

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, October 26, 2011**

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

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

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PETITIONS**

**Newborn Universal Hearing Screening Program**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

More than three in 1,000 newborns are born with educationally significant hearing loss, but Manitoba's current hearing screening program does not allow for every child to be screened.

Without early detection, children are more likely to develop poor language–speech and language skills and also encounter social and emotional difficulties, which leads to poor academic performance.

Early diagnosis of hearing loss in newborns can make a considerable difference in a child's development because newborns can be provided with effective programs and support that foster developmental success.

While most other developed countries and many Canadian provinces have a newborn screening–hearing screening program, Manitoba is lagging behind. There are only a handful of screening programs in the province, while all other newborns can only be tested if they have risk factors of hearing loss or if parents specifically request a test.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors to consider implementing a universal

hearing screening program accessible to parents of all newborns in Manitoba.

This petition is signed by N. Yoks, M. Celere, V. Mikolayenko and many, many other concerned Manitobans.

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

**PTH 5–Reducing Speed Limit**

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Concerns continue to be raised about the number of motor vehicle accidents at the intersection of PTH 5, PR 276 and at the intersection of PTH 5 and PR 68.

The Rural Municipality of Ste. Rose and the town of Ste. Rose have both raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about the current speed limit on the portion of PTH 5 in the vicinity of Ste. Rose du Lac.

Other stakeholders, including the Ste. Rose General Hospital, Ste. Rose and Laurier fire departments, East Parkland Medical Group and the Ste. Rose and District Community Resource Council, have also suggested the lowering of the current 100-kilometre-an-hour speed limit on a portion of PTH 5 may help to reduce the potential for collisions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider the importance of reducing the speed limit on PTH 5 to 80 kilometres an hour in the vicinity of the town of Ste. Rose from the west side of the Turtle River Bridge to the south side of the access to the Ste. Rose Auction Mart to help better protect motorist safety.

This petition is signed by B. Kujanpaa, K. Wilkinson, D. Vandepoele and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### Coulter Bridge

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

And the background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by S. Temple, M. Temple, D. Renwick and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

### Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by M. Brisebois, K. Dokken and M. Smetana and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

\* (13:40)

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The petition was signed by the following: M. Van Osch, M. Chatel, R. Harder and many more fine Manitobans.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today His Excellency, Dr. Georg Witschel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Canada, and Mr. Paul Kammerloch, the Honourary Consul for Germany. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you.

Also for the information of members of the Assembly, we have seated in the public gallery from Tec Voc High School, 25 grade 12 law students under the direction of Ms. Kathleen Mira. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member—Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan). On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Crocus Investment Fund Premier's Accountability

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, this morning, about seven years after the collapse of the Crocus Investment Fund, the Manitoba Securities Commission announced that they had arrived at a settlement with respect to the Crocus fiasco.

Premier may recall that he was the minister responsible for Crocus at the time that it was run into the ground. This morning, the announcement indicated that the directors of Crocus have been banned from serving on public boards for a period of one further year. So we now see, even though it's mild, that there's been some accountability for those directors who had inside information about what was

happening at the fund but failed to disclose it to the public.

Given that the Premier, as Finance Minister and Crocus minister at the time, was in the identical position as these directors, will he acknowledge today that he deserves to be held accountable as well?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** The member from Fort Whyte and Leader of the Opposition will also know that the losses that were incurred by the Crocus Fund occurred when he was working for the previous Conservative government, losses of \$35 million that occurred during when the Conservative government was in office, and that was one of the central reasons that the Crocus Fund experienced the difficulties it did. So I look forward to the member acknowledging that and taking responsibility for that \$35 million of losses.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, of all of the completely false statements that this Premier has knowingly made over the past few months, I think this one may take the cake, Mr. Speaker.

He has said in the House, knowing that it's completely false, that the losses took place under the previous government. The reality is that knowledge of those losses started to take place according to the auditor's report around 2000. There were warnings that started to come up to the board following that time. As Minister of Finance, he was the first Cabinet-level official to be warned of the problems at Crocus, the very first Cabinet-level official to be warned. He then wrote a memo to his own Cabinet in 2001 saying it was headed to a liquidity crisis. He then allowed innocent Manitobans to continue to invest for a further two years after writing his secret memo to Cabinet.

Rather than spreading—throwing mud based on falsehoods today, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier acknowledge today that he is every bit as responsible as those directors who today settled with the Securities Commission for failing to warn the public that this was a bad investment for Manitobans?

**Mr. Selinger:** I know the member opposite likes to play the role of judge, jury and prosecutor role, none of which—for which he is qualified, but the reality is there was an Auditor General's report done on this, a very thorough one, which indicated when the losses occurred, and they also indicated that the government of the day, which was us when we were the government, was neither responsible for the

performance or the valuation of the fund. That was clearly stated in the Auditor General's report. The member opposite knows when the bad investments were made and under which government they occurred, and he should take responsibility for that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report did not have access to the Cabinet memo that was subsequently leaked which showed that this former Finance minister wrote to his Cabinet colleagues two years before the fund stopped trading, saying, and I quote, that the fund is headed for a liquidity crisis. He wrote that memo to his Cabinet colleagues with full knowledge of where the fund was going and allowed Manitobans innocently to continue to invest in that fund for a further two years.

And it's not me that's being judge and jury, it's the Securities Commission—Securities Commission, today, which said that there was fault on the part of the directors who had inside information, and they have now been banned from sitting on public boards for another year. That's today that the Securities Commission said they were at fault. This Premier was in the same position as those directors. The Auditor General was not in a position to know about the Premier's knowledge at the time the report was done.

Will he acknowledge today that he made a mistake, that he should have warned the public and that he is every bit as responsible for what happened to Manitoba taxpayers and investors as those directors who also had inside information?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, the member likes to play judge, jury and prosecutor, even though he's completely unqualified for any of those roles. He likes to make allegations for which there is no basis. The Auditor General did a study of this privately managed fund and concluded that the Province was neither responsible for the performance, nor the valuation of the fund. They indicated when the bad investments were made. They were made when members opposite—the member opposite was part of the government, and the reality was that the serious losses occurred when the member opposite was part of the last government up to 1999. He knows that, and if he wants to make any suggestion otherwise, I suggest he revisit the auditor's report and see what they actually said.

And, by the way, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General had full access to all of our records and was aware of everything we were involved in.

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

**Mr. McFadyen:** On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

And, again, the Premier is completely false in the statements that he's making in the House again today, and he knows that he's making false statements in the House today on the issue.

The Auditor General undertook—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I want to ask for the co-operation of all members of the House to pick and choose their words very carefully. I think we're coming very close to the edge on some of the words that are being chosen here, and I just want to offer a caution to all members of the House. Please be careful when you're making your statements, answering questions or asking questions, please, on the words that you choose.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the facts are as follows: that the Auditor General did a very quick review and provided a report shortly after the fund—it was acknowledged that the fund was in trouble. The auditor said that they were asked to do a fast report and that they did not look at Cabinet-level knowledge or involvement at the time.

Subsequently, this minister brought in an amendment to the auditor's act that barred the Auditor General from looking into Cabinet, knowledge in Cabinet documents, at a time—and he brought that amendment in after he knew that he had written the memo, Mr. Speaker. The memo then got leaked, which showed that he knew, two years before the public knew, about the problems at Crocus, and yet failed to disclose it.

