

**First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
**and**  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

| <b>Member</b>            | <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Political Affiliation</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.       | St. Vital           | N.D.P.                       |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob           | Wolseley            | N.D.P.                       |
| ASHTON, Steve, Hon.      | Thompson            | N.D.P.                       |
| BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.    | Gimli               | N.D.P.                       |
| BLADY, Sharon            | Kirkfield Park      | N.D.P.                       |
| BRAUN, Erna              | Rossmere            | N.D.P.                       |
| BRICK, Marilyn           | St. Norbert         | N.D.P.                       |
| BRIESE, Stu              | Ste. Rose           | P.C.                         |
| CALDWELL, Drew           | Brandon East        | N.D.P.                       |
| CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.      | Kildonan            | N.D.P.                       |
| CULLEN, Cliff            | Turtle Mountain     | P.C.                         |
| DERKACH, Leonard         | Russell             | P.C.                         |
| DEWAR, Gregory           | Selkirk             | N.D.P.                       |
| DOER, Gary, Hon.         | Concordia           | N.D.P.                       |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna          | Charleswood         | P.C.                         |
| DYCK, Peter              | Pembina             | P.C.                         |
| EICHLER, Ralph           | Lakeside            | P.C.                         |
| FAURSCHOU, David         | Portage la Prairie  | P.C.                         |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon.       | River Heights       | Lib.                         |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin         | Steinbach           | P.C.                         |
| GRAYDON, Cliff           | Emerson             | P.C.                         |
| HAWRANIK, Gerald         | Lac du Bonnet       | P.C.                         |
| HICKES, George, Hon.     | Point Douglas       | N.D.P.                       |
| HOWARD, Jennifer         | Fort Rouge          | N.D.P.                       |
| IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.  | Fort Garry          | N.D.P.                       |
| JENNISSEN, Gerard        | Flin Flon           | N.D.P.                       |
| JHA, Bidhu               | Radisson            | N.D.P.                       |
| KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie     | St. James           | N.D.P.                       |
| LAMOUREUX, Kevin         | Inkster             | Lib.                         |
| LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.     | The Pas             | N.D.P.                       |
| LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.       | La Verendrye        | N.D.P.                       |
| MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.   | St. Johns           | N.D.P.                       |
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| MARTINDALE, Doug         | Burrows             | N.D.P.                       |
| McFADYEN, Hugh           | Fort Whyte          | P.C.                         |
| McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.   | Lord Roberts        | N.D.P.                       |
| MELNICK, Christine, Hon. | Riel                | N.D.P.                       |
| NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom        | Interlake           | N.D.P.                       |
| OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.    | Seine River         | N.D.P.                       |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine         | Carman              | P.C.                         |
| REID, Daryl              | Transcona           | N.D.P.                       |
| ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.     | Rupertsland         | N.D.P.                       |
| RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.       | Assiniboia          | N.D.P.                       |
| ROWAT, Leanne            | Minnedosa           | P.C.                         |
| SARAN, Mohinder          | The Maples          | N.D.P.                       |
| SCHULER, Ron             | Springfield         | P.C.                         |
| SELBY, Erin              | Southdale           | N.D.P.                       |
| SELINGER, Greg, Hon.     | St. Boniface        | N.D.P.                       |
| STEFANSON, Heather       | Tuxedo              | P.C.                         |
| STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.    | Dauphin-Roblin      | N.D.P.                       |
| SWAN, Andrew             | Minto               | N.D.P.                       |
| TAILLIEU, Mavis          | Morris              | P.C.                         |
| WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.    | Swan River          | N.D.P.                       |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 7, 2007

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

### *PRAYER*

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### Provincial Trunk Highway 2

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

As a result of high traffic volumes in the region, there have been numerous accidents and near misses along Provincial Trunk Highway 2 near the village of Glenboro, leading to serious safety concerns for motorists. The provincial government has refused to construct turning lanes off Provincial Trunk Highway 2 into the village of Glenboro and on to Golf Course Drive, despite the fact that the number of businesses have increased along Provincial Trunk Highway 2 over the recent years.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), to consider implementing a speed zone on Provincial Trunk Highway 2 adjacent to the village of Glenboro.

This petition is signed by Cindy Skanderberg, Loni Gravel, Marion Haslen and many, many others.

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

#### Grace General Hospital ER

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government has not ensured that the Grace Hospital emergency room is staffed with a full complement of ER doctors. The ER has been short several doctors for more than two years.

Because of this shortage, only one ER doctor is working on many shifts, forcing long patient waits for emergency care.

Residents of the community fear that the Grace Hospital ER will be forced to close if this ER doctor shortage is not fixed immediately.

The provincial government has not come forward with a clear, immediate plan to address the ER doctor shortage.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), to consider developing a clear, immediate plan to address the ER doctor shortage.

To request the Minister of Health to consider taking all necessary steps to ensure the Grace Hospital emergency room does not close.

Signed by Joan Green, G. Keating, Terry Young and many, many more.

#### Provincial Trunk Highway 10

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Provincial Trunk Highway 10 separates two schools and residential districts in Forrest, Manitoba, forcing students and residents to cross some very dangerous circumstances.

Strategies brought forward to help minimize the danger pose either significant threats to the safety of our children or are not economically feasible.

Provincial Highway 10 serves as a route for an ever-increasing volume of traffic, including highway trucks, farm vehicles, working commuters, campers and the transport of dangerous goods.

Traffic levels are expected to escalate further due to projected industrial expansions.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to act in this situation

by considering the construction of a four-lane highway that will bypass around the village of Forrest.

This petition signed by Evelyn Lewandoski, Sherry Fehr, Keri-Lyn Rothnie and many, many others.

### **Headingley Foods**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The owners of Headingley Foods, a small business based in Headingley, would like to sell alcohol at their store. The distance from their location to the nearest Liquor Mart, via the Trans-Canada Highway, is 9.3 kilometres. The distance to the same Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard is 10.8 kilometres. Their application has been rejected because their store needs to be 10 kilometres away from the Liquor Mart. It is 700 metres short of this requirement using one route but 10.8 kilometres using the other.

The majority of Headingley's population lives off Roblin Boulevard and uses Roblin Boulevard to get to and from Winnipeg rather than the Trans-Canada Highway. Additionally, the highway route is often closed or too dangerous to travel in severe weather conditions. The majority of Headingley residents therefore travel to the Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard, a distance of 10.8 kilometres.

Small businesses outside Winnipeg's perimeter are vital to the prosperity of Manitoba's communities and should be supported. It is difficult for small businesses like Headingley Foods to compete with larger stores in Winnipeg, and they require added services to remain viable. Residents should be able to purchase alcohol locally rather than having to drive to the next municipality.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act (Mr. Smith), to consider allowing the owners of Headingley Foods to sell alcohol at their store, thereby supporting small business and the prosperity of rural communities in Manitoba.

This is signed by John Auber, Mary MacDonald, Jack Boyda and many, many others.

### **Rapid Transit System**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

For decades, indecision and lack of support by NDP and Conservative governments in Manitoba has meant Winnipeg has been denied a much-needed rapid transit system.

While a rapid transit system has particular benefits for students, for seniors and for those on low incomes, all Winnipeggers benefit from building a quicker, more environmentally friendly rapid transit system.

Rapid transit is one of the major components of building a livable and sustainable 21st century city that decreases dependence on importing gas from other provinces and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Rapid transit is a critical component in moving Manitoba towards smart growth policies that focus on quality of life instead of decades of dumb growth under NDP and Conservative provincial governments.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to consider ensuring that Winnipeg has a rapid transit system as soon as possible.

Signed by Kathryn Woodward, Jinglee Xu, Kate Morrison and many, many others.

\*(13:40)

### **Crocus Investment Fund**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The government needs to uncover the whole truth as to what ultimately led to over 33,000 Crocus shareholders to lose tens of millions of dollars.

The provincial Auditor's report, the Manitoba Securities Commission investigation, the RCMP investigation and the involvement of our courts, collectively, will not answer the questions that must be answered in regard to the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Manitobans need to know why the government ignored the many warnings that could have saved the Crocus Investment Fund.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to co-operate in uncovering the truth in why the government did not act on what it knew and consider calling a public inquiry on the Crocus Fund fiasco.

That is signed by Cathy Blyth, Robert Blyth, C. Blyth and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Nopiming Provincial Park Flood Watch

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

As members are aware, a flood watch has been issued for the Nopiming and Whiteshell areas and the Whitemouth River. As well, a flood watch continues for the Shellmouth area south of the Shellmouth Dam to Millwood.

Only four weeks ago, Manitoba was experiencing dry conditions and extreme fire hazards. However, last week heavy rainfalls caused rising water levels in the southeast area of the province and as much as 80 millimetres of rain fell in a short time. Small creeks and overland flooding has caused road closures. Additional precipitation is occurring and is forecasted.

The Province continues to actively monitor the situation and work to protect residents and park users. On Monday, June 4, I toured the areas of Nopiming Provincial Park affected by rising water levels and road damage. I saw the great work of staff in the Department of Conservation and Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation.

Some flooding is now occurring on Bird Lake as water rises. Some docks, boat houses and low-lying cottages are affected. Since June 3, Conservation staff have successfully ferried 191 people from the affected area of Nopiming Park due to a road closure on Highway 315. To further ensure the safety of park users, all campgrounds in the Nopiming Park will be closed over the weekend. A full complement of staff will remain at the park over the weekend.

Highway 315 at Booster Creek in Nopiming Park has been re-opened to light traffic only, however, travel is not recommended. Highway 313

from the junction of Highway 315 to Pointe du Bois has also been re-opened but caution is advised again as there is water over the road in several locations. Caution is also urged to motorists on Highway 314, from the junction of Highway 315 to Black Lake.

I wish to commend all the great efforts of provincial staff that are dealing with this situation and remind all Manitobans to exercise caution if they must travel in the park area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I'd like to thank the minister for his ministerial statement in regard to the flooding and the potential flooding in this area where many roads have been washed out. A great inconvenience has been caused to many people in this area.

It is quite a contradiction that we did see dry periods earlier this spring. Heavy rainfalls that we've experienced through the month of May have led to a great inconvenience in the whole Shellmouth area as well as across the Nopiming Provincial Park area. Of course, the issue of the Shellmouth is ongoing as it continues to flood between the Shellmouth Reservoir and Millwood, as well, in that area. The situation of the washed-out roads and the facilities in the Nopiming Park and in other areas are something that we need to make sure that the staff is commended for the work that they've done in that whole area and that the government continues to look at how soon and how quickly they can look at the repairs that will be needed in that area once the water has receded.

I think that we need to make sure that the parks are reopened as quickly as we possibly can. So I think that, from our side of the House, we'd just like to commend the staff for the work that they've done in that whole area and make sure that the support is put in place for the people that need to deal with the inconveniences that they've been faced with.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** I'd like to thank the minister for his statement and update on the flooding conditions. I'd also like to extend, on behalf of our party, concern for those who've been inconvenienced and put in difficult circumstances as a result of the road washouts and the flooding that's occurred. I would like to compliment the individuals who have played a role in trying to help out in the circumstances. I hope that the minister, following this event, will

undertake an investigation or review of the situation to see what can be done if such weather strikes again to ensure that we don't have as much road damage and problems as we've had this time.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today 30 retired teachers.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Manitoba's Economy Government's Plans for Growth

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition. *[applause]*

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a moment I'll certainly take note of for future.

I want to say that it is great to be back here. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, again on your acclamation as Speaker of the Legislature and thank you for the very good work you've done in leading this Legislature over several years. We look forward to more in the future.

It feels like just yesterday that we had our last Question Period. They say time flies when you're having fun. It is nice to be back here again with our colleagues and back here doing the work of the people of Manitoba in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, there are some concerning signals that we're seeing recently with regard to Manitoba's economic position, particularly versus other provinces in the country. We have consistently been critical of the government with respect to its spending policies, its reckless spending, its lobby-and-spend approach to its financial management that the approach, instead of building a strong economy here in Manitoba, is to go to Ottawa for more and then spend every nickel and then some.

We now see warning signs, early warnings of economic problems down the road. The most recent and some of the most disconcerting numbers that we see coming from Stats Canada for the first three months of 2007 show a net loss of payroll jobs here in Manitoba. It shows that Manitoba finished seventh in the country in the first quarter of this year when it came to payroll employment. We all know that

Alberta, sitting on its vast reserves of oil and gas, is a difficult province to compete with but it's disappointing when we see ourselves falling behind Ontario, British Columbia, P.E.I., Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and other provinces that we have historically outpaced when it comes to the growth of our economy.

So my question is to the Premier. Recognizing that large sums of public expenditure can create a temporary sense of well-being, but as the Premier looks down the road, is he going to heed the warning signs that we see right now, or is he going to do what he did with Crocus and ignore the red flags and lead Manitoba down the wrong path when it comes to our economy?

\* (13:50)

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to extend my congratulations to you on your re-election. I would like to say to the member opposite we wish him many more years of happiness in the role he is now providing to the people of Manitoba.

I would point out that Manitoba's GDP was at 3.3 percent last year, far above the examples cited by the member opposite. It's projected to be at 3.6 percent, the second best in western Canada and third best in Canada again.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed the member opposite, I guess in a form of flattery with imitation, is now using the term "reckless" after, of course, we labelled his three triple-digit tax reductions as reckless. I'm glad to see he's picked up that word. But I would ask him about his reckless promises during the election campaign, his reckless spending promises. How much money is it going to cost to build the lake in Point Douglas? How much money is it going to cost to build the beach in Point Douglas? How much money is it going to cost to build the boardwalk in Point Douglas? How many hundreds of homes is he going to bulldoze in Point Douglas? Could he please cost that for the people of Manitoba so we will know whether he was reckless again or he had accurate numbers when he made that commitment?

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, with those debating skills, I am at a loss as to why he refused a live debate in the election campaign. He goes five weeks ducking debates and now that he's got the election under the belt he is full of fire and brimstone. We're glad to see him back. He's not ducking debate today, and I would just say I am pleased to hear that the

first time we've ever heard him raise any concern about the constituency of Point Douglas in all of the years that members opposite have been here, it is nice to hear that concern.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not my intent to spend 11 years as Leader of the Opposition, as the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) did, and I do want to congratulate him. After going 0 for 3, he has clawed his way back to batting five hundred, and I do congratulate him for that in the recent election outcome. Almost 4,000 votes in Concordia, and I can certainly see why he's gloating.

I just want to say, because we have a serious issue facing our province with respect to our economic future. We saw the numbers come out for the first quarter. We saw 100 jobs lost on the Manitoba payroll at the same time as the province of Saskatchewan, next door, created 4,000 new payroll jobs over the same period, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to ask the Premier if he is going to seriously address the issue, the meaningful tax reductions that gets Manitoba out of the basement and somewhere closer to the middle of the pack, as we proposed in the election campaign, or is he going to carry on with what Dr. McCallum has described as a remarkably sad record of job creation?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the Mount Carmel Clinic is in Point Douglas. The member opposite might not know that. We've announced a major expansion of that clinic. I would point out Red River College is in the constituency of Point Douglas. He might find a new campus worth some \$38 million with programs targeted to the residents all across Manitoba, including in Point Douglas.

