefully, and I ask you to show some decorum in this Chamber as well.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, to continue her remarks.

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

As I was saying, I really enjoyed this campaign because of all the young people that were engaged in the St. Vital campaign, and I found it really encouraging to have so many new volunteers involved in the campaign, and they came from all over the constituency. Some of them came because they were interested in politics. Some of them came because they were interested in specific issues. Certainly, the Canadian Wheat Board and the demise of the Canadian Wheat Board was certainly one of the issues that sparked some volunteers to get involved in the campaign. But it really, I think, was a

boost to our campaign to have that many young people interested in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker, and also interested in working and volunteering and being part of the exciting campaign that we had going on in St. Vital.

There was also some wonderful moments on the campaign trail, and there's a few of them that I would just like to mention briefly. The first two were: I was canvassing in Appleton Estates, which is a seniors block in my riding, and there was a—it was about 3:30 in the afternoon and there was a group of women that came in just as I was leaving the building that day from canvassing, and I knew several of them. There was about seven of them, and they had just been at the Celebrations Dinner Theatre, and all of them were in their 80s, Mr. Speaker, and they were headed off to one of the women's suites and they were going for wine and scotch and they actually invited me to go with them.

But, unfortunately, that day I had a volunteer canvassing with me and she told me that I had to go back to the campaign office and do some more work, but I do look forward to perhaps another invite from that wonderful group of women who are obviously enjoying life tremendously in Appleton Estates and still getting out for theatre and drinks and having a pretty good time there in their block.

Another woman in Appleton Estates, who I had a lovely conversation with—actually, I determined from my conversation with her that she was 97 years young, and I asked her, I said: Well, how's your eyesight? And she said: You know my eyesight is fantastic. She said: Come and see the needlework that I am doing. And she invited me into her suite and she is—the work that she does is meticulous and it's tiny, tiny cross-stitch work, and it was remarkable to me that she was still able to do this kind of work at 97 years old. It really was wonderful to meet her at the doorstep and there was many experiences like this where I met many people who were in their elder years and still enjoying life and it really made me feel great that I had the opportunity to meet them on the doorstep.

I also met a couple of people on the doorstep and it was one of the most memorable moments for me. I was walking down the street one day, one evening, actually, and I was canvassing and I saw a couple of gentlemen standing at the end of the street waiting for me, and I thought, well, you know, maybe they want to talk to me about a specific issue. I wasn't really sure what they had in mind and they were

standing there and as I walked up to them I smiled, I said: Hello. And one of them looked at me and said: You're Perry Allan's sister aren't you? And I said: Yes, I am. And they had both taken—they both knew my brother. My brother died in 2000 from occupational disease. He was a plumber, but he taught at Red River College. He taught gas fitting and plumbing, and they'd gotten their ticket from Perry, and it was—and they wanted an opportunity to say hello and just to say what a great teacher Perry was and that they missed him at the college.

So it really was fun to have those kinds of moments on the campaign trail. Moments you never would have unless you're out walking on the street and knocking on doors and visiting people and getting to know your constituents.

I had many conversations with my constituents at the doorstep about the issues that they cared most about and it was always issues that, I believe, we've been working on as a government for the last 12 years. Issues around health care, issues around—obviously, around education, issues around keeping our public utilities public for the benefit of all people in Manitoba.

And that's why I would really like to thank my constituents for their support during this campaign because early on in the campaign the opposition made a campaign announcement about paving every back lane in Winnipeg. And this was a curious one for me because I was pretty sure that it was the MLA who was running against me for the Progressive Conservatives in St. Vital who was canvassing diligently in my riding, which I was pleased that he was doing, and he figured out that the back lanes in St. Vital needed to be paved and so they came up with this announcement that they were going to pave the back lanes in Winnipeg. And I knew that it was directly targeted to St. Vital and it actually became quite an issue at the doorstep with those people that had already paid to have their back lanes paved and other people were curious about why we would give \$40 million to the City of Winnipeg to pave back lanes because isn't that already their responsibility and at the end of the day I just really want to thank my constituents in St. Vital because they really kept their eye on the ball in regards to what issues they cared most about and didn't take the bait in regards to having their back lane paved.