Mr. Speaker, we're not asking him to face the same legal sanctions as the directors. We're asking him to acknowledge he made a serious mistake, which has been reaffirmed by the Securities Commission today in their finding against those directors who had the same knowledge as this former Finance minister.

**Mr. Selinger:** The member opposite completely misleads the public as to what the Securities Commission has found, and he knows that, and he's stretching the truth as he so often does in this House. It was just a couple of days ago that he suggested that a memo written by Hydro was going to delay Hydro projects. When we saw a copy of the memo, which he did not table in the House, as he should have when he quotes from a document, the memo

made it very clear that the in-service dates were to be protected, so he plays fast and loose with the facts on a daily basis in this House.

The Auditor General had full access to all the documents. The Auditor General came to a conclusion that the government was neither responsible for the performance or the valuation of the fund. The member opposite knows that, and the member opposite knows that the Manitoba Securities Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial body which has its own authorities to make its own decisions and come to its own settlements, which it believes are in the public interest, and they have done so in this case.

So the member should not mislead the public. He should take responsibility for the bad deals that were entered into while he was in office.

\* (13:50)

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the—Mr. Brown from the Securities Commission, Doug Brown, this morning said, and I'll quote the full response to the question. He said, and I quote: Board members do have responsibilities that are overriding to that, and so when facts are brought to your attention you are expected to act appropriately. That was the basis for the Securities Commission's decision. When facts are brought to your attention you are expected to act appropriately, and that's why they arrived at the penalty that they settled on this morning with these directors.

The fact is the Auditor General did not have access to Cabinet-level papers or discussions or information. He subsequently, as minister, brought an amendment to that act that barred Auditor General access to Cabinet documents, Mr. Speaker, and subsequent to that his memo was leaked. It's the only way it became public, similar to his falsified election return, only became public when it was leaked.

And I want to ask the Premier, rather than trying to point the finger at others to acknowledge that he is in a position of responsibility, the taxpayers have lost millions of dollars on this deal, investors lost lots of money and had significant delays in getting a return of their money, I want to ask the Premier, rather than playing politics, in light of the finding by the Securities Commission today, does he accept any responsibility whatsoever for what happened, or is it all somebody else's fault?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member—the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Fort Whyte, had at least two conspiracy theories there. He comes up with a new conspiracy theory every week on just about every subject. He always sees dark and evil intentions behind everything.

I'm here to inform the House today not everybody in this House operates the way he operates. Not everybody dreams up weird and wonderful conspiracies to get their political way in this province of Manitoba.

The reality is the Manitoba Securities Commission made a finding today. They entered into a settlement which they believed was in the public interest. Prior to that there was a police investigation where they found no criminal wrongdoing. Prior to that there was an Auditor General's report which did not find the government responsible for either the valuations or the performance of the fund. The member can review all of those documents and all those reports to get the facts straight. And he knows very well that the bad deals that were entered into by the Crocus Fund were deals that were concocted while he was a member of the previous government, and he should take responsibility for that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, the facts are very clear. There was the collapse of the fund which happened about two years after he wrote his memo to Cabinet. There was the Auditor General's review which didn't look at Cabinet-level documents and, in fact, did not have access to that leaked Cabinet document. There was the criminal investigation which focused on allegations of fraud at the level of the fund. That wasn't—that's not what anybody is alleging in terms of the role of the former Finance Minister.

Simply, what we are stating is that he knew there were problems at Crocus two years before the public was made aware. That's the exact basis for the sanctions against the directors that was made today, and that's why Doug Brown said this morning on the radio, if facts are brought to your attention you're expected to act appropriately.

My question to the Premier is: Why didn't he act appropriately and, given that he didn't, why not just accept responsibility today as any responsible leader would?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I've—we've canvassed this question at least three times now, and the facts are clear that the Manitoba Securities Commission

did its own settlement with the directors based on the allegations that were accepted by the directors that entered into the settlement. It's also very clear the Auditor General did a very thorough review of the Crocus Fund and found the government neither responsible for the performance or the valuation of the fund. Those are very significant findings on the part of the Auditor General.

Now the member opposite likes to make allegations. He likes to weave conspiracy theories, but when it comes to accepting responsibility he has never once stood up and acknowledged the fact that the bad deals that were done by the Crocus Fund occurred while he was a member of the government, and he has never taken responsibility for that. So if he wants to lead by example, he could start there and take responsibility for the \$35 million of losses through bad deals entered into when he was a member of the government.

### **Education System Cap on Class Sizes**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** Mr. Speaker, we have yet another government policy that has been brought forward without any consultation on implementing the policy. This government has announced a cap on class size for kindergarten to grade 3 of 20 students.

This new policy raises a number of questions, and obviously there's going to be significant implications for school boards across the province. For example, we know of one school division in southeastern Manitoba that has 75 K to 3 classes that have more than 20 students.

Can the minister indicate how many K to 3 classes in Manitoba now exceed 20 students?

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education):** I'm pleased to have a question about education.

I want to inform the member, first of all, that in regards to his question in regards to no consultation, I'm pleased to announce that we will be asking our oversight committee who have already agreed to take on this monumental task—we've been—asked our—

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

**Ms. Allan:** Oh, well, I think they—I guess they think it's funny that we're working with our education partners. That makes sense because they never did.

We have a history of working in—with trust and respect with our education partners, and that's the

oversight committee that will be working on this very important initiative, an initiative that was our very first announcement in our election campaign.

And I notice that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) never made a commitment to reducing class size. We've made a commitment. We will work with the trustees and the parents and the teachers, school board officials and superintendents to make this a reality here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, it's pretty clear the minister doesn't know how many class sizes that now currently exceed 20.

We know the Canadian federation of teachers, through MTS, is conducting a survey as we speak about that. We also understand there's been little discussion with school boards on the subject.

Questions arise about the physical capability of schools to address this new policy. And what will happen in classes of 21, 22, 23 students?

Can the minister also assure school boards that the government will bear the full cost of this new policy?

**Ms. Allan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, everyone's going to know what the class sizes are in our K to 3 classes across this province because we are going to work with school divisions and we are going to have a tracking system and it is going to go online.

And school divisions have already told us that they are prepared to work with us on that because they believe it's important that we have a baseline, and that was part of our announcement this morning, that we would have a baseline and everyone would know where we are at in regards to class sizes because we know how important early intervention is. We know how important it is that young people have an opportunity to have a wonderful learning environment with their teacher so they can do differential instruction, and it also provides the teachers with more opportunity to communicate with the parent.

This is a wonderful initiative, Mr. Speaker. It's too bad they don't like it.

**Mr. Cullen:** We believe it's important to deal with both class size and class composition. Teachers have told us that composition of the class is just as important as the size of the class.

So how will the composition of classes be dealt with under this new policy, and will the



implementation committee consider class composition under this proposed policy?

**Ms. Allan:** I have every confidence in the oversight committee and our education partners in regards to the dialogue that will happen over the next five years, Mr. Speaker, in regards to making this announcement a reality.

We also put money on the table to make this happen. We have committed \$20 million to 250 new teachers. We've also committed \$85 million for extra space in regards to class sizes that might be required for this.

We will continue to invest in our public education system because our public education system is one of the best in the world. Our public education system is the equalizer for people who need an education because if they get an education regardless of their prior learning experience, regardless of their background, regardless of their circumstances, an education gives people the opportunity to participate in our society, and we will continue to build this system with our partners.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### **Homicide Rate Increase**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in response to a question, the Minister of Justice was hanging up the mission accomplished sign, telling everybody that things were going well when it comes to public safety in Manitoba.