He will note that the child poverty clawback that he initiated as chief of staff has been reinstated for children and poor families. He might note that there are a number of Lighthouse programs, including the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre which they closed down when they were in office that we've rebuilt. He might note that many of those students now have an opportunity of post-secondary education. Many are going to U of W, Red River College, University of Manitoba, a point that was noted by the Governor General, who probably spent more time in the Point Douglas riding than the member opposite.

Can he please tell us how much money is the beach in Point Douglas? How much money is the

lake? How much money is the boardwalk? How many homes is he going to demolish? Is he moving them all to Fort Whyte, Mr. Speaker? Has he talked to the people of Fort Whyte? How can he make such an arrogant promise to those people?

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We will have a little decorum here.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I see his 11 years as opposition leader are paying off well today as he fires questions back across the floor. Just a few more years his experience as Premier, he may actually start acting like a Premier and responding to questions instead of posing them.

And so, as he is the Premier of Manitoba, we would ask for a response to some important questions. On the issue of arrogance, Mr. Speaker, only this Premier would brag about the fact that Winnipeg is second only to Vancouver on the issue of child poverty. He gets up and touts his record. He's got a shameful record in that area. One only need ask people like Sid Frankel and others, who are former supporters of his party, who have indicated their disdain for their record on these important issues.

Now, on the issue of growing Manitoba's economy so that we have the resources to invest in important areas like health care and social services, we've seen other numbers come out, Mr. Speaker, which show on average weekly earnings, which is a measurement of the relative well-being of Manitobans, that Manitoba has finished in eighth place in the recent numbers on average weekly earnings, finishing ahead of only Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. We fall behind New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Québec, B.C., Ontario and Alberta.

Will the Premier concede today that his lobby-and-spend policies, which have created a temporary sense of well-being, are leading Manitoba down the wrong path economically?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we all agree on this side of the House that we have more work to do on child poverty. It's gone from 19 percent under the Conservatives down to 12 percent. We have more work. We were pleased to eliminate the capricious clawback on children that was introduced by members opposite. We were pleased to reinstate the nutrition money that they took away from babies in the 1990s.

I would point out that Stats Canada just came out with numbers for 2005. After-tax income from an average family of four was, I believe, fourth best in Canada. Again, that is a comprehensive number. The member opposite talks about spending again. Will he please tell the people of Manitoba how much reckless money is he going to put in to the lake in Point Douglas, the boardwalk, the beach, and how many homes was he going to demolish? The people of Point Douglas want to know.

### **Job Creation Government's Record**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, Manitoba is dead last in terms of job growth from April 2006 to April 2007. Only 5,100 full and part-time jobs were created during that period of time, while Saskatchewan created 14,300 jobs, Alberta 103,000 jobs and British Columbia well over 50,000 jobs.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: With such pathetic job numbers in Manitoba, when will he get on with the job of creating an economy, creating those long-term, meaningful, full-time jobs that our young people can stay here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** First of all, I'd like to welcome back the Member for Lac du Bonnet and congratulate him on being re-elected and put the record straight. There's been 49,000 jobs created in Manitoba since 1999. Mr. Speaker, 50 percent of those jobs have been created in the private sector; 70 percent of those jobs have been full-time jobs. Manitoba retains one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Manitoba retains one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country for young people.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, jobs have grown very significantly in the last year. There has been a participation in the labour force of over 9,000 more people entering the labour force, and more than 5,100 jobs have been created since the last 12 months in this province.

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, more than 10,000 students graduate from our colleges and universities every year, and, yet, from April 2006 to April 2007, only 1,000 of those jobs were full-time jobs in Manitoba. Manitoba is only creating one full-time job for every 10 graduates from college and university. What will our graduates do?

Mr. Speaker, they have no choice. They're going to have to follow the 35,000 other Manitobans who left Manitoba in search of full-time jobs elsewhere. They won't stay in Manitoba because there aren't enough full-time jobs.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Why does he refuse to create an economy capable of creating full-time meaningful jobs in Manitoba to keep our young people here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** I actually appreciate the member raising issues about young people staying in Manitoba because we have seen more young people staying in Manitoba, and the member, in his own way, has actually complimented us on our post-secondary education policy.

It is true, there are more people graduating from post-secondary institutions, colleges and universities than ever there has been in the history of the province. We're very proud of the record on post-secondary education in this province. We're very happy. More than 90 percent of the people, for example, graduating from Red River College stay and work in Manitoba.

Over 90 percent of our Red River College graduates stay and work in Manitoba. The member opposite knows that. He should acknowledge it.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister shouldn't be proud of those job numbers. He should be embarrassed at those job numbers. From April 2006 till April 2007, Stats Canada reports that Manitoba had job growth of less than 1 percent, the lowest job growth increase in Canada and well below the Canadian average of 2.3 percent.

Our graduates are looking for full-time jobs. Manitoba created only 1,000 full-time jobs over the last year; 1,000 jobs for more than 10,000 graduates.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Will he offer his apology to the 9,000 graduates who will be forced out of Manitoba to find a long-term full-time job? Will he apologize? I ask this minister.

**Mr. Selinger:** The member opposite has fully misrepresented the facts in the province. The unemployment rate for young people, Mr. Speaker, remains among the lowest in the country. The number of people graduating from post-secondary institutions is at record level. As a matter of fact, any young person staying and working in Manitoba now with the tuition rebate program we put in place in the



last budget will have the lowest effective tax rate of any young person in the country.

Young people will have the lowest tax rates in the country. They will have access to growing jobs in the biotechnology sector, access to growing jobs in the professional sector, access to growing jobs in the energy sector, access to growing jobs in the manufacturing sector. Young people know that Manitoba—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Crime Rates City of Winnipeg**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, the facts tell us that Winnipeg ranks No. 1 in auto thefts, No. 1 in robberies, No. 1 in murders with guns, so it should be no surprise that a recent Canada West Foundation survey reported that more than 78 percent of Winnipeggers say there are areas of our city that they are afraid to set foot in. Clearly these people are not feeling much in the way of Spirited Energy.

I would like to ask the Minister of Competitiveness how he intends to address this problem. Does he plan to fix the problem by introducing yet another phase to the Spirited Energy campaign?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** When it comes to neighbourhood safety, we have practical ideas. First of all, this government has put a record number of police officers on the street.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we know that, when it comes to having neighbourhood safety, there has to be opportunities for young people. There are record opportunities in education, record opportunities in the labour market, record opportunities in terms of recreation, in terms of the Lighthouse programs. Our training initiatives are providing unique opportunities for young people to go back to school in adult learning centres which were a runaway mess under the members opposite. They have now been settled down. They are now focussing on literacy, grade 12 completion and opportunities for young people to enter the labour market.

Young people that are working and productive are young people that are not getting in trouble.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, there are a record number of Winnipeggers who are terrified to go into certain areas in our city. Crime is a very serious issue in our city, yet this government's only solution to this

problem is to come up with some lousy new Spirited Energy slogan, throw up a few technicolour banners and hope that the issue will go away. Well, it doesn't work that way.

What is this minister's plan to address the city's image problem? Is it to continue to waste taxpayer dollars in yet more phases of the Spirited Energy campaign?

**Mr. Selinger:** We have a number of plans in place to make sure that we continue to grow Manitoba as one of the best places to live and work. Our investment in culture on a per capita basis is the second best in the county. We invest in young people who are entertainers, young people who are artists. We invest in arts and culture to have a vibrant quality of life.

When I talk to young people they say that if you're an artist, Winnipeg and Manitoba is one of the best places to be because you actually get support, you actually get recognition and you actually have opportunities to grow as an artist in this community, unlike many other places in this country.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, according to the Canada West Foundation survey, not only do 78 percent of Winnipeggers say they are afraid to set foot in certain areas of this city, but it also says that less than 10 percent of Winnipeggers feel good about their downtown. We know this government has already wasted \$2.4 million in two phases of the Spirited Energy campaign and recently has announced two more phases of the campaign but yet has refused to put a dollar figure to that.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Competitiveness. How many phases of this bogus campaign does this government believe it takes to address this problem? I'll answer the question for them. It's zero.

When will this government realize that putting fancy banners over graffiti doesn't fix our image problems. What we need is real action on crime, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, any campaign to purport a community has to be based on a substantive change in the quality of life. The member opposite seems to have a problem with issues around the Spirited Energy campaign. The Governor General of Canada came to Winnipeg this week, visited young people in the inner city, saw great signs of hope there, and many of those great signs of hope are based on initiatives that we have supported in the last seven years.

We want the downtown to be a place that is thriving in terms of culture. The MTS Centre is up and running. The members opposite voted against it. The new Hydro building will bring 2,000 people to the downtown. We have provided record funding to the City. We've restored 50 percent funding to the Winnipeg Transit system that members opposite cut. We have more people using transit now than we've ever seen in the history of the city of Winnipeg. The downtown will now follow up on more—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Crime Rates Auto Theft**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, once again, under the NDP government, Winnipeg is on track for a record number of auto theft victims. In fact, crime stats today confirm that the city of Winnipeg is on pace for more than 14,000 stolen and attempted stolen vehicles.

During the recent election, the Premier (Mr. Doer) announced that he would be leading a citizens' coalition—some might call it a delegation of deflection—to go to Ottawa to try to blame others for what's clearly the NDP's failure.

Can the Minister of Justice indicate whether or not this delegation of deflection will also be making stops in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, two jurisdictions which have had success in getting down their auto theft rate, not by blaming others and victims but by taking their own responsibility?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to report that we've taken the Regina auto theft program and implemented it in Manitoba. We were looking for reductions in auto theft and year over year, as of this month, a 25 percent reduction in auto theft in Manitoba.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once or twice during the campaign, I think the opposition mentioned crime in their ads, like 100 percent of the time, and I noted when I was at the conference of Justice ministers last week in Ottawa, where we talked about the highest murder rate in Edmonton or the incredible auto theft rate in B.C. because of shipping stolen auto parts into container ships or Nova Scotia that adopted Manitoba's Safer

Communities project, we talked about working collectively—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm glad that the minister recognized that the Safer Communities program brought under the former Conservative government is an essential program.

But after the Minister of Justice returned in March from Ottawa, he came back and he said: Mission accomplished. Then, only weeks later, he came and said: Well, no, we need a delegation to go back to Ottawa even though we accomplished our mission on the last trip. Strangely, on almost the same day that the minister was announcing the delegation of deflection going to Ottawa, British Columbia, which he referenced, put out a news release entitled: B.C. auto theft rates drop for the third consecutive year.

Will the minister now admit that he has failed where other jurisdictions like British Columbia and Saskatchewan have had success? Take your delegation of deflection and go see what they're doing right.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, what I think the population wants from the government of Manitoba is us to act. When I was talking with the federal minister, Rob Nicholson, on Friday when I was in Ottawa, and thanking him for supporting our initiative to make auto theft an indictable offence under the Criminal Code, and we had that discussion, I thanked him for our support in that regard. We also talked and Minister Stockwell Day talked about some of the efforts that Manitoba and the other provinces had done and we are sharing in dealing with crime which is under the Criminal Code. I know the member would love to have Criminal Code activities under the provincial jurisdiction and constitutionally they're not. We have to go to Ottawa, and I'm thankful that Ottawa will work with us to change aspects of the Criminal Code to make it tougher and at the same time to work on prevention.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The Minister of Justice, in his answer, references the Criminal Code in sentencing. In the same news release that I had discussed, the May 1, 2007 British Columbia news release said that the reason they have had a significant decrease in auto theft was, and I quote, improved court sentencing. They've taken action to get improved court sentencing in British Columbia, also under the

Criminal Code, just like Manitoba is. B.C. has taken initiatives, got improved court sentencing and yet, this Minister of Justice wants to go back to Ottawa to try to deflect delaying.

I ask him, well, instead of going east to try to go on a mission of deflection, will he go west to try to get direction from jurisdictions that are having success where he has failed, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I don't know if the member knew that the Manitoba court system, together with the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the former Minister of Justice, received an international award for expediting court processes. It's called the Front End Project in New York by the United Nations.

Mr. Speaker, what I don't know is do members opposite support this party's goal to make auto theft a tougher offence under the Criminal Code, to make a first offence be able to be put in custody, to make sure that more than one offence could allow you to be put in custody? Do you support our amendments to the Criminal Code or are you going to continue to only say one thing when you know that you don't have the power to make those changes? In fact, you never made those changes for the 11 lean Tory years, the mean years of Tory office.

#### **Retired Teachers' Pensions Cost of Living Allowance**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, retired teachers are with us again today. They are here for one purpose and that is to try to impress upon this government the need to be treated fairly with regard to their pensions and, specifically, with regard to the COLA as it relates to their pensions. I want to ask this government whether or not this government is prepared to finally treat retired teachers fairly and recognize that they need to have a COLA clause given to them as other sectors of the economy do.

Mr. Speaker, the teachers have been here on a number of occasions. It's time to give them an answer. Is this government today prepared to give these teachers an answer with regard to COLA?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** I thank the member opposite for drawing attention to this complex and important problem, though I do ruefully point out that during his 11 years in government, much of it as Minister of Education, he did nothing to alleviate the situation.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. McGifford:** You know, this is an important problem. It would be helpful if members opposite would just quiet down so we could provide an answer.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. McGifford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to remind members, and I know retired teachers in the gallery are aware that this government has recently invested \$1.5 billion to fund 75 percent of the government's portion of the pension liability. Certainly, this is stabilizing the plan—very necessary if we are to move forward with the COLA and improvements to COLA.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, Mr. Speaker, once again we cannot get an answer from this government. Retired teachers don't keep coming back to this Legislature, whether it's through demonstrations on the front steps or whether it's through attendance in the gallery, because they've been given the answers by this government. They are clearly here because they are frustrated with the way that they have been treated by this government.

I want to ask the minister and this government whether or not the government is finally prepared to make sure that there's a commitment to the issue of COLA in the foreseeable future for retired teachers in this province.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, the member opposite is looking for an answer. I think \$1.5 billion is a pretty loud answer. I also want to point out to the member opposite that even as we're meeting here, the teachers' Pension Task Force is meeting to consider ways of dealing with advancing the situation related to COLA. So, Mr. Speaker, we are working very hard on this file. We know it's an important problem. We're very dedicated to the teachers of Manitoba, and I think we've shown that both in opposition and in government.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that Mr. Tim Sale, who was a part of this government in this last mandate, is now the chair of the teachers' retirement task force. I want to ask the minister whether or not it's within the mandate of this task force to ensure that the COLA issue is resolved quickly. I want to ask this minister whether or not the recommendations of the task force are going to be

coming down in the foreseeable future so that the retired teachers can access the COLA part of their pensions as they should.

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, we're very pleased with the work that Mr. Sale is doing. He is an expert in educational finances. We know that he will do a stellar job and, again, I want to make the point that it's important to let the committee do its work carefully, thoroughly and solve this problem that has taken 25 years in the making. We are the first government to take serious action on this issue.