* (16:10)

This election entrusted our government with a new mandate, and I believe every one of my

colleagues and I take this new mandate very, very seriously. We're aware of the responsibility that this holds, and we are privileged to have been granted this responsibility by Manitobans and we will continue to build this great province. During this election campaign, we presented Manitobans with our vision for Manitoba, and our Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, outlines our vision that we campaigned on here in Manitoba. And that is what will be our blueprint as we continue to build this province for the next four years.

Obviously, Manitobans' No. 1 priority is health care, and Manitobans know that they can trust us on the health-care file. We have more doctors in Manitoba because of our hard work, and we have more nurses in Manitoba because of our hard work. We have nurse practitioners that are now working here in the province of Manitoba, and it'll be nurse practitioners that will help us as we move forward with our quick-care clinics that were announced during the campaign. And we know that there is more work to be done on our health-care file, but I think we are—that Manitobans know that they can trust us to continue the good work that has been done.

And I'd like to recognize the previous—the minister—the present Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and the previous minister of Health for the work that they have done on this very important file, because it's not an easy file. The Health portfolio is probably one of the most difficult because everyone has a story about how the health-care system has touched their lives. We heard many people speak about their relationship with cancer, their relationships with other diseases that have touched their lives. And we all know how personal the health-care file can be and how important that is for all Manitobans. So we will continue to work on the health-care file as we move Manitoba forward.

I would like to take this opportunity as the Minister of Education to thank all of the education partners that I have worked with over the last two years. We have ushered in, I believe, in this province, a new era of co-operation with our education partners. They are all working together with us, and together amongst themselves, in regards to education reform. And we cannot do that unless we have trust and respect amongst our education partners. I've had wonderful experiences all across this province visiting schools. And the dedication and commitment that—of our—of the people that work in our schools and in our school divisions all across

this province is tremendous. And every time I go into a school, I know I'm going to meet dedicated professionals who really care about the incredible education system we have here in the province of Manitoba.

I had a wonderful time in Winkler the other day, opening the new middle school in Schanzenfeld. And I just would like to say a few things about the new schools that we're building here in the province. This school that we opened is a Gold LEED building, and it is an example of the state-of-the-art facilities that we are now building when we build a new school. And, as members in this House know, we are not going to build any more schools anymore unless they have an early childhood education component in them.

And these schools are built Gold LEED, and it means that some of the things that are happening in there are phenomenal. They encourage learning. It's an environment where there is fresh air built into the school, and there's systems that bring—take the stale air out of the school and recycle that air every day so that students have the opportunity to be educated in an incredible environment. And, you know, we can have the best teachers and the best staff in a school, but now we're having some of these kinds of state-of-the-art facilities that really enhance what's happening in the classroom.

We have—I just want to thank the oversight committee and all of the—our education partners that worked on the oversight committee for the report cards, the common report card that we've implemented here in the province of Manitoba. This is the first time that we have taken on this kind of task to have an report card that is in plain language, that is a communication tool for the teacher and the parent and the student. And we believe that these report cards, once they are finally implemented, will be a better tool for helping students achieve as well as helping parents know how they can help their student in their day-to-day education.

I would also just like to make a few comments about some of the questions that the MLA for Morris asked when she was up on her feet giving her speech. She wanted to know how—where the money is for the—or what is it going to cost to implement this K to 3 cap on class size to 20 students. And I guess she missed the press release, but we said very clearly that we figured it would be \$20 million for new teachers, and there is no teacher shortage here in the province of Manitoba so that is achievable. And

we've also set aside \$85 million so that we can build new classrooms in those facilities that will require extra classrooms if more classroom space is going to be required.

This is part of our early learning strategy and giving young people a foundation, a good foundation. We all know how important early intervention is for young people so that they can succeed, and we are very, very pleased with this announcement. And, as the previous minister of Education said in his speech, we were the only party to make this commitment during the election campaign, and we will achieve this with the help, once again, of the oversight committee who agreed to take this task on. And we are so lucky to have them with us, working with us on a day-to-day basis on our education file here in the province of Manitoba.