\* (14:00)

Well, today Statistics Canada came along and they tore down that banner and told us that, in fact, once again we were the murder capital of Canada. Year after year, our province has to suffer the reputation of having more murders per capital than any other province in this great country. More gangs, more guns, more murderers, more victims, and yet this Minister of Justice feels that he is doing a great job.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister of Justice content to pat himself on the back while Manitoba suffers this slap in the face?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** In terms of homicides, there's no question that one homicide in the province of Manitoba is too much.

There is no question that there are challenges, and certainly the first thing I'd like to do is to congratulate our communities and our police, because virtually every homicide in Manitoba is solved. That is small comfort to the victims, but it shows that we are investing in police and making the right decisions and making sure that anyone who commits homicide is brought to justice.

Now, of course, the police will tell us that homicides are among the most difficult crimes to prevent and, in fact, one police officer who made that very clear just a few years ago was one Shelly Glover, then speaking on behalf of the Winnipeg Police Service.

So I think the member opposite should perhaps put some more thought before he asks his questions. And the member opposite, of course, I didn't see him rise in this House to mention the fact that homicides actually went down by 21 per cent in the province of Manitoba last year. I didn't see him rising to mention that homicides actually went down in the province of Manitoba by 36 per cent last year, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm glad the minister wants to talk about the trends on homicide, because not only were we the worst in 2010, but he fails to tell this House what other Manitobans know, is that, in fact, we're already at 32 murders in the city of Winnipeg this year, 10 more compared to the 22 we had all of last year. These killers are getting younger, they're getting more brash, and they're putting more people at risk in the city of Winnipeg and Manitoba.

And this Minister of Justice, he tells us every day, when he's asked a question, that he's doing a great job. Well, sir, it's time for you to admit that your strategy isn't working, and the failure starts with you.

**Mr. Swan:** And certainly we take it—this issue very seriously on this side of the House. Public safety is a true priority. I know the member opposite, I presume he wrote the Conservative book for the last election, the Conservatives running around in jailbird suits handing out Monopoly cards. That was the way that they wanted to deal with this issue.

And I know we waited for a long time. We waited for four years for the Conservative plan on justice. We heard about it. It was so top secret, Mr. Speaker, they wouldn't talk about it in the House. They locked the media, they locked visitors out of their conventions because it was so top secret. And out came their plan, and what was it? We're going to

do what the NDP are doing, and we'll have a Facebook page and, you know, we'll build some dog kennels that the City of Winnipeg was already prepared to build.

So when it comes to solutions, the member for Steinbach is completely void of any ideas. He votes against police officers, he votes against Crown attorneys, he votes against supports in our communities. When will the member opposite actually start to act like an opposition critic and come up with some new ideas? Because I don't think it's there, Mr. Speaker.

### **Shoal Lakes Flooding Financial Compensation for Producers**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Flooding on the Shoal lakes, located mainly in the Lakeside-Interlake constituency, has been a serious problem for several years. Last spring, the Minister of Agriculture, the member from Emerson and myself toured the flooded areas.

The minister promised a special compensation package. Flood victims deserve a well-thought-out plan, but the government's plan isn't working. It has destroyed a number of farm families and led to dispersal of area cattle herds and many other areas of concern. Communities are unsure about the future of their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture what this government is doing to right this wrong. Why is the uncertainty continuing for those people affected?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Well, I thank the member for Lakeside for that question, and I do appreciate both himself and the member for Emerson in joining me that day.

I think it was a—I mean, it was a very good day to see the kind of hurt that Manitoba farmers and farm families are going through in the Shoal lakes area. Mr. Speaker, we all saw some of the great lengths that some of those farmers, some of those ranchers were going to to get feed to their cattle. And we actually rode on some quads through some very deep water to see actually what they're up against.

We followed up that, Mr. Speaker, with a very comprehensive announcement, a very comprehensive plan to help those farmers, particularly the farmers at Shoal lakes, and I do appreciate the advice I get from

the member for Lakeside to even make that program as good as it is and maybe even better.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, local governments need an update on what the future holds for residents affected by the Shoal Lake flooding, including the RMs of West St. Paul, Rockwood, Woodland, St. Laurent, Coldwell, Armstrong and others.

We're in the 11th hour, freeze-up is here, affected families have many questions about compensation and buyouts. People like Debbie and Darwin Fleury and Garnett Lobb, who are here with us today in the gallery. They deserve to be treated fairly. They need to know their options and they need to know now.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister for Agriculture: When is this government's department going to finalize agreements with those impacted on the Shoal lakes?

**Mr. Struthers:** As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, that day that we were out looking first-hand at the devastation caused by this excess moisture, we were asked about buyouts and we followed up with that, in this particular case, to make sure that buyouts were available to farmers and ranchers that were experiencing this trouble. We were asked about compensation, not just in the year that we're in, but in previous years as well, and that was part of our announcement. And we've been flowing money to those cattle ranchers on that side of this issue as well. Clearly, our commitment to those ranchers and to those farmers in that area was clear and clearly we followed up on that.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, as I've said, here today we have three of many people affected by the rising Shoal lakes, the Fleurys and Mr. Lobb. The problem has taken a heavy social-economic toll in our region. They and others from area need concrete answers about what they can expect in terms of compensation or buyouts so they can move forward with their lives. They deserve some clarity from this provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the First Minister and the Minister of Agriculture: Will they commit today, after question period, to meet with the Fleurys and Mr. Lobb to hear their questions and their concerns first-hand? Will they do that today?

**Mr. Struthers:** Sure, I can do that. We've—as a matter of fact, if I remember correctly, I believe we bumped into the Fleurys that day along the gravel road we were travelling on, and I was impressed by

the advice that I gained from Mrs. Fleury, and, I believe, both of the Fleurys at the time.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear with any of the programs that we've announced, that those are our commitments and we will follow through on those. We also made it very clear, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and I, that we are open to advice from people if there are people who aren't getting what they need out of those programs. We're open to that advice and we're not adverse to making changes to make these programs even better than what they are.

So thank you very much to the member for Lakeside for bringing this forward.

#### **Automated External Defibrillators Availability in Public Places**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Almost 80 per cent of all cardiac arrests in Canada occur in homes and in public places, and 35 to 55 per cent are witnessed by a family member, co-worker or friend.

Defibrillation is a key link in the chain of survival. A defibrillator, when used in conjunction with CPR, is—in the first few minutes after a cardiac arrest, can dramatically improve cardiac arrest survival rates by more than 50 per cent.

In June the Manitoba government passed a Defibrillator Public Access Act. As November is recognized as CPR month, it would be most appropriate for the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) to share with the House the status of the work being done by the regulation committee on this important piece of legislation.

My question is for the Minister of Healthy Living: When will public places in Manitoba need to have AEDs available for use to save lives?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for the question.

I know that, indeed, we have shared an interest in bringing defibrillators to more public places to ensure that individuals that are experiencing cardiac arrest can get that kind of timely intervention.

As we announced earlier this year, the Heart and Stroke Foundation is working in very strong partnership with our advisory medical professionals to establish a hierarchy, an order in which these defibrillators will be required to appear in public places. They're also going to be very engaged, the

Heart and Stroke Foundation that is, in maintaining a registry of where these defibrillators are located.