#### **Grace Hospital Emergency Room Staff Levels**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, during the election, the WRHA admitted that there is no contingency plan to keep the Grace Hospital open if family doctors don't pick up vacant shifts in July and August when there will only be three doctors left working in the ER in the Grace Hospital.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us how many shifts remain unfilled for July and August, and if she will table that schedule.

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by saying that it's a real privilege to be back here in the Manitoba Legislature. I congratulate the member opposite as well for being elected.

I said before the election, we said during the election and now today after the election, we will say once again that the Grace Hospital ER will remain open. It will remain open because the region, because the doctors, the nurses, the front-line health-care workers will work together to ensure that those shifts are filled and that the people in that community, and indeed, communities across Winnipeg will get the ER care. Only one party in Manitoba ever closed ERs in Winnipeg, the Conservative Party.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, on such a serious issue, I think it is incumbent upon the Minister of Health to be forthcoming with her answers. This is very, very important. During the election the NDP promised to keep the Grace Hospital ER open by hiring five clinical assistants.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us if they have been hired, if they have ER training and if they will be in place on July 1.

\* (14:20)

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, and I say again, before the election, during the election and today, we have a comprehensive plan that does indeed include the hiring of clinical assists. It includes ensuring that academic programs are available in our community hospitals. It ensures that we make sure that salaries are negotiated in a way that is fair for the very challenging work that doctors do. And may I remind the member opposite that in all of the recklessness that we saw during the election campaign, there were claims about helping front-line care. How many doctors did the members opposite promise? Zero.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We have the viewing public, we have guests in the gallery and they came down here to hear the questions and the answers. I think we owe that to them.

Also, decorum in this Chamber is very, very important. Time is ticking, and we're trying to get as many questions and answers in. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, what is reckless and pathetic is the lack of answers from a Minister of Health that has the job of telling the public what is going on with that hospital ER.

Mr. Speaker, come July and August, if family doctors are not picking up extra shifts, if the clinical assistants are not in place and if there are only three ER doctors left, how can this Minister of Health and this NDP government provide safe patient care to patients that come to the Grace Hospital ER? They deserve an answer from this minister today.

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, indeed the people of Manitoba and the people of the neighbourhood of the Grace Hospital do deserve to have their ER open. That's why we're committed to do it with our multifaceted plan, including the decision to open negotiations with ER doctors early to ensure that we have the staff that we need. Again, only one party has ever closed an ER.

On the subject of \$800 million of reckless tax cuts promised by the members opposite, maybe we should review what exactly that would mean for health care in Manitoba. We know now it's no longer a priority. They've proved it during the campaign.

Mr. Speaker, \$800 million would be the equivalent of the annual budgets of the Grace, Concordia, Health Sciences, St. Boniface combined.

We know that we stand with doctors, nurses and patients in this province. We know that they do not.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for River Heights.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Member for River Heights has the floor.

#### **Candidate Nomination (Wellington) Allegations of Intimidation**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, the recent allegations that individuals very close to the Premier used intimidation and bullying tactics with respect to a nominated candidate in Wellington constituency are very disturbing, particularly given that there were such allegations not long before in another constituency.

I would ask the Premier, given that his government and he have occasionally, in this Chamber, voiced opposition to bullying and intimidation, if he would assure members of this Legislature that he would never, under any circumstances, condone such bullying and intimidation tactics by members of his party.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I know in the Liberal Party, in the federal Liberal Party, the leader of the party gets to ultimately and unilaterally declare who are candidates of their party. In our party, there is a nomination process and there's an executive. It is not a right to run in our party; it's a privilege. If somebody is accused and convicted of some—I'm using a hypothetical example—of the serious crime, for example, and they win in a nomination race, they're not going to be sanctioned by our executive.

I've seen at least, in the last three times that we've won, over 175 or 180 nominations, counting by-elections that have taken place, the great majority of them proceed in a very, very successful and non-controversial way. There is the odd time where that doesn't happen, but I would support the right of our executive, not the leader. The leader has no authority in the constitution on nominations. I would support the right of the executive to ensure that people that have given the NDP name and endorsement have acted in a way that's consistent with the principles of the party and with the laws of the country.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the accusations that are being made with respect to what happened in the Wellington constituency are so extraordinary and so

outside of the normal realm of democratic practice that it's very important that there be a full and open public recording on what happened.

As a matter of maintaining and preserving public confidence in the democratic process in Manitoba, I would ask the Premier: Will the Premier ensure that a full, open report of what happened in Wellington constituency be made public as a result of the investigation by the Commissioner of Elections?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that in a democracy the people are always right. The people that elect candidates and elect all of us to this House are always, at the end of the day, the most open democratic process possible. The candidate in the Wellington riding, the present member of Wellington, received 2,332 votes; the Liberal candidate received 731 votes; the Tory candidate received 567; an independent candidate named Mr. Chan, who was disqualified from our party, received 504 votes, and Mr. Santos, a former incumbent, received 188. That is a full public disclosure of the will of Wellington.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the allegation that individuals close to the Premier presented a nominated candidate with a previously written unsigned statement that she was to sign saying that she was sick when she wasn't and was withdrawing from this nomination race, and pushed her and bullied and intimidated her to sign under duress, these are extraordinary things which need to be investigated.

Will the Premier ensure that there is a full and open report of what happened to make sure that the democratic process in Manitoba is respected and that credibility is restored to what happens?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out that democracy is the votes that people have in a ballot box. You know, in the Liberal Party, and I know the member opposite may be a little wrong on the culture of a party, in the Liberal Party of Canada, the leader can appoint and not appoint and do this. In our party, the leader has no power of nomination. There is a clear separation between the leader of the party and the constitutional executive. Our executive makes sure, for example, that somebody that might be convicted of being a deadbeat dad doesn't run as a candidate for the NDP.

You know, if we had that information, members opposite would be howling if somebody was convicted, for example, of child pornography. They'd

be howling if they were a candidate, and rightly so. That's why our executive makes sure that people nominated by the NDP are worthy, and that's why we see the results in Wellington. This is an open, democratic election campaign, and I respect the people of Wellington.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### St. James Ladies Auxiliary 80th Anniversary

**Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, May 27 was the 80th anniversary of the St. James Ladies Auxiliary. As part of Legion No. 4, the Ladies Auxiliary is an integral volunteer group and community support to my constituency of St. James.

Mr. Speaker, the Ladies Auxiliary received their charter on May 25, 1927. Without a formal venue but determined to meet regularly, these volunteers held their first meetings in schools, offices and even members' homes. It is this determination of the volunteer sector that enriches the lives of others by both increasing the awareness of social causes and improving the community. This impressive membership of the Ladies Auxiliary has not gone unnoticed. Many of these women have received recognition over these 80 years for their volunteerism through various service awards and certificates of merit.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 80 years, the Ladies Auxiliary has been successful in raising funds through luncheons, teas, bake sales, drives, Tupperware parties and raffles. These proceeds have been disbursed through a number of community charities. These include student bursaries, support for local school programs, university scholarships, hospital donations, the financing of athletic programs and through a number of activities and services at the Deer Lodge Centre. The Ladies Auxiliary also works closely with Veterans Affairs and the Legion branch by organizing and fundraising on their behalf.

St. James Ladies Auxiliary is an important feature to this constituency. They foster the development of social networks for positive change in Manitoba. Their mandate is to work in the interest of education of veterans for and with youths in the interest of good citizenship for the future of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, marking this 80th anniversary of the Ladies Auxiliary celebrates these extraordinary people who invest their lives in improving the world.

I ask members here today to join me in applauding the efforts of the St. James Ladies Auxiliary and to thank them for their continued commitment. Thank you.

\* (14:30)

### D-Day Anniversary

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** June 6 marks the 63rd anniversary of one of history's greatest battles, D-Day. June 6, 1944, was a grey, chilled, windswept morning that saw 14,000 Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen take part in one of the most important sea-borne invasions of the Second World War.

The purpose of this large-scale military event was to spearhead the long and difficult campaign to free Europe from Nazi tyranny. This was done by landing thousands of Canadian and allied troops on the shores of France. What ensued was heavy and bitter fighting that saw a significant number of casualties. What was gained was a decisive foothold on the war front that was integral to the eventual conclusion of the war. There was no part of Canada that was spared the effects of losing loved ones on D-Day. Indeed, Manitoba was part of that great sacrifice and trial for these hometown heroes who risked everything in the defence of their country and the advancement of freedom.

Each year, on the anniversary of D-Day, it is our duty and responsibility to pay proper tribute to Canadians who fought on that grey, cold day and to observe and remember those who did not return.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to continue the memory of this event that is more than a matter of history but a vivid part of Canada's story. Lest we forget.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

### Keep the Beat War Child Benefit

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Deputy Speaker, on May 24, I had the pleasure of attending the second annual Keep the Beat, a fundraiser for War Child Canada, at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute.

Students came not only from DMCI, but also from Maples, Sisler, St. Johns, Elmwood, St. Boniface and Kelvin. More than 500 students from these high schools filled the stands in the Maroons gymnasium to capacity, and, indeed, students filled the available space on the floor as

well. Students participated in a series of music and dance competitions.

The singing competition had students in the stands breaking out not lighters but cellphones to celebrate incredible vocal performances. A wide variety of dancers and dance troupes, some with as many as 25 dancers, went through their energetic routines. Finally, four teams of break dancers displayed their best moves.

I had the difficult task of being one of the judges of the competition, but the competitive aspect was secondary to the spirit and camaraderie shown by several hundred students. Performers from all schools were cheered loudly, and the feeling in the packed gymnasium was truly one of unity.

The funds raised through DMCI's Keep the Beat event will help War Child Canada provide humanitarian assistance to war-affected children through international programs in countries such as Sierra Leone, Iraq, Sudan, Ghana, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I congratulate the student council of DMCI for organizing yet another successful event. I also acknowledge the hundreds of young people who came together for a common cause and a great event. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Dustin Penner**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Madam Deputy Speaker, soon the Stanley Cup will be making a visit to the city of Winkler, Manitoba, with our much-loved Dustin Penner. After a 6 to 2 win over the Ottawa Senators, the Anaheim Ducks had a well-fought five-game victory in the Stanley Cup finals. His parents, Terry and Linda Penner, and all of Dustin's family and friends, the entire city of Winkler, are so proud of him.

Dustin played early-years hockey in the Winkler area and went on to play for Minot State University and the University of Maine. After sneaking under the radar of some recruiters, his talent was recognized and the Anaheim Ducks signed him.

Dustin is a force to be reckoned with on the ice and at over six feet four inches he's hard to miss. He's a talented and dedicated individual who remains humble. Dustin has overcome challenges and fought for his dreams, proving his genuine love for the game. His success and skill is well-earned after years of hard work and persistence. He has continued to improve and grow as a player, and I am told that he

grew just over eight inches in over a year. We all look forward to watching his hockey career in the future.

A highlight of the series was the winning goal of game four scored by Dustin and assisted by former Winnipeg Jet, Teemu Selanne. This victory thrilled hundreds of spectators who gathered in the Winkler arena to watch him and to cheer him on. He closed out the Stanley Cup playoffs with three goals, five assists, for a total of eight points.

I would also like to acknowledge Manitoba's other connections to the Ducks. Congratulations to fellow player and Manitoban, Aaron Rome, born in Nesbitt; Teemu Selanne, the former Winnipeg Jet and also coach Randy Carlyle, who has a long and storied history in Manitoba with the Winnipeg Jets and the Manitoba Moose organizations.

Congratulations to all players from both the Anaheim Ducks and the Ottawa Senators for a great series. Thank you.

**Harry Schellenberg**

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and highlight the 10 years of good service that Harry Schellenberg, the previous MLA for Rossmere, provided both to the people of his constituency and to Manitoba as a whole.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Before becoming a member of the Legislative Assembly, Harry spent over 30 years as a history and world issues teacher, challenging young minds to think more critically about global issues and encouraging his students to consider the importance of social justice.

Harry was always active in the political arena long before he became an elected official, serving as the president of the Rossmere NDP from 1995 to 1999, and as the president of the Manitoba NDP from 1997 to 1999.

Moving to the political arena was a natural fit for Harry given his long history of service to his community. During the over 25 years that he has resided in North Kildonan, he has served as a president of the Manitoba Parents for German Education, a former board member of UNICEF and a founding board member of the Chief Peguis Health and Fitness Centre. Throughout his time as a representative in the Legislature, Harry was known for his active involvement with Rossmere's

community groups and was a well-known face at their events. He often visited seniors blocks and hosted coffee parties as a way to reach out to those of his constituents that were not able to attend other community activities.

Harry not only served his constituents but also his fellow members by serving for a time as Deputy Speaker and also as chair of the Legislature's finance, justice and education committees, to name just a few. In his interaction with others, he was known to be a kind, fair and honest leader.

It is an honour to follow in the footsteps of someone who served his community with devotion, commitment and compassion. I look forward to serving Rossmere with the same kind of dedication and integrity that Harry Schellenberg demonstrated for his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\*(14:40)

#### House Business

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Plus les choses changent, plus elles restent les mêmes, Monsieur le Président.

#### Translation

*The more things change, the more they stay the same, Mr. Speaker.*

#### English

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are in this House. We started sitting yesterday following the election, and we are trying to expedite business of the House as it moves forward in order to ensure that matters are dealt with. To that end, of course, we had yesterday the Speech from the Throne. It was ably delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor first, and seconded, I must say, very eloquently by the Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) and by the Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), respectively. We're looking forward to comments and address in reply by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in Orders of the Day. Thank you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATE (Second Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) that the following address be presented to His Honour Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Again, I thank the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for once again putting words on the record of wisdom that I know will benefit all Manitobans as we look back on the record of the comments today, and thank him also for giving me the opportunity to take a little bit of time with the media. As it turns out, the question was to do with Paris Hilton's sentence, and so time, I'm sure, could've been better spent here in the Chamber, but it's one of those things you don't know until you actually get into the scrum.

Mr. Speaker, I want to put some words on the record today with respect to the Speech from the Throne, a very brief Speech from the Throne, introduced yesterday by the government, and I want to again thank you for taking on the role of presiding over this Chamber. I want to thank and congratulate all members for putting their names forth in the recent election campaign and congratulate all of those who were successful in that campaign. I also will congratulate the government on their re-election. We wish that the result would have been different, but we certainly accept the verdict of Manitobans and look forward to the good fight again several years down the road when the time is right.

I also want to thank, if I can, just some people who have provided support to me through the course of the election campaign: members of my family, Jennifer, of course, my kids, Rachael and James, and parents, Ralph and Leyah, and many others who have supported us through this process. I would also like to thank the family members of all other candidates who, I know, feel the stress of campaigns even more acutely sometimes than the candidates themselves, and I want to thank all the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus in particular for the outstanding work that they have been doing and for the dedication they bring to this Chamber today and in every day that they come here to work. Members of staff as well from the leader's office, caucus, party and other places, who have worked hard over the past number of weeks taking time away from their normal duties to campaign certainly deserve our thanks and recognition as well for their participation in this great democratic process.