I would like to just thank my family for their support, not just during this campaign, but over the last 12 years. We all know that the life of politics—some people might think it's glamorous but, you know, when the—well, when the laundry hasn't been done for a week and there's no food in the fridge, and you know, things are falling apart around you, sometimes you—it can be grim. And we really have to thank our families for what they put up with because I know I'm not alone in this. I know we all have these struggles in keeping the balls rolling when we're doing these incredible, important jobs that need to be done. So I'd like to thank them all, my family, for their support, Neil, Jessie and Joel, thank you.

And, once again, I—[interjection] Absolutely. And, once again, I'd just like to say that it's a privilege to be back here as the MLA for St. Vital. And I know this will come as no surprise to members opposite, I will be supporting the Throne Speech because I believe that this Throne Speech is our vision for Manitoba. It's what we campaigned on during the election campaign, and it is what is going to continue to build this great province that we are all so privileged to live here.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and once again, congratulations on your election.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I'm indeed pleased to have this opportunity to address the amendment to the Throne Speech and feel very privileged to have this honour in this Legislature. The first thing I would like to do is thank my constituents, who once again put their faith in me

and elected me to this House. I am indeed grateful to them and appreciate all their good wishes and their support during the campaign. It was a pleasure going door to door in this campaign, as it is in all campaigns. It's always something that I really enjoy doing, talking to people at the doors. And I have to say that, in this my fifth election, I was so happy to hear the comments from people and their appreciation of my hard work and my commitment to my role. And while a person knows they work hard in their job, it is really nice when you have your constituents tell you that they recognize your hard work and commitment, and they're very supportive of it, and that they're very happy to give you their vote in the election. So that is always very heartwarming and gratifying to hear that at the doors.

* (16:20)

I also had a very incredible campaign team, and I was very privileged to have the people working with me that I did, and I just want to thank them so much. I can't believe how many people put so much of their own time into something like this, and it really struck me during this campaign that a lot of people really volunteer and don't get a whole lot out of it other than, you know, our thanks for doing it. And I was so impressed at the number of people that were so willing to be there, almost every day in some cases, and to work for me and to work for our party. And I think it really says a lot about people that are committed to, you know, wanting Manitoba to be such a great province and putting themselves in the position they did to try to make that happen. So I want to thank my campaign team and all the volunteers that were there for me through this whole campaign. They really make it possible for a candidate to go out there and do the kind of things it takes of a candidate, and I am so happy that they gave me the confidence that I needed to go out and work hard for the people of Charleswood.

I also want to thank my family for their hard work, particularly my husband, who really stepped up to the plate this year as the chair of the sign committee, and we had the most number of signs we've ever put up and that group did a great job. And I just want to acknowledge the sign crew and the good leadership that was in place to make all of that happen.

It was interesting during the campaign, probably one of those moments that will always stand out, but you meet some people sometimes on a campaign that really make it special. And, in this one case, one

evening I was doing this seniors building, and there was 92-year-old woman there and she lived alone and she was just amazing: very spritely, very agile, her mind as active as anybody in their 40s and 50s. And she was telling me how she was on Skype with her grandchildren, and her grandchildren were spread out all over North America, actually the world, and she was so proud of them. And I was so impressed because, I have to say, I've never been on Skype, and here we have this 92-year-old that was totally comfortable with it, and talking about the things her grandkids were doing that I wouldn't even have understood half of it, and she really was quite an amazing woman.

Mr. Speaker, Charleswood is one of those communities that just rolls up its sleeves to make a lot of things happen, whether it's the schools in our community or the community clubs, or the different groups, whether it's youth groups like Girl Guides and Boy Scouts or any other number of youth clubs, or the adult organizations like Rotary and the Harte Trail, or whether it's our senior centre, which I am so very proud of all of the things that they do and make happen in Charleswood.