And I'm very pleased to inform the member that that work is ongoing and I would be happy to provide her with an update. I'll seek that very swiftly and I will get back to the member about the progress of that committee. I know that they are working very hard, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:10)

**Mrs. Rowat:** I appreciate the comments from the minister and I look forward to the update.

The Defibrillator Public Access Act requires all AEDs to be continuously maintained, display visible signage and be registered with the designated registrar to ensure they are easily accessible in emergency situation. The legislation will include a regulation that will require a list of public places that will need to have AEDs in place.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) indicate to the House today what locations will be included on this list so that they can begin planning for the implementation of this legislation? Is it going to be phased? Can the minister provide some information so that community public places can then start to prepare?

**Ms. Oswald:** I thank the member for the question. Indeed, as we announced earlier when the legislation was brought forward, that it would be a phased-in list and that, indeed, our medical professionals would be the ones that would determine who would be in the first phase, who would be in the second phase. An example, Mr. Speaker, would be in the case of schools. It is suggested that defibrillators be present in schools, but, indeed, it will be preferable for secondary schools to be the primary target with a discussion and a view to schools for younger children after that, if at all. And so that kind of work and analysis is going on.

The member raises also an important point about how important it is for the registry to be maintained. The defibrillators are only useful if members of the public can call 911 and can have that 911 operator say, indeed, there is an AED on site; this is where it's located; please go and get it now.

So all of that work is going on. I appreciate the member's interest in the question. We know that by making these early interventions, indeed, we'll be able to save lives right here in Manitoba.

### **Child and Family Services Agencies Children-in-Care Sexual Exploitation**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, last week at the LEAF breakfast, Benjamin Perrin, an assistant professor from the University of British Columbia, spoke about the need to address human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children and youth. And a striking fact that Mr. Perrin emphasized was that almost three-quarters of the approximately 400 children and youth who are sexually exploited every year in Winnipeg were, at the time of exploitation, actually in the care of the government's Child and Family Services.

I ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger) to explain why it was that almost three-quarters of the children and youth who were sexually exploited in Manitoba were actually in the care of the provincial government's Child and Family Services at the time of their exploitation?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** Well, I thank the member for the interest in this area. It's one that is of primary concern to the government, which is why we brought in Tracia's Trust and now have launched phase 2 of Tracia's Trust, which the professor remarked on and, indeed, I understand, as a result of the hard work of so many in Manitoba, including Diane Redsky who also gave a presentation, they recognize that Manitoba leads the country in efforts to combat this insidious scourge, this exploitation of our most vulnerable. But in answer to the question more specifically, the member knows full well that the children in the care of Child and Family Services are often facing very serious barriers. They face many obstacles to healthy living, which is what Tracia's Trust is all about, and, indeed, the child welfare system is designed to ameliorate those challenges when children come into care, and we are going to continue to mount efforts in this regard.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, there may be, as we know, special needs for those children in care, but normally one would expect that a child in the care of Child and Family Services would be protected from human exploitation rather than be exploited. All of us are only too well aware of the major problems in this government's Child and Family Services, the way they're running it, but it's very difficult, very difficult to understand how it could happen that almost three-quarters of the sexually exploited children in Manitoba were actually in the care of the

government's Child and Family Services at the time they were sexually exploited.

Why was it, I ask the Premier, that the children were not being adequately protected and kept safe? How could they have been sexually exploited at the time that they were supposedly being protected by your government and your system?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, perhaps the member could get some benefit—we'd be prepared to provide some briefings to him for those who work with sexually exploited children so he can understand what can often befall a child, whether in a birth home or in a foster home or in a residential facility.

What we launched in Manitoba, the first of its kind in Canada, perhaps in North America, although I know Texas is a model that we look to, an initiative called StreetReach, which works with law enforcement to identify runaways who are at risk of sexual exploitation to make sure that there's a targeted effort to identify where they are and to go after those who harbour those vulnerable children.

But if the member is advocating locking up all foster children, I think that he's in the wrong place, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unbelievable that three-quarters of the children who—sexually exploited in this province are actually in the care of the government—that they can't be stewards of the children that they are bound to look after by the courts in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that most of the sexual exploitation is actually happening in hidden gang houses and trick pads. And why is it that we have children who are supposed to be protected in the care and nurtured in the care of this government are getting into gang houses and trick pads? I ask the Premier: What on earth is his government doing that he is allowing this to happen?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, again, I think the member should look at what everyone is doing. And, Mr. Speaker, he should also be aware that it's not only about government but government leadership, government facilitating action by those who are on the front lines whether they be police, whether they be workers.

But, you know, him blaming a—foster parents who work so hard, Mr. Speaker, him blaming the workers that work so hard to protect these children, there are immense odds that must be overcome

sometimes when it comes to certain families. And I only wish, I only wish that Manitoba parents all could be successful in raising their children in healthy ways.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do have in too many homes in this province a crisis in the families that the Province is making remarkable efforts to address in ways that no other province in this country has: \$8 million in investments to facilitate versus—I understand what?—\$600,000 in Ontario or \$300,000 in British Columbia.

So we are being looked at to what we are doing. But that's why efforts like StreetReach, that's why The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act that's going after the harbouring of children in gang houses is a innovative technique, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we are making investments.

#### **Canadian Wheat Board Ottawa Meeting on Reform**

**Mr. Ron Kostyshyn (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is not only important to the farmers in the Swan River area, but to Winnipeg as a major hub of grain industry and the future of the Port of Churchill.

Could the Minister of Agriculture please advise the House that what the NDP government is going to do to fight—maintain this important asset?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Finally, Mr. Speaker, a question on the Wheat Board from an MLA who finally wants to stand up for farmers, an MLA who wants to stand up for jobs in our city of Winnipeg, an MLA who wants to stand up for the Port of Churchill, an MLA who wants to defend our province's economy instead of making excuses for their friends in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne we very, very clearly indicated that we would be heading up a group of concerned Manitobans, business people, farmers, people who are going to be negatively impacted with this wrong-headed decision by the Conservative government. We've decided and signalled clearly that this group will go to Ottawa to make sure that Ottawa understands what these impacts economically will be to our province, and to make sure that Ottawa understands that we will work with them to make sure those impacts are mitigated.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite could complain and squawk all they like, but they missed the boat on this one.

\* (14:20)

#### **Manitoba Agricultural Museum Funding Reduction**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Agricultural Museum is much more than a museum. It's an international display of our heritage and a training centre for many agricultural trades and home skills that allowed pioneers to survive and thrive in Canada. It is a heritage centre that gives all of us a sense of how our forefathers dealt with life in a new country. It is also an international tourist attraction.

Why has the NDP government seen fit to reduce funding to this international centre of excellence and tourism at a time when it is important to showcase our heritage and attract visitors to our province?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that this facility is important to—as are so many others across our province—to tell the story of farm communities: farm communities that have built this province; farm communities that have raised families that have gone on to greatness; farm families who have made huge contributions to our economy here in our province of Manitoba.

There's no doubt that this government understands that, that we continue to support not only this facility, but many of those facilities right across Manitoba, because it's important to understand, it's important to recognize and to acknowledge those contributions by farm communities, by farm families and by rural communities in every part of our province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Agricultural Museum is run by a volunteer board and 700 volunteers. They maintain traditional skills that cannot be preserved in a book and pass them on to the next generation through live educational demonstrations. Last year alone, the hands-on school program had a thousand children participate and learn about the daily lives of our ancestors. They attract visitors to Manitoba year round to learn about our rural prairie heritage.

Will the government commit today to revisiting their decision and reinstate operating grants to at least their former level and possibly higher for the operation of this world-class heritage facility?

**Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** I thank the honourable member for the question. I would like to share with the honourable member—I'm sure he is aware of it, as well—that the Manitoba Agricultural Museum is categorized as a Signature Museum.

With the exception of this particular museum, Signature Museums receive \$55,800 in annual funding support, but due to a unique situation, like the transfer from MAFRI to our department, MAM also received operating support in the amount of \$75,800 for a total funding of \$131,600. However, given the SM program has been operational for over 10 years, and periodic review of grant programs is a normal procedure, and a review of the Signature Museum program was initiated in July of 2010 by—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Time is expired—time for oral questions has expired.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences Awards

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, recently I attended the 13th Annual Institute of Cardiovascular Science Awards on behalf of our Premier (Mr. Selinger). The ceremony was part of an international heart conference hosted by the cardiovascular research institute at St. Boniface Research Centre. First-rate cardiologists, cardiac surgeons and scientists from 22 different countries came to Winnipeg for their deliberations. This event showcased Winnipeg's contribution to the world in the field of heart research, education and care.

St. Boniface research hospital is one of the premier institutes on heart research in Canada. The cardiovascular research conducted there is fundamentally important to the health and well-being of people because it directly helps doctors to save lives. Supporting such research is integral to keep our health-care system strong and adapt to the changing needs and demographics of the people across the province, country and the whole world.

During this event, I presented the Ken Bowman Research Award to Dr. Barry Halliwell, deputy president of the National University of Singapore, for his lifelong contribution to heart research. This award recognizes individuals with an outstanding

track record of achievement in cardiovascular research. Halliwell is widely regarded as the world's leading authority in the study of toxic effects of free radicals on hearts.

The whole event was organized under the chairmanship of Dr. Pawan Singal, director of the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and professor in physiology in the faculty of medicine at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Singal has made it his personal mission to improve cardiovascular health care in Canada, and is doing a remarkable job, Mr. Speaker. Alongside with the institute he has pioneered the studies that have laid groundwork for treatment of, and damage associated with, oxidative stress on the heart. I would like to recognize Dr. Singal and his wife and a guest, who is sitting in the gallery, for his immense contribution to the cardiovascular research community of the world.

I would also like to thank Dr. Alan Menkis, Dr. Chuck LaFleche, and Dr. Digvir Jayas for ongoing research and commitment of cardiovascular health in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Institute of Cardiovascular—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. The member's time has expired. Is there leave for the member to finish? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Jha:** Mr. Speaker, the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences Award was a grand success, and an enjoyable event to participate in. And once again, I applaud Dr. Pawan Singal for his leadership.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

##### Shelby Gillies

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize before the House today an extremely accomplished young lady from Neepawa. Shelby Gillies is presently in grade 9 at the Neepawa Area Collegiate Institute, and has already under her belt an illustrious career in horseback riding and Highland dancing, among other endeavours.

Shelby began 4-H when she was only eight years old, and received her first horse. From 2007 on, she has won several accolades of 4-H competitions, including the 4-H Silver Spurs Junior first place one person visual speech award for three years in a row, and has participated in the Shift n' Lift rodeo. This past summer Shelby attended the Junior National

Rodeo in Gallup, New Mexico. Of the over 1,000 contestants at the rodeo, Shelby placed 136th in barrel racing, 82nd in breakaway roping, 134th in goat tying and 112th in pole bending.

Additionally, in the 2011 Manitoba High School rodeo season, she finished second in barrels and breakaway roping, fourth in goat tying, fifth in ribbon roping and sixth in pole bending. Though Shelby has now retired from Highland dancing, as it was conflicting with her involvement in volleyball, basketball and track and field, to name just a few of the school sports teams on which she plays, she formerly won many awards in the field of Highland dance. Most recently Shelby was honoured with the Commended Irish Horn Pipe, Commended Scottish National, Highly Commended Irish Jig and Commended Highlands awards.

Mr. Speaker, it is young people like Shelby that provide hope and enthusiasm for the future among their elders. Here we have a talented and smart individual, who not only excels at the aforementioned extracurricular activities, but is also highly involved in piano and band instruments, synchronized skating, and has for the past two years been placed on the principal's honour roll, an honour reserved for students with combined averages of 90 per cent or higher.

I'm so pleased to recognize Shelby and her successes in the House today, Mr. Speaker. And I know that I speak for all members when I say that I am excited to see what this gifted, local student from my constituency accomplishes next. With her ambition, and proven successes, I know that she will go far.

#### **Bethania Group Fundraiser**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Mr. Speaker, this week I had the great pleasure of attending, along with the member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), the Annual Spiritual Care Fundraising Dinner for The Bethania Group at Douglas Mennonite Church. This fun-filled evening was a smashing success, being well attended by various friends, family and the wider community that support the important work of The Bethania Group in our province.

\* (14:30)

Since 1945 Bethania has provided wellness, housing and personal care services for older adults in Manitoba. The Bethania personal care home on Concordia Avenue, in my constituency, currently accommodates nearly 150 residents, as well as many

more in BethaniaHaus, who also share in the chapel facilities and spiritual services at the facility. I have had numerous opportunities to visit with the residents of Bethania and I value their perspective and insight that they have shared on the various issues that are important to them.

As a Mennonite organization, The Bethania Group demonstrates compassion and love by offering a range of services to older residents that treats each person as a whole, meaning their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Bethania has a special commitment to respecting the cultural and ethnic diversity while recognizing a special responsibility for maintaining a spiritual and cultural environment suited for care of Mennonite and German-speaking people.

This week's fundraiser was focused on the spiritual aspect of care at Bethania. Ray Koop, CEO of Bethania, and the members of the board and staff did a wonderful job of hosting the evening. Guests were treated to a performance from the Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Concert Choir under the guidance of teacher Vic Pankratz that wowed us with a powerful and very musical performance. The evening concluded with a keynote address by author Tim Frymire who gave a thoroughly entertaining and thought-provoking talk on aging and the importance of spirituality and humour.

I am proud of the work that Bethania does in my constituency and beyond, and would like to wish them every success in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Southeastern Manitoba Wildfires**

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to give a hearty thank you to the fire crews and supporting volunteers who courageously and successfully battled the southeastern Manitoba wildfires in early October. Several fires originating in the Stuartburn area moved north and east, affecting rural municipalities such as Piney, La Broquerie and Reynolds.

Along with the crews from Manitoba Conservation, more than 160 firefighters from 27 municipal departments came—gathered to help fight these rapidly advancing fires. The seriousness of this situation cannot be understated. At some points the fires were moving at a rate of nearly a kilometre per minute. Six hundred people were safely evacuated, many on very short notice.

Thanks to the tremendous effort of fire crews, the affected areas escaped relatively unscathed with no loss of life, and no loss of residential buildings. These firefighters put their lives on the line and we owe it to them to recognize their efforts in keeping us safe. I would like to recognize the work of all those involved with this process, including the Office of the Fire Commissioner, Manitoba Conservation fire crews, the municipal fire crews and the bible church members that cooked for the firefighters and the countless other volunteers that lent a hand at this critical time. Their bravery and willingness to help out in this time of need was so greatly appreciated by both directly affected members of my constituency, La Verendrye, and by all Manitobans who see their work in action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, November is national pancreatic cancer month. Pancreatic cancer impacts the lives of too many Manitobans. It is the fourth leading cause of cancer death in Canada. It is estimated that 4,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year; 75 per cent of those diagnosed will die within the first 12 months and most of these will die within the first six months.