I also want to just note the election of two other members of the Silver Heights class of 1985, and I want to assure all members that there are Tories in that class of '85 not yet elected to this Chamber. I look forward to the next election campaign when we can even the score, perhaps even add further members of the class of '85 on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** Five more years.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Five years. He's going to drag this one out, is he? Well, I guess if he drags it out five years, then he will have been Premier for as long as he was opposition leader if he can drag it out to 11 years, Mr. Speaker. And I want to just say on the theme of the Silver Heights class of 1985, there used to be a time when members, many were concerned about the influence of the Masons on Manitoba politics, but we now know that the secret society of Huskies is now the new with its secret handshake and bizarre rituals as the new force to be reckoned with in Manitoba politics.

I do want to take a few minutes to talk about the Speech from the Throne. We've had many opportunities through the campaign to comment on promises made by the NDP and the Leader of the NDP through that campaign. We've had opportunities already to put comments on the record with respect to the Throne Speech that was introduced and voted on prior to the election campaign. So I will try to be fairly brief today, Mr. Speaker, to allow the newly elected members of the House their opportunity to make their speeches without heckling, a privilege I know that I will be afforded over the next few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is problematic not for exactly what it says but for what it has left out. We have said in Question Period today and have been raising the concern over several years about the policies of this government when it comes to creating private investment job creation and a sustainable economic future for Manitoba, jobs and opportunities for young people.

I know that I and many others in my generation, and generations that have come both before and after mine, have said with sadness and reflected with sadness on the number within our generation who have left for other provinces in search of opportunity, whether it be Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and, increasingly, places like Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and P.E.I. as we see the job numbers in those provinces coming up

dramatically as Manitoba remains stalled close to the back of the pack when it comes to economic growth.

We've seen a record spending under this NDP government over the last number of years. They, instead of taking their foot off the gas pedal, put their foot on the gas pedal when it comes to spending, and that spending, Mr. Speaker, while it creates a temporary sense of well-being, does lead us down the wrong path as a province.

We know that with record reliance on Ottawa we've seen increases in the total gross debt of Manitoba. With the highest taxes in the country we see a growth in the public sector and a lack of investment in the private sector that is worrying in terms of where we go in the coming months and years.

We know that, in a rising tide where the economies of the world are growing, including all economies within Canada and indeed throughout North America, it's easy to look good on the surface as our economy rises with the tide which is rising throughout North America. But we know that, with the dead weight of NDP policies, our economy is rising more slowly than those of other places. The dead weight of NDP policies is putting a drag on our province. It is now showing up, Mr. Speaker, in the economic numbers that we get from credible agencies, not from the Minister of Finance, but from Stats Canada.

The Minister of Finance who misled this House over successive years on Crocus, and he continues to put wrong information on the record on economic matters, Mr. Speaker, again today continues to paint a misleading picture. So, given the choice between the discredited Minister of Finance, the king of Crocus, the misleader-in-chief on the opposite government side, we look to Stats Canada when it comes to the true picture—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable First Minister, on a point of order?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Yes. The member opposite is breaking the rules again, Mr. Speaker. Of course, all members are honourable members.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable official Opposition Leader, on the same point of order?

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was making reference to misleading information put on the record previously by the Minister of Finance, which, I believe, is in order, if in fact it is accurate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. On the point of order raised, members have used the term "misleading" at times. Where all Speakers have ruled where it is totally unparliamentary is when you put—*[interjection]*

Order. A point of order is a very serious matter, okay. *[interjection]*

Order. When members use the word "deliberately misleading" that has always been—*[interjection]*

Order. When members have used the word "deliberately misleading," all Speakers have ruled that out of order. Okay.

So I would like, at this point, to caution all honourable members on using the word "directly misleading" because I will call it to order and the member would have to withdraw that comment. But right now I'm cautioning all members to pick your words very, very carefully because all members in this Chamber are honourable members and each member should be treated as such.

\* \* \*

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I would simply note that there was information put on the record which is contradicted by what Stats Canada is saying when it comes to our economic performance as a province. We've seen, with the numbers that came out prior to the new year, stats showing that Manitoba's job growth was dead last in the country last year. We've seen more recent numbers come out reported, I believe, the day or two days after the election on May 22, which showed that in the first three months of this year, Stats Canada is showing that our average weekly earnings are eighth in the country.

As we've said previously, we could live with the thought of falling behind the province of Alberta given their vast wealth within the ground there in oil and gas reserves. But, when we fall behind New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Québec, B.C., Ontario, then we do believe that there is cause for concern, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at job creation, a loss of 100 payroll jobs in the first three months of this year, zero percent, the eighth ranking in the country on payroll jobs, Mr. Speaker, we know that the early warnings are there for problems down the road. So we will acknowledge that while massive increases in public spending may temporarily produce a sense of activity and a sense of well-being, as we look down the road we must raise concerns and raise warnings about government policies that are slowly leading Manitoba into relative decline, and which may ultimately, if we are not careful and if we're not prepared to take some new decisions and different courses of action, lead to a state of absolute decline when it comes to our economic performance.

I know that they don't particularly worry about private-sector jobs. They don't particularly care whether business is doing well. But they do care about other things, Mr. Speaker. We know that the inability of a province to produce jobs and wealth will, in the long run, jeopardize our ability to pay for important public services, including health care, where we see the Grace emergency room teetering on the edge of disaster, and we see in many cases public services not meeting the needs and the expectations of Manitobans.

So we see many areas of concern. They have us close to the back of the pack. After all the budgets are introduced across the country, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba will have the highest taxes west of Québec, and we fear that after other governments have introduced their budgets and moved forward with their medium- and long-term plans, we will sink even further behind in terms of our tax competitiveness as a province.

We've seen economists as eminent as John McCallum call the recent numbers stunning, in a negative sense, and absolutely sad when it comes to Manitoba's performance as a province. These are things that, over time, will begin to manifest themselves if we don't have a government that isn't prepared to invest and make the right decisions to move Manitoba forward with measured tax reductions, to move us from back of the pack closer to the middle of the pack, with meaningful action on infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, where we've seen close to eight years of neglect.

We've got roads being washed out, bridges, on the verge of collapse, being closed. We've seen roads that are an absolute disgrace around our province; not just embarrassing, Mr. Speaker, but dangerous.

We've seen recent tragedies in western Manitoba on Highway 1, as a result of their years of neglect when it comes to investment in roads in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see in this Throne Speech more of the same. We see more of the old complacency. We've seen more of the arrogance of thinking that there's no more work to be done when it comes to building a great province of Manitoba. We would urge the government to fight against the tendency to be arrogant at this stage in their mandate, to fight against the natural tendency that we saw after Brian Mulroney's great historic win in 1988, the natural tendency to allow arrogance and hubris creep into their thinking. We saw—and I'm even prepared to admit that after our success in 1995 there were some who thought that we couldn't ever lose. We know that history is hard on those who become arrogant, who allow the intoxicating fumes of power to render them arrogant and complacent. We call on the government to resist the temptation to lapse into arrogance.

I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) is very proud of his .500 record when it comes to general elections in Manitoba, and we do acknowledge that, as a political tactician, he is skilful, Mr. Speaker. But we call on him to take a look at the numbers, to read the writing on the wall, and as the chickens come home to roost as a result of eight years of NDP mismanagement of our economy, we urge the Premier to look at what is required in the modern world to build a strong, growing economy. We urge him to consider the position of Manitoba versus other provinces when it comes to our tax levels. We urge him to consider the position of Manitoba versus other provinces when it comes to investing in infrastructure, post-secondary education and all of those other policies and directions that are required to create a strong economy.

But we also urge the Premier to look at the recent results and consider the growing gulf between the city of Winnipeg and rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We see many in rural Manitoba today who feel that they don't have a voice in this government, that nobody in this government is stand up and fighting for them and addressing and tackling the problems that matter to the citizens of our rural communities.

We've seen emergency rooms close. Contrary to the statements made by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) earlier in the House, emergency rooms have closed under this NDP government. I know that the

Minister of Health has never travelled outside the Perimeter Highway, but if she did, she would find that there are closed emergency rooms throughout rural Manitoba, closed as a result of the neglect and negligence of this government.

I would urge them to visit the community halls, the legions, the curling clubs and the various places where citizens across rural Manitoba gather, and listen hard to what they're saying today because the triumphalist attitude, the arrogance that we see permeating this Chamber today from the NDP is not something that is being reflected and felt in rural Manitoba, where people feel that they have a government that has neglected and ignored their concerns for too many years, Mr. Speaker.

They don't have the sense of optimism about the future of agriculture that some may feel today as a result of their opportunities to work on public-sector funded projects taking place disproportionately within the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. So I would urge them to listen carefully to what our farmers are saying who are operating in an environment of lower prices and rising costs in terms of fertilizer, in terms of other inputs into agriculture as they try to transport their goods across crumbling roads, as rail lines are closing, and are looking for a government that's in their corner as opposed to fighting against them, whether it be in the area of neglect in the area of the cattle industry—a \$2 tax eaten up entirely by administrative costs paid to friends of the NDP government instead of going where it was needed to support our rural producers, to support those in the cattle industry who are looking for a government that's in their corner, and a government that's not fighting against them with phony taxes handed over to friends of the ruling party and not going into where they're required in terms of increased benefit. *[interjection]*

Now, Brian Mulroney, the comments coming from the other side of the floor. The arrogance—he hasn't got Gucci loafers, Mr. Speaker, but I expect that we're going to see that tomorrow when he comes into the House. The level of arrogance and complacency that we're seeing creeping into this government is something that they have to fight against. I know it's not easy when one in four eligible voters come forward to vote for them, three in four either having voted against them or stayed home in the election. I can see why it is that they feel the level of arrogance that they feel today.

\* (15:00)

When the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province gets fewer than 4,000 votes in his own constituency of Concordia, Mr. Speaker, the people who know him best return him to the Legislature with fewer than 4,000 votes in his own constituency. I know they feel they've got lots to celebrate. Enjoy it while you can. But, more importantly, listen to what the people of Manitoba are saying outside the city of Winnipeg. Listen to what the numbers are saying. Listen to Stats Canada when they raised the warning bells about our lacklustre performance. Be concerned about what that means in terms of our ability down the road. Maybe we don't feel it today, but down the road, as we look to our future, I would ask members opposite to share our concerns. Don't do what they did on Crocus. Don't ignore the red flags. Heed the warnings and start to change course today while we still have the opportunity to put Manitoba on the right track.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I would move an amendment to the motion currently before the House.

I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese),

*THAT the Motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:*

But this House regrets:

(a) the government's failure to address the fact that Manitoba's health-care system is ranked dead last in Canada, failure to end hallway medicine as promised, failure to keep Manitoba emergency rooms open and safely operating and failure to ensure that Manitobans have timely access to health care; and

(b) the government's failure to make a substantial commitment to the health of Lake Winnipeg and to effectively limit Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions; and

(c) the government's failure to make post-secondary institutions sustainable by neglecting their needs and failing to provide leadership and a long-term strategy for their growth; and

(d) the government's failure to take responsibility for the fact that Manitoba is first in Canada for robberies and homicides committed using a firearm, experiences very high rates of auto theft and violent crime, and the government's tendency to blame the federal government for these problems; and

(e) the government's failure to make Manitoba competitive by failing to index tax brackets to inflation, failing to recognize that Manitoba's basic personal exemption is the lowest in western Canada, and allowing Manitoba to remain the highest taxed province west of Québec; and

(f) the government's failure to make Manitoba Hydro strong by raiding it, weakening it and jeopardizing it to the point where it now carries more than \$7 billion in long-term debt; and

(g) the government's failure to address Manitoba's crumbling infrastructure for the last eight years leading to washouts, detours, weight restrictions and collapsed bridges.

AND HAS THEREFORE failed to address the priorities of Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, seconded by the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese),

*THAT the Motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:*

But this House regrets:

(a) the government's failure to address—dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

The motion is in order.

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Mr. Speaker, I am most honoured today to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne as the new MLA for Kirkfield Park. I would like to begin by thanking the people of Kirkfield Park for the opportunity they have provided me by electing me as their representative to this Legislature. I am grateful to them for the warmth and hospitality with which they greeted me as I visited door-to-door in their neighbourhoods, and I am both humbled and invigorated by the trust they have placed in me.

It is especially an honour to be elected to this House as the first member of our party to represent Kirkfield Park. I will work tirelessly to ensure they will always be proud of this, their decision to move their neighbourhood forward. I especially want to thank the volunteers from Kirkfield Park who saw in me and in this government an opportunity to build the best possible future for themselves, their families and their neighbours.

Surely, as well, I thank those that came as friends, family and colleagues from the labour movement and from the teaching and social work professions. A degree of special gratitude is reserved for those real-life heroes, those members of the United Firefighters who supported our work from the early days before my nomination until the final minutes of the May long weekend, canvassing in the heart of Westwood.

Not too often does one have over a hundred people backing them during a month-long job interview. Their efforts throughout the campaign, their faith, dedication, and hours of commitment still leave me awestruck. Likewise, I thank the many colleagues in this House who also took the time to share with me their wisdom, their experience, their time, and their energy. This was assuredly their victory as much as it was mine. Thank you to all of you, my colleagues.

It is humbling, as a result, to stand in this Chamber knowing the standards set by my colleagues in their previous terms in office. Already, I have seen the camaraderie, work ethic and dedication to service that I believe inspired the people of Manitoba and of Kirkfield Park to return this government to office for a third term. I'm honoured and privileged to be part of this historic team. I will work tirelessly to meet the standards they have set in their commitment to their constituents, to the ideals of this government, and to the betterment of life for all Manitobans.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Madam Deputy Speaker, in coming to this moment, many different paths in my life have converged to permit me this opportunity to continue to advocate for social justice for all Manitobans and to uphold the values of this government while in the service of my neighbourhood. The influences of my family, neighbourhood, education, activism, and teaching background have brought me to this place.

To begin with, I must thank my family for both the early exposure to being politically aware and involved and for providing the strong foundations that allowed us to get through a wonderfully chaotic month of campaigning. My husband and sons have grown as they rose to meet the challenges and changes that a campaign such as ours places before a family. As a mother, I felt such pride as I watched my boys, especially my eldest, Zachary, participate in the campaign.

My own mother, Anne Whitwell, has always been my greatest role model. As a working mother, she has always dedicated a large part of herself to the service of others, from working as a Girl Guide mom and sewing countless costumes for school productions to her current work on the board of directors for the Stroke Recovery Association. She laid the foundation of my strong feminist and social justice perspective and my work ethic. To this day, she is still my biggest cheerleader, and my respect for her and gratitude to her are beyond anything words can express. With my mother, I regret only that my stepfather, Brian Whitwell, did not live to see this moment. I know he too would be proud of how one of his daughters was now able to represent the province he chose to make his home over 50 years ago, when he left Yorkshire to begin a new life.