We've got a great business community that really does step up to the plate and get involved in supporting the various community organizations as well. And there are so many individuals in Charleswood that, you know, have that same philosophy of, you know, rolling up their sleeves and making some good things happen in the community. So I'm very, very honoured to represent this community, these neighbours, these friends, who have been so supportive of me now through five elections.

I'd like to congratulate the Speaker on his role, and he certainly demonstrated throughout his many years as a committee chair that he was a very good committee chair, a fair committee chair, and it was certainly an honour to be able to support him for running as a Speaker here. And we certainly look forward and welcome his fair handling of this House as he did in all the committees that he's chaired over the years.

I'd like to congratulate, too, all of the MLAs that have been elected here in Manitoba, all 57, because it certainly is something that we should all take a great deal of pride in: to have that ability to be here in this Chamber and to represent our constituents, and to also take on some personal challenges that we want to advocate for as well. It certainly also is an

opportunity to give back for the many good things that have happened in our own lives, and to make a difference.

I'd also like to welcome back the Clerk, and the table officers, and the Sergeant-At-Arms, and certainly give them a lot of credit for the great work that they do, and everybody at Hansard, too, who sometimes I wonder how they even—are able to put all of our words onto paper as quickly as they do.

So, it's nice to be back, Mr. Speaker. I have to say it's very disappointing to be back on this side of the House. I have to acknowledge that, but it's certainly a job where opposition is going to continue to work very hard and to hold this government to account.

And, Mr. Speaker, in addressing some comments from the Throne Speech, a pitiful six pages, I would have to admit, which was really just a rehash and not anything close to a vision statement. But it is something that I think needs some comments on in a number of areas. And probably where the Throne Speech needs more comments is on where it failed in the area of crime and in the area of finances and in the area of hydro and in the area of health care. And those are just some of the issues where there was a glaring, glaring omission of some things that needed to be dealt with in order to make Manitoba a better province.

We saw, this past weekend, a violent weekend in Winnipeg. And people are becoming extremely concerned with what is going on in the province, and this government's incompetence to deal with it and to make a difference in getting that under control. And all we get from our Premier (Mr. Selinger) here in Manitoba, and our Attorney General (Mr. Swan) is mind-numbing rhetoric. And I think we need to get beyond mind-numbing rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, to deal with these issues of crime that are really taking hold in Manitoba.

You know, I was reading something the other day, where it indicated Calgary had six homicides. Here we are sitting with 34 and we're not even at the end of the year. And—sorry, Calgary. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this government should certainly be paying a lot more attention to how to deal with the issue of crime. And to do something more than just talk about it, but to look at some kind of a master plan that will take this issue, take the bull by the horns, and get something in place that is going to address it. And we don't see that happening with this government, and they certainly had 12 years. They

keep talking about their great record and all the things they have to do. Well, they have had 12 years, and it's a pitiful lack of action we've seen in the area of crime.

In the terms of finances, Mr. Speaker, with the level of debt in Manitoba and, in fact, something that the government totally ignored in this speech, which is like the elephant in the room being completely ignored, Manitoba is sitting at \$25 billion in debt. And they talk about what they're doing, and all their grand pronouncements, but most of it is built on debt. And we have an NDP government here that doesn't seem to understand that debt, at some point, will bring a province to a grinding halt. And that is coming. The storm clouds are there. This government doesn't seem to want to put the brakes on, and they go forward and spend and spend and spend. And they're doing it on the backs of taxpayers, and they're doing it on the backs of our kids, and future generations in this province, because somebody, at some point, is going to have to pay.

And this government doesn't want to seem to control that. So, we've got unprecedented level of debt in Manitoba, at \$25 billion. We've got a province that is happy to be a welfare state, taking all the money they can get out of Ottawa. We're so dependent on Ottawa for bailouts; two provinces in Canada, the most—

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order please.

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

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Dispense.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Chair—Speaker hears a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

The question before the House is the amendment of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 18, Nays 33.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Speaker: The debate will now continue on the main motion and address to reply. The debate is open. The honourable Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Mr. Speaker, I rise, of course, to support our Throne Speech and to thank you, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: One moment, please.