While pancreatic cancer is responsible for 5 per cent of all cancer deaths, it sadly receives less than 1 per cent of all cancer funding. The Forget-Me-Not Pancreatic Cancer Network is a grassroots organization based in Winnipeg which is trying to improve pancreatic cancer awareness and research. Led by Lisa Webinger, the organization is now working to help fund the expansion of the Manitoba Tumour Bank to include pancreatic tumours.

The funding will help increase staffing and resources so that the number of samples banked from patients with pancreatic cancer can be increased. It will also help the education for patients about the ongoing research efforts that are being undertaken. Expanding and maintaining a database linking patient data to the cancer registry is also important to capture all pancreatic cancer patients in the province and to link with other provincial and national databases to help increase pancreatic cancer research.

The Forget-Me-Not network's championing November as pancreatic cancer month by encouraging all Manitobans to participate in Pennies

for PanCan. All rolled coins can be dropped off at any Cambrian Credit Union throughout the month of November with all donations going to pancreatic cancer research.

In June of next year, in 2012, Lisa Webinger will be attempting to set a world record for the most money raised for charity while running a half marathon, all in support of pancreatic cancer awareness.

Today, I'm wearing a purple arm bracelet in support of—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Is there leave for the member to conclude his remarks? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** —not only in November, but all year round. Thank you.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **THRONE SPEECH (Fourth Day of Debate)**

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

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

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this First Session of the Fortieth Legislature of Manitoba, and the amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Rossmere, who has 22 minutes remaining.

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** I think I left off yesterday talking about the envelope I received from Elections Manitoba that had included in it a revised map of Rossmere, and I had indicated yesterday that the constituency of Rossmere has expanded considerably. And considering the number of new developments that we're opening up in the Rossmere constituency, it required a new map with dozens and dozens new streets and homes so that when we looked at the map there were a number of new communities that had sprung up that didn't even exist two years ago. However, I would think that with street names like Bill Blaikie Way and Tommy Douglas crescent, I think the residents of those streets will feel quite at home in Rossmere.



Again, I am very thrilled to be here, to have the privilege of again working for Manitobans. I recognize that privilege would not have been possible without the hard work of my election team, Jess, Renee and Marilyn. They kept things chugging along in our campaign office. They kept my spirits high and they certainly kept the volunteers coming in. They were awesome. Thank you gals.

I also want to give special mention to one of my volunteers who was actually highlighted in the *Free Press* during the election, and that's Mr. Rod MacAuley. Mr. MacAuley is in his mid-80s and has seen many elections. In fact, he tells of selling CCF memberships and riding his bicycle to pick them up; that's how far back he goes. But his claim to fame in Rossmere is that he has been doing sign locations forever. He knows where every sign in every election has gone. In fact, I understand that he even convinced a number of new residents in this election that they needed to have my sign on their lawn because all the previous owners did and, actually, they conceded and they had my lawn signs up. He is certainly a gem and I can't thank him enough for his many years of dedication. We certainly love you, Mr. MacAuley.

Mr. MacAuley was one of nearly 100 volunteers that criss-crossed Rossmere many times in the course of 28 days. I owe a tremendous thank you to all my friends, family and community members who supported me and helped me return to this wonderful place and this fabulous job.

So now, as I come to the purpose of the afternoon and that is to speak to the Throne Speech, I thank the constituents of Rossmere for supporting the important work our government has undertaken over the past number of years, and endorsing this work by electing us to continue that work and to build on our past accomplishments and to expand the vision that we have for our province.

The Throne Speech is our road map for Manitoba's future. The themes expressed in this speech are the themes that we shared with Manitobans on the doorstep, and these themes resonated well with Manitobans and the folks in Rossmere. On many occasions, the constituents of Rossmere have expressed to me how pleased they were with the direction this government has taken Manitoba, especially that our programs and measures have helped our province. Whether the uncertainties around the world, they feel confident that we have a steady and even approach that will continue to serve

us well into the future. And the election results have worn that out.

Our Throne Speech continues that model of a sure hand on the province's rudder. Our theme of continuing to invest in front-line services is one that all Manitobans will benefit from and let every citizen know that we are continuing to move forward with their health and well-being in mind. We are investing not only in the social health of our people, but also the economic and environmental health of our province.

Earlier I spoke of the changing demographics in my constituency of Rossmere, the growing number of seniors and the young families who are choosing to move into our community as our older citizens downsize to apartments and life leases. The message from both groups was the same: keep up the good work and stay the course. They trust us to continue to work every day for Manitobans to preserve the affordability advantage that we have in our province. In fact, as I went door to door in these brand-new developments that have become part of Rossmere, many of the folks that I spoke to were from BC, from Alberta, from northern Ontario, and they weren't returning home to Manitoba, they were coming here for job opportunities.

\* (14:40)

The people I met were pleased with our government's efforts in health care and education. They were well aware of the positive impact our leadership has had on the well-being of Manitoba. But they were also confident that we will continue to move forward on other priorities of Manitoba families: the safer communities, the environment and, certainly, jobs and training.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand here today and support our government's vision and plan for Manitoba, a vision and a plan that Manitobans have endorsed. After all, Manitobans have given our government its fourth mandate, an historic feat in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to put a few words on the record in regards to the Throne Speech, and I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by thanking you and a congratulations on your election for Speaker. I know that you will do an excellent job. I know that from committee meetings that you have chaired that it was always a sense of fairness and non-partisanship

which was appreciated by all at those committees. Respect is something you earn and you have shown yourself to be worthy of the respect bestowed upon you in the election as Speaker. And I know that by the time you get through all of the congratulations from the 55 or 56 people here that you're going to feel like a cob of corn, all buttered up.

I would also like to congratulate the new MLAs on their victory in their—in the October 4th election. And it takes special people to do special things, and you all have made a great impact in your constituencies already and will do even more in the coming years.

To all of the re-elected MLAs, congratulations and welcome back. Although we don't always agree on the road to building a better Manitoba, we all agree that our goals are the same.

Also, Mr. Speaker, a huge welcome to our new interns and as well our new pages. It is my hope that they can separate the wheat from the chaff in this building, and when they leave here they have a better understanding and appreciation for the workings of this Legislature.

I'd like to also thank those who supported me in my campaign for re-election: my CFO, Glenn Reimer; my campaign manager, Debra Enns; communications chair, a former page at this Legislature, Becky Cianflone; my daughter Amy, the sign chair; and, of course, my wife, Rose Ellen, who made sure that I know the time schedules and that my clothes match—both had been futile attempts by her, but thanks anyway.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of the speech, or the Throne Speech, certainly held few surprises, and I don't believe that it left many fuzzy, warm feelings with many people in Manitoba.

The member from Thompson brought up a very, very interesting point in his response to the Throne Speech yesterday, and I'd like to comment on those, at least a couple of them. He felt that some parties weren't represented well in Thompson, and I would like to point out to him that in the Emerson constituency there was not one sign from the NDP party or the Liberal part. That was—it was okay by me, really. However, the fact that they would not answer any of the invitations for an all-party debate, that they wouldn't acknowledge media phone calls, wouldn't acknowledge emails, that's a slap in the face to democracy. If you're going to put your name on a ballot, at least, at the very least, you have the

intestinal fortitude to face the people. And unfortunately, neither party, the Liberals nor the NDP, had that intestinal fortitude. That's a shame.