My father, Stan Blady, is certainly one of my parents who most directly is responsible for my taking this early-formed work ethic and applying it to political endeavours. He too ran for a seat in this Legislature under the leadership of the Honourable Sharon Carstairs. While he never had the opportunity to be a member of this House, I know that my arrival here is, in many ways, a fulfilment of his own aspirations to represent the community in which I was born and raised. His support, and that of my stepmother MaryLynn Turner-Blady, has made this journey a dynamic and rewarding one. I hope to continually earn the respect of my parents and my family, and I will strive to make them all proud of my service and work on behalf of the people of this province and of Kirkfield Park.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is also a pleasure to serve in this Legislature with two former high school classmates: the MLA for Minto (Mr. Swan) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), and also a former university classmate and fellow environmental advocate and activist, the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer). Each of the four of us has been afforded a strong education, an opportunity to explore the greater world, and now the prospect of working together to ensure the continued growth and prosperity of this province. I anticipate working toward these goals in a collegial manner, even when working from opposite sides of the Legislature, and I look forward to working with these friends and my other new colleagues in a manner that benefits all citizens of this province.

\* (15:10)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am also thankful to the educators who inspired me to teach and shaped my political perspectives, especially those at Collège Silver Heights Collegiate and in the departments of Anthropology and Native Studies at the University of Manitoba. They encouraged critical thinking and provided me with the theoretical and practical tools that have served me well as a parent, activist, and educator. These same gifts now will help me in my service to the people of Kirkfield Park.

I must also thank my teachers and mentors from the Aboriginal and Métis community for teaching me in their traditional ways, guiding my work as an advocate for decolonization and as an ally in the quest for social justice for the First Peoples of this province and of this country. Over the years they have generously shared their knowledge and guidance. Their teachings will always serve as the underpinning of my commitment to work for the betterment of all and in the service of others. Meegwetch, et merci.

It is through the guidance and mentorship of these many people that I chose to become an environmental and social justice activist and an educator. It is the teaching profession which I am now leaving to serve in this House. This is a bittersweet moment. I am saddened to step away from my cherished role as an educator and I accept that I will no longer be with my students in the classroom. Still I recognize the opportunity I now have to work and advocate for the programs in which I am honoured to have taught.

My students at Brandon University were the first I had to leave. I look forward to seeing the continued enrichment of the Gender and Women's Studies program, and the Aboriginal and visual arts studies program in whose development and expansion I played a small role.

It is also with regret that I will be leaving the Joint Baccalaureate Nursing program at Red River College. As I have told my students repeatedly, I know I do not possess the skills that they bring to their profession and that has made it all the more a privilege to mentor those who do, as they will work to become even better nurses and provide the best care possible.

I will also be leaving the place that I have considered my second home for the past six years: the Inner City Social Work Program and the Aboriginal Child Welfare Initiative. William Norrie Centre is a hidden jewel in the crown of the

University of Manitoba. Too few people outside of its programs are aware of it. Yet its students and faculty represent the best of investing in post-secondary education, youth, Aboriginal communities and the inner city of Winnipeg.

As a member of this House, I will continue to advocate for programs like these as they serve not only the students enrolled in them but also the people and the greater community that these caregivers will serve. It is in these educational environments that my commitment to high-quality health care and social services was reaffirmed and in which I came to realize that it was time for me to reach outside of the classroom and enter this new phase of service to my community.

This, Madam Deputy Speaker, brings me back to my neighbourhood, the constituency of Kirkfield Park. Growing up going to Saturday morning hockey games at the Allard arena and researching school projects in the Westwood library were significant parts of my childhood, as were so many other activities founded in the strong sense of family and community fostered by Kirkfield Park.

It was wonderful to be able to go into my neighbourhood in a whole new way during the election campaign. Never before had I methodically set out to meet all of my neighbours. It was wonderful to end up on the doorsteps of old classmates and their parents, of former teachers and principals, and to even be reintroduced to children that I had grown up babysitting, to now see them with children of their own. While I remembered a different political tone when I was growing up there, it was interesting and rewarding to see that we shared so many of the same values, values that this government has been demonstrating and nurturing over the past eight years.

It was this that made the month-long meet-and-greet so rewarding. Our shared concern for health care and the future of the heart of our neighbourhood, the Grace Hospital, was often the first place where dialogue on values and aspirations for the neighbourhood began. The constituents of Kirkfield Park and I look forward to the expansion of the emergency room training program of the University of Manitoba into our beloved Grace. The opening of the Access Community Health and Social Services Centre will also be a proud and significant moment in the provision of stable and long-term commitment to care, not just for Kirkfield Park, but

to all of west Winnipeg served by the Grace Hospital.

Likewise, we have a common interest in providing future generations with a cleaner and healthier environment. Whether it was youth and young families concerned for the legacy they were inheriting, or seniors concerned by that which they were passing on to future generations, there was an overwhelming focus on how we can each contribute to building a future and an economy that will bring us forward without sacrificing the soil, water and air we require to survive.

People in Kirkfield Park were eager to participate in programs like Power Smart and the proposed Water Smart. They look forward to a future where clean energy like wind power, geothermal and biofuel are the norm rather than merely an alternative.

The people of Kirkfield Park are committed to their neighbourhoods. They recognize that this government's collaborative approach with the green energy, biotechnology, film and health-care sectors offer the prospect of secure education, training and employment. They believe these actions affirm this government's commitment to retaining youth and providing a strong and thriving economy to grow and develop our province.

Also, the upcoming tuition rebates that encourage younger Manitobans to build their careers here are considered pragmatic and realistic. These young people sincerely wish to establish their future in their home communities. Along with their families, they welcome these measures.

Having grown up there, I know that Kirkfield Park is, and has always been, one of the safest neighbourhoods in Winnipeg. This is not taken for granted by the residents of Kirkfield Park. They appreciate and have always demonstrated a commitment to building and maintaining safer communities. My neighbours appreciate this government's stated intention to increase the number of police officers and firefighters, and they recognize that this government has led the way in calling for tougher consequences for lawbreakers. They feel secure in their neighbourhood and know that this government is working to ensure and maintain that sense of security throughout the province.

I was also pleased to see how many believe that Manitoba Hydro is part of a legacy for all Manitobans present and future. As such, they were

adamant that it remain publicly owned. They also appreciated the work being done to further develop our infrastructure and to build a strong and sustainable economy for all Manitobans. They especially appreciate the practical and affordable manner in which it is being accomplished.

Finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, I must point out how the people of Kirkfield Park stress the importance they placed on responsible fiscal management. And how they repeatedly expressed that, as working families, they greatly appreciated the measured, moderate and consistent practices of the recent NDP governments. The ongoing balanced budgets, coupled with responsible tax relief, are central to their support for this government.

In closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am proud and humbled to be here as the representative for Kirkfield Park in this Thirty-Ninth Legislature. I look forward to the honour and the privilege of serving my neighbours and province and doing so as a New Democrat.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate you and all my colleagues in this House for providing me this time to express my gratitude to the people of Kirkfield Park. Thank you for allowing me this inaugural opportunity to share with the members of this Legislature some of the thoughts and considerations which the people of Kirkfield Park have entrusted to me to bring to this Chamber. Thank you.

**Mr. Stu Briese (Ste. Rose):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak to the Speech from the Throne, but first I want to take this opportunity to thank some of the people that helped me in my constituency through the election, through the nomination process and every step of the way.

I was sworn in I think it was the day before yesterday in room 255 in this building, and my mother and father attended that ceremony. It was a very proud moment for me. My dad is 90 and my mother is 89; she'll be 90 in August. They made a special trip in from Neepawa to attend.

I have other members of my family that were very helpful during the campaign. I had an excellent campaign team. They were competent, they were professional, and I think we had signs up around our constituency as quick as anybody in this province.

I want to thank the people of the constituency of Ste. Rose for their support. It was an interesting

election. They certainly supported me well, and they supported me from every corner of the constituency.

I also want to thank the members and the staff in the Leg. and the staff back in Ste. Rose. Everybody is so helpful. This is a steep learning curve, but it's certainly working out reasonably well.

\* (15:20)

I do want to take a moment to acknowledge Glen and Heather Cummings. Glen was my predecessor in the Ste. Rose constituency, and Heather helped him at every step of the way for 21 years. Glen served the people of Manitoba in this building for 21 years and was instrumental in the development of most of the environmental legislation that is still in use in the province today. It was carefully thought out and implemented, and I think everybody in the Chamber today owes Glen Cummings a huge vote of gratitude. He was truly a minister who always placed the best interests of Manitoba in the forefront of everything he did.

I want to speak a little on the constituency of Ste. Rose. It is roughly 100 miles by 50 miles and covers over 6,000 square kilometres. It is located between the Riding Mountain escarpment and Lake Manitoba. Ste. Rose has a large diversity of landscape and people, and it is a true honour to represent this riding in the Manitoba Legislature.

Ste. Rose encompasses four main towns: Neepawa, Gladstone, Ste. Rose and McCreary. There are also numerous small towns and like the song, "I've Been Everywhere" I'm going to name some of them because I believe members of the Legislature should be familiar with the names and locations of the small urban centres of Manitoba. The towns and villages of Ste. Rose constituency include Riding Mountain, Kelwood, Eden, Laurier, Plumas, Alonsa, Langruth, Amaranth, Arden, Westbourne and Glenella.

The Ste. Rose riding also includes nine R.M.s: Langford, Lansdowne, Westbourne, Rosedale, Glenella, Lakeview, Alonsa, McCreary and Ste. Rose.

There are three First Nations: Ebb and Flow, Crane River and Sandy Bay and several Métis communities: Crane River, Eddystone, Kinosota and Bacon Ridge.

Ste. Rose also has 10 Hutterite Brethren colonies, and very recently we have had

approximately 15 families of Old Order Mennonites move into the constituency to make their home.

We now are seeing farming operations carried on as they were a hundred years ago. On one side of the road there are four-wheel-drive tractors with 50-foot air seeders. On the other side there are four horses hitched to a 10-foot press drill.

In Ste. Rose we have four hospitals and three RHAs. Two of the hospitals are still managed by local boards and two are under RHA management. All of our hospitals have concerns about doctor and nurse shortages and emergency service provision.

Ste. Rose constituency also has a number of education facilities that fall into the jurisdiction of three school divisions and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Most of our schools are facing problems, some with declining populations and some with overcrowding and some with deteriorating infrastructure.

The point that is unique about rural ridings is the fact that we serve mostly large areas with small populations. That creates a different set of problems that urban areas do not experience. I spoke to one school bus driver during the election campaign who was just making his last stop at 5:30. Those children have been on the school bus for almost two hours. People routinely are one-half to one hour away from ambulance and paramedic services. So you can see the impact that the closure or reduction in services at the schools or in the hospitals can have on the residents of rural constituencies.

The residents of Ste. Rose are independent-minded, hardworking, make-do type of people and I'm proud to be their representative in the Legislature. When I hear a need for assistance, I know it is legitimate, and I intend to do whatever it takes to assist them with their issues and problems. During the election campaign I had the opportunity to hear many of the issues that are foremost in the minds of the residents of Ste. Rose. In Neepawa I heard concerns about the new personal care home and the fact that its construction has been announced in three different provincial elections and any other time one of the cabinet ministers happens to pass through the town. So far, in eight years of announcements, not one shovelful of soil has been moved.

Neepawa has also seen the transfer of a number of Crown Lands Branch employees out of the community. Every community has critical mass, and



the loss of a few jobs can be quite detrimental. The loss goes far beyond economics. It is a loss of children in the schools and the recreation facilities and volunteers in the community.

In McCreary, I heard concerns about economic development and the fact that the Agassiz ski hill was closed. The residents of that community believed that even though the ski hill is a federal issue, there's a role for the Province in the negotiations.

In Ste. Rose I heard concerns about maintenance and staffing of health-care facilities. In Neepawa, Ste. Rose, and Crane River, I heard serious complaints about staffing and maintenance of facilities that are under the jurisdiction of Manitoba Housing.

The 2,200 people at the Ebb and Flow First Nations at Bacon Ridge need ambulance services. They receive 200 calls per year, and most of the patients are transported in private vehicles.

The people in Crane River need road improvements. The roads are literally impassable for part of every year.

The BSE crisis in the cattle industry started five years ago, and we have seen little increase in slaughter capacity in this province. Wind farms and ethanol plants, although important initiatives, aren't going to solve the problems of the cattle industry in crisis. The R.M. of Alonsa has 35 percent of the cow herd in Manitoba, and the industry is struggling.

There are huge problems with The Crown Lands Act and administration. The act needs review and needs inputs from producers in that review process.

Madam Deputy Speaker, because of my background and experience working with municipal government, I believe there is room for improvement in the way all levels of government operate. I think there's a need to review the roles and responsibilities of all levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. We might not like the results of such a study, but we're stuck in an archaic system of grey areas and overlapping services. They are confusing to the public and they are economic disasters.

I also believe there must be a better communication and co-operation between government and departments. People in the province have far too much difficulty finding answers and solutions to their concerns, and they deserve better service from us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am concerned by the almost total disregard for ag issues in the Throne Speech. Any jurisdiction that forgets its agricultural roots is destined to failure. Agriculture is a primary industry that creates huge renewable economic benefits to our province. The efficiency of our ag producers allows every one of us to follow our dreams. I believe farmers and, in particular, the hog industry have been unfairly targeted on environmental issues. It's my view the farmers are the best environmentalists of us all. Farmers care for their land, their crops, and their livestock partly because the health of their land and their livestock is directly related to their livelihood. Beyond that, though, farmers think in generation terms. They truly want to leave the land in good shape for the next generation.

When we see an industry such as the livestock industry in crisis, it is our duty and our responsibility to provide whatever assistance is necessary. We talk about permanent cover being carbon sinks and good for the environment, but we fail to realize that every time another cattle producer is forced out of business or gives up in despair, another parcel of what is probably marginal land is returned to crop production and we lose some of the environmental benefit. Sound environmental practices are good for every Manitoban and should be financially supported by every Manitoban. Farmers are excellent stewards of the land, and it is the responsibility of all of us to provide the tools they need to operate efficiently.

Agriculture in Manitoba is facing a growing problem of attracting young people into the industry. Crop and livestock production have become very technical enterprises. I believe one of the actions that should be taken to address that issue is the development of mentoring and apprenticeship programs for young people interested in agriculture as a career.

\*(15:30)

One final ag issue I want to comment on is drainage and water management. As I mentioned earlier, most of Ste. Rose constituency lies between the Riding Mountain escarpment and Lake Manitoba. The only way I know to effectively hold water on top of a hill is to freeze it. Thankfully, in Manitoba we get a few months each year when it won't stay frozen. When that happens, it moves to the lake at a rapid pace. We have seen a lack of funding and a deterioration of the provincial drainage system over the last few years, and that trend needs to be

reversed. We need to be proactive about it rather than reactive. At the present time, we take the risk every year of paying out through crop insurance for land that's too wet to farm, flooded in the spring, until past the deadlines. All we need to do, I think, is improve and revitalize our drainage system, and we do away with that risk.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to address the House. I have tried to give you an overview of the Ste. Rose constituency and the issues of the people that live there.