My apologies to the Minister of Advanced Education. The member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), I believe, wishes to seek if there's leave of the House to allow her to continue with her remarks to the main motion.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed? [*Agreed*]

Thank you to members of the House.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to finish my speech. We did have to have it interrupted for the vote, so I do appreciate this chance to make a few more comments. So, thank you very much.

But I would like to just indicate that in the area of finance, which the government didn't even address in this particular Throne Speech, that their spending is not sustainable, and at some point there is going to have to be some serious looking at what they're doing by all of them in order to rein in their spending, because everything in Manitoba is going to depend on our fiscal position. And if they do not have a strong fiscal position, especially with the storm clouds that are out there, Manitoba is going to suffer, and it's going to be the debt and dependence on Ottawa, which they omitted in their Throne Speech, that is going to be the thing that comes to bite them.

And they are going to have to do a far better job than what they are doing now. And by ignoring it totally in their Throne Speech, it looks like it is certainly not one of their priorities. Mr. Speaker, Manitobans also pay the highest taxes west of Québec, and that certainly is something that was totally omitted by this government in the last 12 years. It continues in their Throne Speech, and it is definitely something that they need to do something more about.

In the area of health care, Mr. Speaker, it is appalling what we have just seen in terms of the lack of transparency and accountability in the death of Brian Sinclair. We cannot believe the cover-up that is continuing to be perpetuated by this government, who will stop at nothing to cover up the issue and the

truth about a man that died voiceless in an emergency room after waiting for 34 hours. And this government is trying to continue that shameful behaviour of a cover-up by, in fact, trying to ensure that this is kept as quiet as possible from any type of light shining on it—and it really, really is despicable.

In the area of health care, the government is going to have to do a much better job of trying to retain doctors. We've now lost over 1,800 doctors in the last decade in this province. We have a nursing shortage that is over a thousand, and it's far beyond what it was a decade ago. And, Mr. Speaker, they're going to have to do a lot better job than what they've been doing to address the issue of doctor and nurse shortages. We also have a very serious shortage of midwives, and where they think they're going to get all the midwives from in order to deal with the gaps out there is really beyond me.

* (16:40)

In the area of child poverty, Mr. Speaker, I think the government has to really look at the issue of child poverty and poverty and the working poor in Manitoba. They've done a terrible job in the last decade in looking at this, and what they could at least do now to help these people is take thousands of people off the tax rolls and exempt more people in Manitoba, as they have in Saskatchewan, from paying taxes. I think this government has an opportunity coming up in the Throne Speech or, pardon me, in the budget, to do something in that area, and I think they have to raise the threshold here. In Manitoba, people start paying taxes at making \$8,000. In Saskatchewan, it's something like \$14,000. It's pitiful again, Mr. Speaker, that with the, you know, opportunities this government has had, they could certainly do something better in that area.

And another thing that was really missing from the whole Throne Speech was the area of tourism, and, in fact, we hear that, in Culture, Heritage and Tourism, the government has slashed spending by \$10 million, where we see, for instance, in Saskatchewan, with tourism, they've doubled their budget there because they know what they need to do to attract more people to that province. And here we don't even see much happening in that area, Mr. Speaker. And I think those are beginning of some of the tax cuts, or sorry, some of the program cuts we're going to see because for all of the spending they're either going to have to raise taxes or cut programs or find that money somewhere, and there's not very many pockets from them to get that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this was a Throne Speech that one can support. They really missed the whole vision aspect of a Throne Speech, and I don't think this government actually deserves to be here for another four years. They didn't get here in a way that they should be very proud of. They got here by fearmongering and not being truthful in their campaign, and that's how they got here. It had nothing to do with good ideas or a vision for Manitoba. They got here strictly by fearmongering and that is shameful, but it is what it is. I don't think it's an election they should be proud of. Fifty-four per cent of Manitobans did not vote for them. The support that wasn't there for them should also be a wakeup call for them, and they are going to have to really pull up their socks and roll up their sleeves to do a better job of helping Manitoba reach the potential that it can.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I will be supporting our amendment, and I guess I did by our vote, and I cannot support the Throne Speech itself. And, just on a final note, I think this government has also made a mess of the whole Hydro situation, and that is something that I think is a real shame for people in Manitoba because it is taxpayers' money. And we have a government here that has, instead of taking this incredible Crown corporation that we have, and instead of, you know, propping it up, instead, they're continuing to pick away at it until there's not going to be much left. And what they've done is so unfair to the people of this province that, eventually, it's going to all become very aware to Manitobans that this NDP government has made a mess of another Crown corporation in this province, and, at some point, Manitobans are going to bear the brunt of that.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put these few words on the record.

Ms. Selby: As I was saying, I rise to support our Throne Speech, but I do also want to add my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on both of your elections, and I know that you will take your responsibilities very seriously.

I want to welcome new members to this Chamber. I remember my early days in this grand room and, despite many years of public speaking before I got here, I was surprised at how nervous I was to deliver my first few speeches in the House. And let me assure our new members, it does get a little bit easier. I did consult with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) in this matter only

last year. He is, of course, a man with immense experience from both sides of the House, and I asked him how long it took before he felt comfortable speaking in this Chamber. And he reassured me that just about last year he started to feel a little bit more comfortable. So don't feel bad if your knees are still shaking a little bit when you speak the first few times.

Mr. Speaker, I have many people to thank for helping me return to this Legislature, too numerous for me to mention each by name, but let me start first with the people of Southdale. I've made so many friends over the past four years and really gotten to know the people in my community.

I was handing out medals this past Friday night at the Dynamite Cup at the Southdale Community Centre. It's always exciting to see young people participating in something they're obviously so passionate about and to see their families out in full force supporting their children. I also love seeing the younger brothers and sisters running around the arena, knowing that many parents were keeping an eye on that group as they were chasing each other up and down the steps and actually not paying a whole lot of attention to their brothers and sisters on the ice.

As I was handing out the gold and silver medals, it struck me how many of the children that I knew. I knew their families and, in many cases, I've gotten to know them through my work as an MLA, which makes it probably one of the most rewarding parts of the job.

I'd also like to thank, Mr. Speaker, my campaign team, those who were with me on the doorstep, my caucus colleagues, as well as those who were outside of the spotlight who kept our campaign focused on the things that mattered to Manitobans.

There were times when I would take a moment and look around at the focused, but furious, activity in my campaign office, people coming and going at all times, and be amazed at all these people who gave up their personal time to help on my campaign. There are no words to express the gratitude I feel to everyone who came out to support our vision to keep Manitoba moving forward, and I thank them all for their commitment.

There is another category where words are not enough, Mr. Speaker, and that is, of course, to my family: to my father who says, yes, without questioning when I say I need help; to my

father-in-law, Harv, who helps without even being asked; to my mother-in-law, Bev, who fed the entire team along with my family for four weeks, and to Trevor, who has never once complained about the hours that I work.

But most of all I need to thank my daughters, Hayden, Avery and Bronwyn, who don't always like this job if I must be honest, Mr. Speaker, but are great supporters of our party and our vision for Manitoba. They helped at the campaign office, were incredibly patient with the long hours I spent on the campaign trail and never stopped believing in me. They are remarkable girls, on the cusp of becoming young women, whether I'm ready for that or not. And I look forward to seeing how they will shape their future and how they will use their talents to move Manitoba forward.

Mr. Speaker, this marks my second term in office and, of course, the fourth mandate for our government. It is a privilege to be given such an opportunity. There are things the people of Manitoba expect from us: to make our health-care system even better, to continue expanding job and educational opportunities, to keep Manitoba affordable, making our communities safer and healthier, and to protect our environment and keep building Manitoba Hydro to the benefit of all Manitobans. And I promise to keep those priorities in mind for the future of our province and for my daughters' futures as well.