In conclusion, I would like to support the amendment made to the Throne Speech by our leader. Thank you again, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is an honour to be here and an even greater honour to represent the constituents of The Maples. I look forward to expressing their interests, their values and their concerns to this Assembly.

Before continuing, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate you and Mr. Speaker on your election as Deputy Speaker and Speaker. Your guidance, wisdom and assistance will be of great help to us new members. I would also like to congratulate all newly elected members, my colleagues and members from all parties who were successful in their election bids.

I am proud to follow in the footsteps of those who served as representatives for The Maples before me, and I would especially like to thank Cris Aglugub for his years of service and many efforts on behalf of the people of my constituency.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the people from The Maples for electing me to serve as your representative in the government. I'm humbled by their faith, trust and will work hard to represent them to the best of my abilities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba has long served as a reflection of Manitoba society in general. As our society evolves, so should the values and composition of the House. That is why I am so pleased to be working with my new colleagues in the NDP caucus. We come from so many different backgrounds and experiences that we can only benefit from our diversity.

In our caucus, we have former engineers, lawyers, professors, teachers, social workers,

business people, journalists, farmers, miners, ministers and many others. History has been made of many few instances. There are 13 women in our caucus, and 18 in total in the House, the highest percentage anywhere in Canada. We have members with many different ethnic backgrounds, including at least six that I know of who were born outside of Canada. We now have two Indo-Canadians serving together for the first time. We now have a woman of colour representing as an MLA for the first time. Together, we are truly representative of Manitoba, and I am looking forward to learning and working with all the members in this House to make my community and all of Manitoba a better place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when I first came to Canada I was looking for opportunity; the opportunity to find a good job, the opportunity to make a better life for myself and my family and the opportunity for a better future for my children. I first arrived in British Columbia in 1970 as a visitor. I applied to have permanent immigrant status but was rejected. Fortunately I appealed the decision and was granted a work permit. However, I couldn't find a steady job. My friends moved east in search of jobs, first to Calgary then to Toronto. Many stopped in Winnipeg and found the opportunity they were looking for and called me to join them here. Since then, the East Indian community in Manitoba had increased from 30 ordinary working people to about 15,000 people.

Economic opportunity is what first called me to Manitoba. But I should mention that I also moved from B.C. for another reason. While it is a beautiful province, racism was frequent and quite open during my time there. There was not a single day in which I did not hear racial slurs. At one point it got so bad that I asked my father to send me a plane ticket to return home. Fortunately, during the time it took him to arrange the money, I changed my mind and decided to continue on in the face of these adverse circumstances. I decided to continue on in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, looking back, I feel lucky that I decided to come to friendly Manitoba. I found a greater welcome here and plenty of jobs were available. More confident in the future, I was able to obtain my permanent resident status in 1974, returning to India and getting married before moving permanently to The Maples in 1977.

I have lived in The Maples ever since, except for the one year I spent working in Thompson gaining

experience in the trade. I speak with pride that my children did not go to private school; they went to public school in The Maples. Now one is a doctor and the other is a pharmacist. I can say without hesitation what a great place The Maples is to raise children and I know that our government will make it an even better place to raise children in the future.

\*(15:40)

Madam Deputy Speaker, as a father, I appreciate the initiatives our government is undertaking to develop more skills and education opportunities for our young people here at home. Examples like creating 4,000 new apprenticeship training opportunities, a 60 percent tax rebate on tuition fees for all post-secondary graduates who stay and work in Manitoba, a new training centre at Red River College for leading-edge research opportunities for youth in Manitoba's green-energy economy. These are all examples of initiatives that will encourage our young people to stay in Manitoba and in The Maples.

As one who looks forward to working and retiring in Manitoba, I appreciate the improvements to health care our government continually undertakes. I appreciate the fact that The Maples has already and will continue to benefit from our government's investments in health care, home care, and the provision of more medical equipment throughout the province. I note with satisfaction that work on the new emergency department for Seven Oaks Hospital is well under way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the concerns I have heard while talking to my constituents concerns the issues around crime. I am pleased that our government will work to make our communities safer by adding more police officers and prosecutors to the justice system. I agree that we must call upon Ottawa to ask for tougher consequences for youth involved in serious crimes. But I am also pleased that our government will be expanding and creating new programs and opportunities for at-risk youth.

One of the commitments I made to my constituents during the last election campaign was the call for solutions from the community itself. We need to take our lead from the grass roots, from those most affected, and from those concerned with the security and safety of their families.

We must be proactive, not just reactive, when dealing with the issues of crime and public safety. We must assist families, providing supports for good parenting, and encouraging solid role models and

mentors for our youth. I take a look at the success of so many graduates of Maples Collegiate, and I would like to take this opportunity to invite successful grads to come back and provide a positive example for our youth. The importance of having solid role models is vital for our youth, and I think in a community like The Maples, we can provide many positive examples for our kids to follow.

Madam Deputy Speaker, tolerance and the acceptance of diversity in The Maples is a source of strength and a positive role model for all our communities. The Maples is a very diverse constituency with a number of linguistic groups, families with varied socio-economic backgrounds, and many, many hardworking people. It is a mosaic of newcomers and of more established families. I am pleased to say that The Maples enjoys the many benefits of immigration as immigrants help fill skill shortages and enrich our social and cultural fabric.

The richness of that fabric is reflected in the schools in my constituency. For example, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Maples Unity Group, now in its 12th year, which is a nationally recognized leader in the promotion of equality and in the fight against racism. Composed of students and staff at Maples Collegiate, the group also promotes peace through its many yearly activities. These include food drives, bringing speakers in to talk about racism, volunteering at homeless shelters, and participating in Remembrance Day ceremonies, among other activities. The results, I think, have been profound as The Maples is one of the most desirable communities to live in our province today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, strength through diversity can serve as a guidepost for the future. It was at the latest unity march in The Maples that a young student approached me and told me how proud she was that a member of the Indo-Canadian community had been elected to the government. She said that she wanted to follow in my footsteps and accordingly was going on to post-secondary education, studying law at university. These are the kinds of signals we want to hear from our youth. Inclusion, diversity, education, these are the building blocks for our youth and our future.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be sitting as a member of such a diverse and representative caucus as ours. I am a firm believer that we as a legislative body should mirror the wider society of which we are part. With members from so many differing cultural and socio-economic

backgrounds we are well poised to lead Manitoba forward.

To quote from an earlier Speech from the Throne by this government it should once again be emphasized that we Manitobans are different, one from another, in our origins, the colour of our skin, our languages and our political perspective, but we have built a society where those differences can be valued. We are united by our sense of community, by the welcome we offer newcomers and by our pride in our many ways of life.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our government is dedicated to inclusion and diversity. By including new Canadians and indeed all Manitobans in our hopes and deliberations I believe that we can guide a strong Manitoba into the future. I also believe that the Throne Speech outlines just how we can achieve that.

At the end I will like to quote the quotation from the Sikh holy book, *The Guru Granth Sahib*, written by the founder of the Sikh faith: we should have such a society that all the people feel included and no one should be left out; and the tenth Guru said: there is only one race, that is the human race.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

\*(15:50)

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** Madam Deputy Speaker, to be here in the Chamber today is a culmination of a long-time goal of mine, so I am very happy to be here.

I should just clear the air. First of all, and contrary to a rather bizarre press release issued Tuesday morning by the NDP party, I will not be part of the NDP swearing-in ceremony. I will sit on this side of the House.

First and foremost, I have to say that having my family here in attendance at our swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday was very significant for me. While I've always tried to put family ahead of business, having their support in reaching my goals is a very different perspective for me. Knowing that they are beside me as I take on a new challenge in life meant very much to me, and it is something that I will keep very close to me forever.

Of course, I need to thank my volunteers, and one of them is up in the gallery today, Madam Deputy Speaker. He's probably the youngest volunteer out here, but he's just been an excellent worker. Caleb Jones, thank you very much for your

help. My achieving the position of MLA was made possible by a large group of dedicated volunteers who worked very hard in many ways, especially by helping me assemble the largest nomination meeting ever held in Carman constituency on probably the iciest roads that anybody has ever seen. It was, again, these volunteers who helped me attain a larger majority than in the previous election, so it's very comforting to me that I have this group of volunteers around me.

This has been a three-year dream in the making in getting here, and I'm very privileged to have been given the opportunity and the support by many members throughout the whole constituency. We have a large constituency and I have support from all over. My constituency has big expectations of their member, expectations I plan to meet and exceed every day.

As a rural constituency, Carman faces many challenges that continue to be ignored by the current government. Right now, we have health care and roads in a competition, and it's a competition to see which can decay at the fastest rate. Our transportation system remains crippled from a road system that routinely faces restrictions and closures. Carman constituency faces two separate rail line abandonments, which further diminishes our ability to do commerce, and it will become even more difficult to maintain our current business environment as well as the hope of attracting any new business to our area.

It's just a complete lack of vision by this government that allows a rail line from Morris to Mariapolis to be abandoned and dismantled, sold to Brazil, where it's going to become a new rail line in Brazil that will haul corn, soybeans, meat and ethanol to port to compete directly with our farmers here at home. Something's wrong with this picture. Manitoba needs a government that's willing to take short-term risks for long-term gains for all parts of Manitoba, both rural and urban.

Our health facilities face a variety of challenges just like many other areas in Manitoba: aging structures, shortage of doctors, nurses. We have an acute shortage of health-care aides in our rural ridings, and this all contributes to the instability in the system.

The town of Carman faces an acute shortage of level 1 and level 2 facilities. The town of Carman has been told by the current government that they have no interest in building level 1 and level 2 facilities

because provincially there's an excess of those facilities. But averages don't count when you're a senior living in Carman, living in your own home, at risk, with no alternatives.

My goal of MLA for Carman is to be the biggest promoter of Carman constituency, and I've done this throughout the entire nomination process, through the election campaign. I bill myself as a big promoter of Carman constituency, and as a rural area, we've been hit very hard by out-migration of Manitobans. Many, many people have picked up and left our area, most not stopping in Winnipeg or Brandon but continuing to leave the province for good. Young families especially have left, and that's been very hard on our schools, on our health-care facilities, and the businesses which rely on the local business. It's put them in a very precarious position, and it is my goal and my job as an MLA to help turn this trend around and create an environment with jobs, housing, and opportunities in which people, young people with families, will have an incentive to stay, and that we can get young people and all people to move back into Carman constituency.

We have eight municipalities in our constituency, and I will work very close with them to effect improvements to our infrastructure, our roads, water and sewer. These upgrades are vital, not just for the town themselves, but for the very survival of our local communities.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Government should not just be creating public-sector jobs. Government should be creating an atmosphere through which business is allowed and encouraged to grow and thereby create long-term, stable employment.

So I, obviously, have my work cut out for me, but I will work tirelessly for Carman constituency so that whenever there is positive talk about Manitoba, Carman constituency will automatically come to mind.

Manitoba has been good to my family, and it is incumbent on me to work in those areas that need improving and to accentuate those areas in which Manitoba and Carman constituency, in particular, have so much to offer.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, you will find me fair-minded about positive growth and very tough and relentless on issues that I feel need to be addressed. I do not need 20 minutes of self-indulgence when

there's real work to be done. Let's get to work. Thank you.

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Speaker, I am most honoured to rise in the Chamber for the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba. Two months ago, if anyone had said that I would be standing here today before this historic and august body and presenting an inaugural speech, I would have said they were dreaming.

Well, dreams do come true, and I am filled with pride that the constituents of Rossmere have placed their trust and confidence in me to be their representative in the Legislature.

Rossmere is the home of my childhood, youth and adulthood, and it is a privilege beyond measure to serve the good people of the constituency.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to all the MLAs, new and veterans alike, and wish you all well in the work that lies ahead for all of us.

It is a great honour to stand before you today and to deliver my inaugural speech, but this opportunity would not be here without the efforts of many people. To say that our success in Rossmere was a team effort is an understatement. Our campaign office was outstanding, with Carolina, Breigh, Mat and Marilyn, and I thank you all for your hard work. I appreciated your warmth, your consideration, thoughtfulness, and grand sense of humour. And boy, you need that at times. I cannot think of another occasion where I was so well looked after. The volunteers often expressed to me their appreciation of your work. The fact that time and time again on short notice a volunteer would come forward speaks to the quality of your work and the relationships you built.

A hearty thank-you must go out to all the volunteers and the many friends who came out each day during the campaign. Your efforts went beyond a hundred percent to ensure success. I cannot speak highly enough of the many veteran Rossmere volunteers who came to help the rookie, and whose experience was of such value to the team.

My friends that stepped forward to be part of the effort to keep Rossmere orange and to support me were outstanding. Your willingness to be available on short notice and to take on any number of jobs was appreciated.

\* (16:00)

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the MLAs from Gimli and Lord Roberts, who took the time from their own campaigns to come out and provide support and advice for a first-time candidate. It was an excellent opportunity to get to know my NDP colleagues and to learn from their experience. It also demonstrates a selflessness that I see on a daily basis among all my NDP colleagues.

The opportunity to run in Rossmere was a gift that I often say was handed to me on a silver platter. It was a gift because it is home, but also because I have the honour to follow Harry Schellenberg who served Rossmere with distinction and dedication. Harry worked hard for his constituency and built a relationship with his constituents that was evident as I went door-to-door. They knew they could count on him and that he was accessible. He has left a legacy in Rossmere, and I look forward to continuing the high standard that Harry set. It is also a standard that the community expects.

The citizens of Rossmere also articulated a confidence in the record of the NDP government and in the leadership of the Premier (Mr. Doer). Time and time again, they expressed appreciation for the commitment this government has made to continue to move forward on issues important to all Manitobans: health care, education, safety, Hydro was one that came up very often, and creating a future for young people and for families in Manitoba.

I'm honoured to have been chosen to be part of the NDP team in whom Manitobans have entrusted their futures. It is an awesome responsibility, but one that I look forward to shouldering with each of you. I also appreciate the willingness that constituents of Rossmere demonstrated to open the doors for a new face with a new style to work on their behalf. That willingness and trust shown to me is truly humbling and is a responsibility I take seriously.

I am excited about this next chapter in my life, and I commit to the constituents of Rossmere and to all Manitobans the same degree of enthusiasm and energy that I've brought to all of my endeavours. Rossmere is a community with a long history from the McLeods and the McDonalds and MacKays of the Kildonan settlers in the 1800s to the arrival of the Mennonites in the 1920s. But the history continues to evolve, and it's a community that is shaped by the new people who move in and those who live in the community. The bicycle trails that I cycled as a child are lively neighbourhoods with an abundance of

green space. The schools I attended are examples of excellence and scholarship.

Rossmere is a community that is vibrant and full of life. From active seniors to young families and new Canadians, Rossmere displays a rich diversity in culture, ages and backgrounds. It's a community that takes pride in itself and which I am proud to call home.

Now, I would be remiss in my remarks if I did not thank my parents. As immigrants to Canada nearly 60 years ago, they came with little except the determination and drive to create a safe home in their chosen country for their family. My parents have always been an example for me of the possibilities that life holds with hard work, determination, faith in God, and a good dose of humour. According to them, I could do anything I set my mind to and even if disappointments came along, they were taken in stride and used as learning opportunities.

When I became a teacher, they were very proud—teaching is an honourable calling in the Mennonite community. With my election as part of the NDP team, even though my father is no longer with us, I know he would be proud of me. I know my mother is proud of me, that I am part of a team that values social justice, equality, and opportunities for all.

My teaching career has spanned over 30 years and in that time, I've had the great pleasure and opportunity to work with many inspiring educators, students, and parents. Although my role was as a teacher, throughout my career I have also been a learner, and I've grown through the many associations and contacts that I have been privileged to make. My perspective has been broadened through my students and their parents who have shared with me their stories, their diverse backgrounds and cultures, and I know that all the experiences and all the people with whom I've had the privilege of working will prove to be an invaluable resource in the work that lies ahead.

During the campaign, as I met thousands of constituents, I discovered that the commitments made by our government resonated across the board. Rossmere is a community with a large number of seniors who are interested and engaged in their community. Our conversations revolved around ensuring accessible health care and home care so that they might remain independent. I spoke with young families who talked about the importance of a solid public education system for their children and a future that offered them affordable post-secondary

opportunities. The wish of each and every one of those families is to grow and prosper here in Manitoba.

This Throne Speech affirms the commitment of our recently returned government to seeing that progress is made on these issues of importance to Rossmere residents and to all Manitobans.

I appreciate this opportunity to thank the people of Rossmere and to acknowledge the important contributions of my colleagues, friends, and campaign team. Thank you as well, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today as a newly elected representative from the great constituency of Emerson.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone in their election win and to you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment. I also wish to applaud the work of Mr. Jack Penner, the former MLA for the Emerson constituency. Jack's service of 19 years was truly an amazing level of commitment.

I wish to recognize the tremendous support of my family, particularly my brother Gordon, who helped to make it possible for me to pursue this wonderful opportunity and to serve this great province. A big thank-you is also in order to those that helped in my election campaign. I cannot say enough about the support my team provided, from my manager and my CFO to my secretary, media personnel, fundraisers, and the young lady who accompanied me door-to-door. I'm honoured by their unwavering support and confidence.

As residents in the Emerson region, my wife, Rose Ellen, and I own and operate the Walking Plow Charolais ranch, and we also grain-farm in the Woodmore district. As an MLA, I plan to build on my background of public service at a local and provincial level through various organizations. I was a founding member of the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, a member of the Manitoba Beef Commission, a councillor with the Rural Municipality of Franklin, the chair of the St. Pierre vet board, a member of a biodiesel committee as a representative for the Keystone Agricultural Producers Association.

One particular level of service is a source of pride for me: it is in goals for the economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture in the Emerson region. Mr. Speaker, composed of farmers and R.M. council members from three

municipalities, the Stuartburn/Piney Agricultural Development Association, commonly known and referred to as SPADA, works closely with Manitoba agriculture to bring new and innovative technologies to the area through demonstrations and test plots. Our efforts introduced water-quality testing, sustainable use of natural fertilizers, and testing of application equipment.

With the end of the Crow benefit, SPADA quickly realized that Manitoba would become the province for livestock feeding. Dictated by the additional cost of grain shipments, it was also an opportunity to add value to one of Manitoba's key resources. The Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, Department of Agriculture, Manitoba Conservation, the PFRA, and many other partners helped us to research supply, application, and ultimate environmental impact of livestock manure as a natural fertilizer. After five years, the published results proved that agriculture in Manitoba could be expanded in an environmentally sustainable manner while adding economic value to rural communities through jobs, a larger tax base, and opportunities to keep young people in their communities.

Most recently I had the privilege of working on the formation of the Prairies East Sustainable Agricultural Initiative or PESAI. Established by the Department of Agriculture, this organization works to promote development in eastern Manitoba. As a SPADA representative, I helped craft the PESAI constitution and planned the first annual general meeting. PESAI mirrors the efforts of SPADA and has proven to be a rewarding means of serving the Emerson region. Such grassroots initiatives have led to many positive results for both local economies and the environment. They clearly demonstrate what can be achieved when farmers and landowners are trusted to make the right decisions when it comes to their business and their impact on the surrounding ecosystem.

\* (16:10)

It is of great concern to me that agriculture as a key driver of this province's economy received barely a mention in yesterday's Throne Speech. Agricultural policies in Manitoba today do not meet the needs of today's entrepreneurs who understand that farming is a business, not only a way of life. The government's top-down approach through restrictive land use regulations and arbitrary moratoriums can only confine economic development, not encourage it. Too often over the past eight years we have seen

this government exert control over more and more of the agricultural industry, whether through regulations, moratoriums or market dictates through levies on livestock sales. None of these approaches demonstrate any trust in farmers to govern their operations. Producers are natural environmentalists because they need to be. Their livelihood depends on healthy soil and clean water. Through the organizations I have worked with, we have shown that the expertise exists at home to preserve water quality and soil health.

During the nomination race in the election many issues were raised. The Emerson constituency is large and very diverse. At one end, because of the diversity of their economy, residents are enjoying unprecedented growth in spite of the NDP. At the other end, where incentives depend on agriculture and lumber businesses, Manitobans have suffered greatly since BSE and the downturn in the pulp and paper industry. Beyond agriculture, the constituency of Emerson continues to face many other challenges in terms of essential services and economic strength. Many of them are direct results of unfulfilled promises and mismanagement by the provincial government for the past eight years. It is these challenges that have brought me to the Legislature to serve.

Emerson is home to six international ports of entry and is a gateway to western Canada, the largest port west of Fort Erie. However, the transportation infrastructure leading into Manitoba is deplorable and a deterrent to economic growth. The bridge over the Red River at Letellier is a perfect example. This bridge is part of a major artery for the rural municipality of Franklin and to the east for producers to market their products. However, it has been under weight restrictions for over a year, despite being earmarked for replacement 10 years ago. Both a bridge closure and another outright collapse of a bridge in Dominion City only add to the illustration of the seriousness of this issue.

Rural health care remains present in everyone's mind in Emerson as well. There are two hospitals now where there once were three. Emerson Hospital was to be replaced with a new building 10 years ago. That didn't happen but a considerable amount of money was spent by this administration on an older structure before it was closed. Like other regions in rural Manitoba, we face challenges in recruiting and retaining doctors and their support staff. Emergency rooms are operating sporadically at best. Ambulance service is of the utmost importance to rural

communities and sadly has fallen short in Emerson constituency. In the town of Emerson an ambulance was regulated out of existence. In the extreme south-east, in the R.M. of Piney, wait times for ambulance services can be anywhere from one hour to 90 minutes. The nearest hospital to this community is in the United States and unfortunately, since 9/11, has resulted in a loss of a 24-hour service or access of the border as it closes at night with a steel gate.

As the MLA from Emerson, I want to ensure that the needs and the efforts of my constituents do not go unrecognized. Their interests are my interests and it is an honour to represent them in this Chamber. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise today in the House and thank you to my fellow members on both sides of the House for being present for my first speech. Congratulations to all of you, new and returning. I look forward to working with you and to continue building on the great work that this government has done over the past two terms.

A friend and mentor told me early on in the campaign that people will respect you just for throwing your name into the hat. He told me that anyone who has ever run in an election will recognize how difficult it is and what a sacrifice one makes, win or lose.

And so I stand before you today to congratulate you on winning but also to extend those wishes to those who did not and to thank them for giving Manitobans the opportunity to participate in a democratic election.

I stand before you proud and humbled, for no one gets to this Chamber without a lot of support of friends, family, peers and hundreds of volunteers. My particular journey began with the ongoing support of the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). Her strength, courage and wisdom continue to inspire me, but it is her role as mother and ability to balance a challenging career with family that I look to her for guidance on.

We are making history in Manitoba. A third majority government for the honourable First Minister (Mr. Doer) and a record number of women in the House. I know we will bring a unique perspective to the issues that matter to Manitobans. And just as our mothers and grandmothers did before



us, we are paving the way for our daughters to dream. I credit the honourable Minister of Health with giving me the courage to live this dream.

Throughout the campaign and my first couple of weeks here I have benefited from the assistance of many of the staff and colleagues: the honourable First Minister for his guidance and patience, to the ministers of Finance, Labour and Immigration, Advanced Education, Literacy, and Healthy Living, along with the honourable members from Wolseley, Minto and Transcona. I owe a debt of gratitude for all of your support and encouragement over the past few weeks

I extend my gratitude to Winnipeg City Councillor Dan Vandal for his support. A good team is a result of good leadership. It is an honour to be a member of this government and to have an opportunity to learn from people whom I hold in the highest regard.

Let me continue with expressing my gratitude to the countless numbers of volunteers and staff who helped me during the campaign. Their dedication and commitment is inspiring, and I thank them for bringing out the best in me.

I could not imagine facing the task before me without the support of my family. My three daughters, Hayden, Avery and Bronwyn who are the best cheerleaders anyone could possibly have—*[interjection]* When I told them I was planning to run for office they had complete confidence in me and were convinced I would be able to run faster than anyone I was up against. It takes a village to raise a child or, in my case, my in-laws, Harv and Bev who are always on hand to help out. But I have to apologize to my parents, Jim and Bonnie. It is not easy to watch your child take on risk, but they always find a way to support my endeavours once the ground stops shaking.

I would not have the courage to take on such risk without the support of my husband, Trevor. He is happy to remain on the sidelines, pushing me toward the spotlight. But it is his wisdom and insight that I turn to for guidance.

Above all, I would like to thank the people of Southdale. I take my responsibility to my constituents very seriously. I met most of them on the doorstep and many more in the grocery store, at the park and at school events. I look forward to serving Southdale and to watching our community grow and flourish.

I spoke earlier of my own risk of leaving a full-time job and, in fact, leaving my career in television to run for MLA, but the people of Southdale have also signed on for a new beginning. Prior to this 2007 election, this seat has never been held by a member of our party.

J'aimerais reconnaître le grand nombre de Francophones qui demeurent dans la circonscription de Southdale et les remercier pour la riche diversité culturelle qu'ils apportent à notre communauté. Au cours des quatre prochaines années, je m'engage à améliorer ma connaissance de la langue française, non seulement pour mieux servir la population française à Southdale mais aussi pour pouvoir vivre davantage en français avec mes trois filles, qui fréquentent une école d'immersion française, et avec mon mari, qui travaille pour la télévision de Radio-Canada.

Je m'engage aussi à offrir un service dans les deux langues officielles à tous ceux qui prennent contact avec mon bureau de circonscription.

#### **Translation**

*I would like to acknowledge the large number of Francophones who live in the constituency of Southdale, and thank them for the rich cultural diversity they bring to our community. Over the next four years I promise to improve my knowledge of the French language, not only to serve the French population of Southdale better but also so that I may live more in French with my three daughters who attend a French Immersion school, and with my husband, who works for CBC French television.*

*I also promise to provide service in both official languages to all persons who enter into contact with my constituency office.*

\* (16:20)

#### **English**

Southdale is made up of several smaller communities, including Windsor Park, Niakwa Park, Niakwa Place, Southdale, Island Lakes, Royalwood, Southland Park, the soon-to-be-built Sage Creek, as well as areas outside the Perimeter. We are linked by more than just a line on the constituency map. We share many of the same resources from schools and day cares to community centres. Throughout those activities our children have formed friendships that cross those invisible boundaries, and I know because I spend most of my weekends driving my children to birthday parties around the constituency.

Southdale is recognized for its lifestyle. Many of us are living the Canadian dream. We own beautiful homes, our children attend excellent schools, and in most cases such as my own we live in harmony with our neighbours. Many of you may think of Southdale as a place of abundance, and it's true. We have a lot to be grateful for, but there are challenges within our community. There are different degrees of economic success and people who need our help. And while I don't expect to have all the answers, and I know it's unrealistic to promise a solution for every problem, I do promise to listen and to do what I can to ensure that everyone in our community has the same opportunity for success that my children will have.

Southdale is one of the fastest growing communities in Manitoba, and this government recognizes that as Southdale continues to grow we need to constantly reassess the community's needs. Young families are moving in while older residents continue to live in the community in their own homes, thanks in part to our province's home-care program, recognized as the best in the country. With additional expansions to come, 2,000 more people in Manitoba will be able to live in dignity at home and share their wisdom and experience with the village.

My husband and I moved our family back home to Manitoba in 2002. At the time we were raising 18-month-old triplets on our own in Montréal. We decided we needed the help of our families. It was the best choice we ever made. Our parents have been such a help to us and such a positive influence in our children's lives. But I did not expect my life to improve so drastically with the move. My husband and I found opportunity in our careers that would not have been available in Montréal. Winnipeg offers us a lifestyle we couldn't afford in many other cities. Here in Winnipeg we can afford to buy a lovely home, still have season tickets to a renowned ballet company, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and still have enough left over to pay for dinner in one of our outstanding restaurants.

I lived in Ottawa for 10 years when my father was transferred there during my high school years, and after that I spent 10 years in Montréal, but Manitoba remained my home. I can say with experience and my own authority that neither Montréal nor Ottawa can compare with life here in Manitoba.

And it only gets better. I have found great opportunity for my career here in Winnipeg and, thanks to this government, 4,000 more people will

find opportunity to train in their chosen field with apprenticeships. As a journalist for 10 years I worked and saw many changes in that industry. The Internet and the need for news on demand means more people are making a living in new media. And, with this government providing a 40 percent tax credit to the new-media sector, more of our young people will be finding high-paying jobs in that growing new industry right here.

Now, I say young people only because after you reach a certain age it can be a little hard to take on new technology. I got my first cellphone just a few weeks ago, and other than forgetting to bring it with me most times, I have figured it out, but now it looks like I'm going to have to figure out a BlackBerry too. Some of our young people will feel the need to explore beyond our provincial boundaries, but I have many friends who, like my husband and I, have gone out into the great big world only to find there's no place like home. I met many people on the doorstep who have returned to Manitoba, and many, many more young people who plan to stay after graduating and begin their careers and start their families here at home. Those who do stay in Manitoba upon graduating can take advantage of a 60 percent tax rebate on tuition, something that can go a long way toward saving for that first home and putting down roots in a community you belong in.

As a former member of the media, I've had unique opportunities to go behind closed doors and to speak with so many of our community leaders. I've also been at so many events celebrating new initiatives, particularly in the areas of health care. As a parent, I have visited a number of emergency rooms across the province, thankfully for nothing more serious than the odd broken collarbone or ear infection, but I have always been impressed with the level of expertise and patient care my family has received. Because my daughters are only six years old, there are no doubt many more sports injuries in our future, and I'm sure I will get to know all too well the new south Winnipeg Women and Children's Health Centre. In Southdale, we're fortunate to be served by so many talented medical professionals at the St. Boniface Hospital, and this new centre will provide even more access and choice for families.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Madam Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

I stand here today, surrounded by mentors, women and men who I've long admired. I'm keenly aware that as a mother of three daughters, I am

teaching them what it means to be a woman, a wife, and an active member of society. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly and try to live my life as an appropriate role model, but in that role I have responsibilities beyond my own children. As an elected official, I must stand up for the rights of our children's children to inherit a cleaner, healthier environment. While our federal government makes excuses for not meeting Kyoto targets, I am proud to say this government is enshrining Kyoto targets in legislation, the first province to do so.