There are also a number of commitments I made to the people of Southdale during the election, things to help serve our growing community. Mr. Speaker, Sage Creek was just a drawing on the map when I first got elected in 2007. It is now a thriving community where neighbours look out for each other, and cars slow down for a game of street hockey. Budget 2011 committed to a school and two new daycares for Sage Creek, initiatives that will further develop a sense of community among the neighbours in that neighbourhood.

There are several parks and plenty of green space in the Island Lakes area of my constituency, but with a summer like we had this year it was obvious we were lacking an area to cool off. And that's why I look forward to working with the community of Island Lakes, to see where they'd like to see a new splash park, something that will benefit everyone in Southdale and ensure, that even on the hottest day, there will be a place for families to get together and share some summer fun.

Along with a lot of young families that are living throughout Southdale, not just in Island Lakes but everywhere, in every corner of Southdale, you see young families. And as you walk along the sidewalks of Royalwood, you're bound to pass a few strollers. Over the last few months many moms living south of Royalwood mention their concern about how far the nearest park is to them.

Our government supports and encourages healthy living and families getting active. So it would only make sense to commit to another playground for Royalwood. We know that playgrounds get people out of the house, it gets children in the habit of being active but also allow for parents to come together to share problems, to share their frustrations and, hopefully, to share some of their wisdom. Parenting small children can be isolating and spending some time talking with another grown-up by the sandbox can make the rest of your day go a whole lot smoother.

Mr. Speaker, we know that health care is the No. 1 priority among Manitobans, and it is to us as well. And that's why we'll continue to hire more doctors, more nurses and to make our health-care system more efficient. For anyone that has faced cancer or supported a loved one on their journey, you know the hardest part is actually before the diagnosis, when you know something is wrong but you're not sure yet how serious it is, if it's cancer or maybe something less invasive.

*(16:50)

I hope we see the day that the word "cancer" is no longer scary. But, until then, we'll do what we can to make the road from testing to treatment shorter. Our government is committed to giving Manitobans the fastest access in Canada to world-class cancer screening, testing and treatment. We can't promise to end the sleepless nights, but we will make the journey easier and quicker. Part of that plan is bringing health care closer to home. My constituents are well served by the St. Boniface Hospital. I've visited friends whose babies were born there. I've held a friend's hand in the emergency room, and I've watched my brother-in-law learn a new career as he trained in one of the ultrasound labs at the hospital.

But there are times when you don't really need the specialized care of an emergency room, and I know that, when my children were little, they inevitably got an ear infection at about 9 o'clock on a Saturday night when their pediatrician wasn't

available till at least the next afternoon. And that's why we're bringing quick-care clinics to communities like Southdale. Now unfortunately, there still will be times when the emergency room is the best place to be, but for all those other less acute illnesses a nurse practitioner will be able to diagnose and send you back to your own bed in a much quicker time, also leaving the emergency room free for those in dire need.

Mr. Speaker, my daughters are in grade 6 this year, which is kind of hard to believe because when I made my maiden speech in the House, they were only six years old. Time has actually gone quite fast in the last few years. The last year in their school is what they're completing. Next year they'll go off to high school, and right now they are really enjoying ruling the school. They have many more responsibilities this year. Along with patrolling, they've added leadership. This means that a week or so each month they get assigned to help the younger children get ready for recess, and they act as secretary during the lunch hour and are expected to be positive role models. They are loving this new role.

I am grateful for a school community that teaches them not only to read and write and speak French fluently but also helps them shape into contributing members of our society.

They also go to a fairly small school where we have always benefited from small classrooms and a principal, Madame Olson, who can name each child in the hallway and seems to also keep track of what's going on in the children's lives outside the classroom. She has a remarkable way of connecting with everyone. My children have had a great start to their education, and I can't believe they're in grade 6 and they still love school. I'm hoping that continues over the next couple of years.