I am proud of this government's environmental record of supporting green energy from wind farms, hydro dams, and ethanol. While these environmental projects are exciting, our government is committed to working with our Aboriginal communities to create legislation that protects East Side First Nations' rights to create and implement land-use plans.

In closing, let me say, once again, what an honour it is to be here today, to be representing the people of Southdale, and to be serving Manitobans. I am proud to stand alongside my new fellow Democrats. I eagerly anticipate the next four years and know that as the province continues to move forward and grow, so too, shall I. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Acting Speaker, I rise to put a few comments on the Speech from the Throne. First of all, I would like to begin by saying thank you to the residents, constituents of River Heights who have considered to re-elect me to the Chamber to work on their behalf—to work on their behalf, not in the government, but as an active MLA working to keep the government and the opposition accountable as an MLA.

**An Honourable Member:** When do you start?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Right now, you watch. And I've already been working.

The dismal record of the NDP, sadly, Madam Acting Speaker, the Throne Speech which we were subjected to yesterday was a sad testament of the NDP government's ability to make hundreds of promises during an election and to put very little into a Throne Speech. There was virtually no substance in the Throne Speech yesterday. Vague comments, rather than any follow-through on the hundreds and hundreds of promises that were made during the election. What a dismal performance we got from a newly elected government.

What was striking, Madam Acting Speaker, was that Lake Winnipeg was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech. There was something about water, but there was nothing, no mention of Lake Winnipeg. One of the commitments that we heard from the NDP during the election was that they wanted a sewage treatment plant that was going to treat nitrogen and phosphorus. We heard that from you. We said we would have a treatment plant that treated phosphorus and get the job done.

The NDP have done zero in eight years to clean up Lake Winnipeg. They have done virtually nothing on the sewage treatment in Winnipeg, and we have lots of phosphorus going day by day from the city of Winnipeg into Lake Winnipeg. Yet Lake Winnipeg was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech. It was a sad, sad Throne Speech that did not mention the most important lake in all of our province, a treasure, a pearl, a wonderful, wonderful place which is deteriorating under the NDP, which has got increased algal blooms, increased pollution with higher levels of phosphorus, and yet there's not even a reference to cleaning up Lake Winnipeg.

The government, in, I think, about 2003, if I recall, promised that they would have Lake Winnipeg cleaned up in three years. Well, we're now four years later and it's not been done. I think that the government was talking about doing something with sewage treatment then, but they haven't done it, and they forgot to even mention it in the Throne Speech.

The second item that I want to talk about is the city of Winnipeg, the biggest city. For decades, delays and debates and, you know, uncertainty from NDP and Tory government has meant that we still don't have a rapid transit system in the city of Winnipeg. You have stalled and stalled and stalled, and we still don't have a rapid transit system in our biggest city. You look at what makes a global city these days and one of the keystone qualities of a global city is the presence of a highly sophisticated rapid transit system. Because of this government and previous Conservative governments, we don't have a rapid transit system in Winnipeg. Our biggest city, our great city is not so great because it doesn't have a rapid transit system, which is so badly needed for all Winnipeggers, particularly for students, and to make it a senior-friendly city, and to make it an environmental friendly city where people don't have to burn up as much in the way of greenhouse gases. Failure after failure after failure in this respect, and the NDP have not been able to deliver. In fairness, neither did the Conservatives deliver before.

The third thing I want to talk about is health care. We are all too well aware that the government was rated last year as the worst of all provinces in health care from the Conference Board of Canada, a dismal showing for a government which has said that health care is its top priority. If they can do no better with their top priority, you know, where are we with the other priorities? Well, we know they are the worst in Canada when it comes to auto thefts. We have the worst high school drop-out rate in all of Canada. It is a sorry record. The NDP must be pleased they've got some good spin doctors to cover up the sorry record, but it's too bad that they have not been able to do better for Manitobans and for Manitoba.

You might, I suppose, be able to dismiss one major report by a very credible organization, the Conference Board of Canada, but these findings are repeated again and again. The most recent May report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information talks about the picture across Canada. Let me refer you to the situation with hip fractures and surgeries after hip fractures. Time and time again members of the government have got up in this Chamber and said what a good job we are doing with hip fractures. We are doing a wonderful job with hip operations. We are doing a wonderful job, we are told, with hip replacements. But the record, sadly, as exposed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, says otherwise. The percentage of patients receiving surgery after a hip fracture, the same or the next day, is the worst in Canada: 53 percent only of patients with a hip fracture get their surgery the same or the next day.

Compare that to other provinces, the average of the other provinces is 65 percent. In British Columbia it's 71 percent; in Alberta it's 67 percent; in Ontario it's 64 percent; in Québec it's 62 percent. We are the worst in Canada, if you have a hip fracture and you want to get quick access to surgery to deal with your hip fracture.

Manitobans have to be waiting the longest in pain, but it's worse than that. The report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information goes into in-depth documentation. What do they show? That if you don't get your hip surgery quickly you are at higher risk of complications and of dying. It is a surgical procedure that should be available within the first 24 hours, but even if you allow not the same day, the next day, or the day after, we still have by far and away the poorest performance when it comes to access to surgery after a hip fracture.

It is a sad and sorry record that this government has given to our province. This is not just on auto thefts or high school drop-outs. It extends to worker safety. We have the worst time-lost-to-injury rate in all of Canada, by far, the worst record in terms of worker safety. The lowest proportion of new jobs in the country; we have been hearing those statistics day after day, month after month, year after year. It's too bad that the NDP have not been able to do better.

\* (16:40)

Indeed, it was because of these big problems under the NDP that we laid out during the election a comprehensive approach in order to address many of these deficiencies which are sadly troubling Manitoba under the present NDP poor management. We laid out a plan to take Manitoba to become a have-province, not even mentioned by the NDP, doesn't even appear to be a goal that the NDP strive for. We laid out a plan in terms of investments, innovation, tax changes, that would allow Manitoba to move forward, and to move forward substantially better than is happening at the moment; making changes to the payroll tax which has probably driven a hundred thousand jobs out of Manitoba, the NDP payroll tax; making changes to address some of the serious environmental issues that we've got.

For all their claims, the climate change and greenhouse gases have not been dealt with as well as they should have been. Greenhouse gas emissions have gone up and continue to go up under the NDP.

Lake Winnipeg: We laid out a plan to accelerate the treatment of phosphorus in the sewage coming from Winnipeg so that we would drastically reduce the phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg. We laid out a plan to ban the use of phosphorus in dishwasher detergents and a variety of other changes which could have been implemented. Indeed, we will be reintroducing a bill to eliminate phosphorus from dishwasher detergents, and we hope that the NDP will finally see the light and support positive measures for change instead of NDP stalling tactics.

We laid out plans to address the problems in education, improving the quality, approaches which would allow us to address the problems of high drop-out rates in too many of our schools. Clearly, this is one of the worst things that could possibly be happening when young people are dropping out or, as some say, being pushed out of school because there isn't the right environment to keep them there. When we have the worst record in all of Canada, in Manitoba, it should be addressed. It should not be

just talked about and addressed in a token way; it should be addressed in a meaningful way.

We talked about communities, about responses to crime that would be quick and meaningful and would use provincial measures rather than blaming Ottawa, effective measures that would improve the situation here. These sorts of changes, sadly, are not the sorts of changes we have seen in eight years under the NDP. Indeed, as my colleague, the MLA for Inkster, has pointed out, the local community justice committees have been sadly neglected by the NDP, so sadly neglected that young people with small offences are not even coming to the committee. They are not even being paid attention to, and so these young people go on to commit larger and larger crimes because they are not being picked up and addressed and supported and helped to mend their ways within the community.

We laid out a plan to improve the health care system in Manitoba. Sadly, the NDP have accepted a situation where too many people wait too long, and this is not acceptable. There are ways to make changes, and we laid out the changes that are needed in terms of family practice and specialist care, legislative changes that can start to bring us to a framework where we have a system which is more accountable. Those changes that we have brought forward before have not been supported, which is too bad, because we continue to stall and have problems and get into more and more difficulties with access to care in Manitoba.

I should add that one of the problems here is that the NDP system has failed dismally in putting patients and their family physicians first. It is a sad reality that the NDP, for eight years, have put the bureaucracy first. In putting the bureaucracy first they have sadly bypassed and done end runs and marginalized family physicians. The result has been that the front line care workers who are marginalized are not happy, are too often leaving or not staying. The NDP just don't seem to know what to do.

It has been a poor situation. That's, of course, why people like Dr. Craig Hildahl stepped forward with ideas, stepped forward because he was so disappointed at what was happening under the NDP. He could see from the inside the problems that were there, that the marginalization of family physicians under the NDP has meant that patients are last, not first, and the bureaucracy is first, not last, a sad reality that needs to change.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

The problems, let us bring forward problems of medical errors. There has been quite a bit in the news the last several days about Tracy Weber and her mother, a mother who arrived at Concordia Hospital with an acute emergency urological situation. Sadly, things did not go well, and her mother went into shock. There were problems which those at Concordia Hospital would not admit, but which, thankfully, the College of Physicians and Surgeons reviewed, and pointed out that there were systemic problems occurring under the NDP. Lots of other people could have pointed that out, but the College of Physicians and Surgeons has the credibility, has the background, the investigative capability to point out that there were systemic problems, and they did so.

The problem, though, is that Tracy Weber and her family have been trying for some time, not only to get an acknowledgment of the problem, which, finally, the College of Physicians and Surgeons did, to say there were systemic problems, but also to get an apology for what happened. Sadly, sadly, they have never had that apology. We will be introducing the Apology Act, and the NDP would do well to support it. The NDP would do well to look at Sorry Works, a program which has been used in the United States and which can be used in conjunction with the Apology Act, so that people who have been, sadly, hurt as a result of medical errors, or families, can have that apology and can be treated with respect, as they should be treated.

Fundamentally, we want to move the system forward. We want to make the changes that will mean that we don't have these errors, these problems occurring in the kind of frequency, the kind of way, that we've had them under the NDP. That's where we need to go and that's what we were talking about during the election.

\* (16:50)

**An Honourable Member:** How are you doing so far?

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, I can tell you that after the election I had one of the Cabinet ministers come to me and say, well, your program was so good that we're actually going to use some of your ideas. You know, we at least have an acknowledgement that we've got a good program, and we've had it from a lot of people. The reality is that it's a recognition that there've been major failures under the NDP for many years.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, you got us, Jon.

**Mr. Gerrard:** It's about time that the MLA for Kildonan recognized that his government has failed so terribly, so badly.

**An Honourable Member:** Where?

**Mr. Gerrard:** One of the areas which is of vital importance, one of the vital roles of government is to make sure that the most vulnerable people in our society are well looked after and supported and have opportunities. Certainly, as we have found again and again, at the housing operations run by the NDP government, that there are a lot of problems, that, sadly, the housing operations being run by the NDP government are not among the best but they are among the worst places. We found Manitoba housing units where there were huge problems with drugs and prostitutions and safety and arson and this and that. The reality is that the housing operations run by the provincial government—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** —under the responsibility of the provincial government, are among the worst places to stay. Instead of treating those who are least well-off, who are most disadvantaged in all of society, well, the NDP, sadly, have left them, too many of them, in places which are not the best but the worst places to live in Manitoba.

It's a sad reality, and the NDP need to acknowledge it and need to recognize that they can only blame the federal government for so long, that at some point they have to take responsibility after eight years in office for what's actually happening in Manitoba. This is why I was elected to make sure that the NDP are not ready to get away with things, as they've been doing in the past.

One of the areas where, clearly, there is a vast room for improvement is in the conduct of elections. We'll be bringing in a bill tomorrow to talk about this. Certainly, in the conduct of nomination meetings, when we're talking about NDP bullying, intimidation, there is a huge room to improve.

So, Mr. Speaker, given these circumstances, I now move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

*THAT the Motion be amended by adding at the end of item (g) the following words:*

(h) the government's failure to address the fact that Manitoba has the worst high school drop out rate of all provinces;

(i) the government's failure to be able to deliver quick access to surgery after a hip fracture so that Manitoba now has the worst record of all provinces;

(j) the government's inadequate approach to improving the Provincial Nominee Program.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux)—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**An Honourable Member:** No, read it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Read it? Okay.

(h) the government's failure to address the fact that Manitoba has the worst high school drop out rate of all provinces;

(i) the government's failure to be able to deliver quick access to surgery after a hip fracture so that Manitoba now has the worst record of all provinces;

(j) the government's inadequate approach to improving the Provincial Nominee Program.

The subamendment is in order. We will now debate the subamendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I thought maybe what I'd do is take an opportunity just to talk about democracy.

Democracy, Mr. Speaker, I believe is something which some members quite possibly might take for granted. I would suggest to you that just because we happen to live in Canada and in the province of Manitoba, quite often, you know, it might take a trip abroad where you get a better appreciation of just how wonderful of a country we actually live in, and how very important it is that we maintain the democratic values.

We need to move forward, Mr. Speaker, and try to leave the system better than when you first entered into it. This Premier has failed, and he has failed miserably, when it comes to making Manitoba a better, a more democratic province. In fact this is one of the issues that ultimately led to me running back in 2003. It was because this Premier brought in

legislation that he knew would have a crippling effect on opposition parties. His party was in a good position to accept the legislation and pass the legislation, thereby putting more limitations on opposition.

I genuinely believe that this Premier is not a friend of true, positive democratic reform. He knows the lines. In opposition for 11 years, he knows what to do in order to minimize government accountability. I take great pride in the fact of being a thorn in the side of this government.

For those of you who would like to see 57 members all of one political party, I would suggest to you that that is not a healthy situation. Manitobans want healthy government. They want a government that's going to be held accountable. The way in which you have a government that's going to be held accountable is you need to have healthy political parties. That might not fit the agenda of each and every member inside this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you that Manitobans as a whole want healthy democracy. They want healthy accountability.

This Premier has been very successful in manipulating, in changing laws that ultimately give an advantage to his governing political party. There is. You know, all you have to do, and I use it as an example, take a look at the 2003 provincial election. Let me suggest to you, if you take a look at how much money the NDP spent on advertising, how does that compare to 2003 for the opposition parties?

Take the Conservatives, take the Liberals, add them together, double it, and you still spent more. You still spent more. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they had the money in the bank. They knew the legislation and the law that was going to pass.

The Premier says, well, we don't want union and corporate donations. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd love to see this Premier debate this issue in any forum that's open to the public, because this Premier will lose. You will lose the debate because it's artificial, it's superficial. The impact of your legislative changes had a crippling effect on the opposition parties. It's not fair legislation. It's not fair.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Look at what happens in the province of Québec, or in central Canada, and the government seems to take pride in it.

Mr. Speaker, what they should be doing is they should be reflecting on some of the members' statements, the new members, when they said it's a privilege—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have 26 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, June 7, 2007**

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