And they complain when I keep them home for things like our swearing in. It's very hard to explain the importance of a historical event like the swearing in of a government's fourth mandate to 11-year-olds who wanted to be in gym class that morning instead. They have greatly benefited from having teachers who know them well enough to understand how each of them best learns, and I'm proud our government is committing to giving all children that same strong start by limiting classroom size for kids in kindergarten to grade 3 as well as adding new schools, new science labs, and in renovating gyms to make and better prepare our children for tomorrow.

As Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy, I know that getting kids off to a good start means that they are more likely to go on to post-secondary studies after high school. There was a time when high school diploma was enough, but, as our society becomes more knowledge based, education becomes more and more important. Mr. Speaker, one of the things I am most proud of is our Bright Futures Program. And in the few months that I've been minister, I've only had time to tour a couple of these programs, but the work that's going on is nothing short of remarkable.

Students who might be at risk of dropping out of school are nurtured through staff and volunteers to find out what makes them spark. I've met artists, athletes, and scholars who didn't see themselves as any of those things before entering the Bright Futures Program. Their parents talk of watching their children blossom, and it's easy to see the difference this program is making in young people's lives. Some of these young people will go on to post-secondary studies, and through the Bright Futures Program they have the opportunity to earn money towards tuition.

But all students in Manitoba benefit from our commitment to legislate tuition to the rate of inflation. As a parent, I appreciate being able to plan for my daughters' education with some predictability. As a minister, I'm proud that we're keeping universities affordable while also offering three-year funding so that our institutions can continue to improve the quality of education here at home.

Mr. Speaker, our government prides itself on keeping post-secondary school accessible and affordable while still offering an excellent education to our students. I'm proud that we judge a student on their passion to succeed rather than their ability to pay and that our post-secondary system works to give all students a chance, whatever their background, and helps them overcome obstacles that might otherwise prevent them from pursuing college or university.

And yet sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we are judged harshly, particularly outside our borders, for these priorities. There are those who think universities should be accessible only to the elite, to learners who have followed a linear path from high school to those hallowed halls. Well, I care less about how people in ivory towers rank our universities and more about what our students have to say. Enrolment is up, and

our students speak highly of the innovative teaching that they find in their classrooms. And I know the diversity that I see on our campuses, both in age and background of our students, enriches campus life and our community at large.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the next four years, working with my community and colleagues, to keep Manitoba moving in the right direction. And I know our new caucus members bring new energy and new ways of looking at issues, and I look forward to getting to know each of them. It is a big responsibility we have been handed, but I feel together we are up for the challenge. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could canvass the House to see if it's the will of the House to see it as 5 o'clock, so I don't have to come down the runway before I hit full flight on my speech.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

When this matter is again before the House, the debate will be open.

And the time being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 31, 2011

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		Recreation Facilities Gerrard; Selinger	229
Coulter Bridge Maguire	221	Community Led Emissions Reduction Wiebe; Lemieux	230
Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba Graydon	221	Delta Marsh Field Station Wishart; Ashton	230
Tabling of Reports		Shoal Lakes Eichler; Struthers	231
Manitoba Horse Racing Commission, Annual Report, 2010-2011 Struthers	222	Members' Statements	
Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, Annual Report, 2010-2011 Bjornson	222	Mossey River Growing Project Kostyshyn	231
Communities Economic Development Fund, Annual Report, 2010 Robinson	222	Breast Cancer Awareness Month Driedger	232
Oral Questions		National Foster Family Week Whitehead	232
Homicide Rate Increase McFadyen; Selinger	222	Andrew Chudley Schuler	233
Stefanson; Swan	223	Localized Improvement Fund for Tomorrow Program T. Marcelino	233
Coulter Bridge Maguire; Ashton	224		
Gardenton Floodway Smook; Ashton	225	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
RM of Westbourne Briese; Ashton	226	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Shellmouth Dam Rowat; Struthers	227	Throne Speech (Seventh Day of Debate)	
Freight House Community Centre Gerrard; Selinger	228	Stefanson	234
Gordon Bell High School Gerrard; Selinger	229	Bjornson	238
		Taillieu	244
		Allan	248
		Driedger	253, 256
		Selby	256, 257

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