Also, I'd like to point out that the member from Thompson made a number of comments about the things that they've said they would do and they were able to do, and he ranted on and on and on. One of the things that he said he was going to do and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of the province said he was going to do in 2009 was to look after certain flood properties in the Red River Valley. And as late as this week they're still not looked after. This is 2011; it's not 2009. The Buhler family, that I might point out, still have to do temporary diking, still have to move their livestock and still have to find temporary living quarters while the Red River Valley floods. This was a promise by the First Minister and by the member of Thompson.

The member of Thompson has quite a history, actually, of making these types of commitments and not keeping them. Back in 2001, he was made aware that the situation in Shoal lakes was getting severe, and so this is the quote from *Hansard* in 2001: I've driven through that area a thousand times, but when you see it from the air, which I had the opportunity to do, you can see that essentially what is happening is that nature is essentially filling these swamps. These swamps are now becoming lakes, and the water level is at an unprecedented level.

And today, what did we hear here in the House? We heard a question of how people are being bought out. That's 10 years later. There was nothing done to alleviate that issue. These are ranches that were a hundred years old. These are people's whole lives that have been turned upside down. They have no home to go to, and yet the minister stood up and, in jest, said, oh, we've done this and we've done that. What he has done is ruined—he's ruined the lives of many, many people in Manitoba just by neglect—by neglect of doing the job that he says that he is good at, that he is proud of. He voted for budgets that did not address the issues in this province that were needed to be addressed. And today, all of Manitoba has to pay the bill, but more importantly, the people that are moving are paying with their life history. And, Mr. Speaker, that's wrong, and it should never have to happen.

The other elephant in the room when this Throne Speech was read was the complete—completely ignored the level of debt in Manitoba at \$25 billion and growing at 10 per cent a year. We have a record

of level of dependence on Ottawa for transfer payments, thanks to the generosity of the federal government, which is not something that can last forever. When we talk about the deficit in the province being \$511 million or if it's \$490 million, that's pocket change. That's pocket change, Mr. Speaker. What the real deficit is is \$4 billion. That's how much we spend every year—every year that we spend that we have no way of taking in. That is the real deficit and Manitobans understand that. And it isn't being addressed in this Throne Speech in any fashion whatsoever. That has to be addressed. And the only way that I can see that they're going to reach the goal that they have suggested that they're going to do—balance the budget by 2014—is by raising taxes and raising user fees. And they'll do that by doing the parks and forgetting about doing the rehabilitation in the parks; they won't do that, but they'll raise the fees. All the user fees will have to go up. The chainsaw from the—[interjection] I can't go there.

The NDP are banking on revenue increases, and there's no guarantee that Manitoba's own resource revenue will increase unless we do something to address our competitiveness. And we really haven't done anything to address the competitiveness in the province of Manitoba, and I don't see anything in the Throne Speech that would address that either. The education property tax exemption introduced by the NDP government will cost \$200 million over the course of the NDP's mandate. This is \$200 million that the NDP are going to take out of the pockets of every property taxpayer or from school divisions. Now, as a property owner, I certainly welcome the opportunity or the benefit of the tax being removed from my property, but at the same time, there's no solution in the Throne Speech that's going to address the shortfall that these school boards are going to have, and also how they're going to finance the question today of the 20 students in the grade 3 classes. And if there's any answers from any other ministers present today, we would be more than happy to have them. They don't even have to put them in writing.

\*(14:50)

We're very concerned that the NDP will use the stabilization fund as a slush fund. They have a long history of raiding Crown corporations. In 2002, the NDP government took \$203 million special payment from Hydro. Hydro did not have the cash on hand, but was forced to borrow the money. The cost of

borrowing the money was almost as high as the special payment itself, bringing the total cost of the special payment close to \$400 million. Hydro rates have increased more than 20 per cent since. And today we've—or yesterday we heard in this very House here that there was a memo from the vice-president of Manitoba Hydro that indicated that many projects would have to be put on hold or mothballed just because Hydro doesn't have the money to go forward.

The NDP government has doubled the water rental fees and increased the debt guarantee fees paid to the Province by Hydro. Neither services costs the government any money, yet they combined to result in almost \$200 million in annual revenue. The special payment and the fee increases have resulted in the NDP taking more than an extra billion dollars out of Hydro since coming into power; that's why we have these 22 per cent increases in the last four years of Manitoba Hydro.

And with the reckless folly of going down the west side of the province costing an extra billion dollars, that will be \$2 billion that the ratepayers and hydro users in the province of Manitoba will have to shoulder while we're exporting power at half the price that we're paying for it here. And when our price goes up we'll be—we'll not be paying more than half, we'll be paying two-thirds the price.

Violent crime, we'll deal with crime. We are now the murder capital of Canada. We hold that—and I've listened to today to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) who takes pride in that. He takes pride in what he's been doing. How can you take pride in being the murder capital of Canada? I would rather see the Grey Cup here, not the murder capital of Canada. Bring the Grey Cup home. How can you be proud—how can you be proud of that record when you have done nothing to curb crime? He should resign, that's what he should do.

The long-term efforts to combat crime will not work without peace in the streets. Nonetheless, the NDP dedicated six short sentences in the Throne Speech to crime and safety initiatives. They don't have a plan to rein in the gangs. They scrapped the gang registry. They don't have a plan to get the illegal guns off the street, and what they're banking on is that their cousins in Ottawa will let the Conservative government at least pass some laws that will help take some of these people off. But they

haven't been able to influence them yet in Ottawa. I hope that they can. I hope they can talk to their cousins there to get onside.

Under this NDP government, 31 prisoners have accidentally been released from the provincial correction facilities since 2006. Mr. Speaker, one, two, five even, can accidentally be released. How can you have 31 prisoners be accidentally released? Call for the review, but pay attention to what happens when the review is done. Don't leave the key in the door. Don't give them the key to get out. Do you supply them with transportation once you let them out?

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the Justice Minister can't explain why they've waited for three years to spend millions of dollars provided by the federal government for policing. Manitoba's title as the crime capital of Canada became entrenched. Instead putting police on the street, they waited until the eve of the election to put that money forward to put the extra policemen on the street, and in rural Manitoba and in my constituency of Emerson we're very thankful that we got one extra policeman. Unfortunately, it's on a term basis of three years. Mr. Speaker, there is no plan going forward to deal with crime.

Under the Conservation and Water Stewardship, hundred of people are still evacuated with no indications of when they can return home, hundreds of them. The Throne Speech didn't address the need for comprehensive independent review of the way the flood was handled. It just makes good sense to assess how the resources were used and determine what needs to be done differently to better prepare for future floods.

And we know, on this side of the House, we know that there were many, many warning signs that were neglected. We know that there was inaccurate information put on the floor here in this House. We know that they blamed it on faulty equipment which in turn turned out not to be faulty.

We know that the federal government put money forward to do renovation work on the Shellmouth Dam, on the gates, and it was cost shared. The federal government put their money up. They spent their \$4 million and did their part of that agreement. But our provincial government, who are so proud of their record, did not do their part. And that particular oversight—that's not even an oversight, they just refused to do it. They spent the money somewhere

else and thought that Manitobans wouldn't find out—but that particular event caused 25 per cent more water to come down through the Assiniboine River system and down the diversion into Lake Manitoba. It also caused, Mr. Speaker, the Hoop and Holler smoke-and-mirrors cut to be done. That 25 per cent extra water has created nightmares for many, many people who live along Lake Manitoba. And at the same time, this government says, we're proud of our record, as they sat here and never missed a paycheque. Most of them didn't even know what a sandbag looked like. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Crowded schools, Mr. Speaker. Crowded schools were not addressed, and yet we heard the Minister of Advanced Education—or of Education today stand up and say, but we know the way out of poverty is education, we know that. And we agree on this side. But why do we have 75 huts in certain areas? Why do we have 25 huts in certain areas? Why do we have grade 7 and 8 students have to walk through sleet and snow to get to a bathroom, where you've got 50 students using two bathrooms with a stall in each one of them? How do we expect to educate our young people if we don't address these issues?

In Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, the NDP have made big promises about expanding Aboriginal employment, and we agree with them a hundred per cent, but they aren't achieving the results that they promised. In a freedom of information response, it was revealed that the percentage of Manitoba apprentices working on the Wuskwatim dam was as low as 40 per cent in September of 2010, and only 11 per cent of those were Aboriginal. That's a shame. They live right next door. Statistics released from the Wuskwatim partnership for July 2011 relieved—revealed that only 7 per cent of the total workforce was from NCN, the First Nation that signed into the agreement with Hydro. Seven per cent, and this was the first First Nation that signed in.

Mr. Speaker, on top of that, the unions in this province of Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg were shut out on many of the jobs in Wuskwatim. Carpenters were brought from Québec because they—we couldn't supply them in Manitoba; they didn't have dam experience. Well, I want you to know that the carpenters in Manitoba can build anything, but they were shut out from that particular site, from that particular workplace. And their representatives here

sat here in their chair, in their place, and did nothing and said nothing. As that money left our province, the tax money left our province as well.

\* (15:00)

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the mismanagement that's gone on in many different areas, we can look at infrastructure. During the election, local governments repeatedly stated they wanted leadership from the provincial government to help address the serious infrastructure deficit. However, the word infrastructure is not mentioned in the Throne Speech. Manitoba needs a comprehensive long-term strategy to address the infrastructure deficit. We have to keep in mind that municipal governments are the grassroots government. They are the ones that keep this province together, and they have been shown no respect in this document that was presented to this House the other day.

The Provincial Nominee Program, Mr. Speaker, was introduced by the PC government, and the program has been very successful in bringing new Canadians to Manitoba. However, we're still losing people to other provinces. We've lost 50,000 people since 2000—50,000 people. We bring them in at a rate of about 14,000 a year, and through the Emerson constituency and the Morden-Winkler constituency and the Steinbach constituency there's been the fastest growth of any place in Manitoba in spite of—in spite of—the NDP's record. And we need these people to work here, but we can't keep them in the province, and the reason that we can't keep them here is because of the tax system. It's quite simple that we have the lowest personal exemption of any place in Canada. So it's no wonder that these individuals who immigrate to Manitoba to fill the needs that we have here find that they can make more money in any other province and they can keep more in their pocket. It's not just a matter of making it. It's like playing pool; it's not what you make, it's what you leave for your opposition.

The other piece of mismanagement, and we've heard it today, a good portion of it today, and agriculture again was not mentioned in the Throne Speech, wasn't mentioned in a former budget speech. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) seems to be acting as a one-man wrecking crew, and he's doing a fine job of killing agriculture in the province of Manitoba. He has said many times that we're going to have a slaughter plant in the province of Manitoba. He has failed twice. He's failed once and

his former minister has failed once to establish the plan. We've watched him when he couldn't do a simple business plan, a simple business plan that other people have been able to do to satisfy the federal government. The Minister of Agriculture was unable to do that, and in not doing that he lost the support of \$10 million, and I would say that's a death knell for a beef slaughter plant in the province of Manitoba.

So for the millions of dollars that we have invested in that plant, and when I say we, I'm talking about myself and many of my colleagues that are in the cattle business, because we're forced—we're taxed, we're taxed by the provincial government to participate in a slaughter plant. And what we have to show for it today, Mr. Speaker, is an empty lot on Marion Street with a pile of crushed cement. That's all that's there to show for the millions of dollars that has been taken out of the cattle industry in this province. The Minister of Agriculture should be ashamed of himself. He has done nothing to protect the cattle industry as far as the TB issue around Riding Mountain. He had an opportunity. He had an opportunity to work with Parks Canada, to do an eradication program, but, no, instead he's jeopardizing. He's jeopardizing the cattle industry. *[interjection]*

We'll talk about the \$10 million that the Minister of Agriculture was unable to hold because he couldn't do the business plan. That's exactly right. You're absolutely right. The minister—the member from the Interlake has brought up a good point.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please, order. It's becoming increasingly difficult for me to hear the comments by the honourable member for Emerson. I've asked for a co-operation of all honourable members. If you wish to have a private discussion they have loges to the left and right of the chair here. Please conduct your discussions there.

The honourable member for Emerson, to continue.

**Mr. Graydon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

The member from the Interlake, I know that he's still reeling from losing the election as a Speaker and he feels that he needs to speak out a little bit more, and if he'd have been a little bit more forceful, he might have been in the Chair that you now have. But, at the same time, the Minister of Agriculture

(Mr. Struthers) has failed, and he's failed the farmers of Manitoba in many, many different ways. And today he says, we're going to Ottawa and we're going to take 'fibulators' to Ottawa, and we're going to breathe life into the Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, it's time that the Minister of Agriculture faced the harsh reality that there are decisions that have been made in Ottawa, and he is not going to be able to change those decisions. And the energy that he is expending would be better spent at looking at the diversification and the opportunities that are going to come forward under the new regime that is going to exist. But instead of co-operation, he is going on the path of confrontation and wasting—and wasting taxpayers' money. And today we seen and we heard today from the minister also that the money was taken away from places like the Austin Threshermen's Reunion. They didn't have the money to put into that, but he has the money to go with 'fibulators' to Ottawa. It's shameful.

But, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your indulgence.

**Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise today to speak for the first time in this Chamber. I—before I get started with the formal part of my speech, I got to acknowledge all of the people from Point Douglas here today. So I did let them know that the election is over on October 4th, but they continue to work hard every day.

And I want to congratulate you on your election as Speaker, and I look forward to your guidance in this House. I would also like to acknowledge the work of former Speaker of the House, George Hickes, the first elected Speaker of this Assembly, who held that position since 1999 and whose footsteps I follow as the MLA for Point Douglas.

I would also like to thank the Legislature staff and the Clerk's office for their kind assistance in helping new members make their transition to their elected roles. I congratulate all members of the House on their election or re-election, and I look forward to working with you all.

I'd like to thank everyone who ran, win or lose. Every candidate contributes to improving our democracy and makes an impact in strengthening the voice of all Manitobans. I'd also like to recognize the political staff on all sides of the House for their hard work that makes it possible for us to do our jobs.

I congratulate the First Minister and this government for making history with a fourth majority. I look forward to working with this team under his leadership to make Manitoba a safer, healthier and a more vibrant place to live.

I could not have run as a candidate without the love and support of my wife, Melanie, and our one-year-old son, Hayden. They have given me the inspiration and motivation to do this work with their love and understanding. My wife, son and I have been greatly supported by my mother-in-law, Mira; father-in-law, John; and sister-in-law, Jocelyn. I'll always be grateful for their care and love. Another huge thanks goes out to my mother, Shirley, for her support, as well as my four older brothers, Barry, Garry, Wayne and Brent. I would also like to acknowledge my late father, Norman Chief. I know he would be proud.

It all starts with the people of Point Douglas—that's why I'm here today. I want to thank the constituents of Point Douglas for their tremendous support in electing me as their MLA. When a reporter asked me the other day what my feelings were after finding out I had won, whether it was a feeling of pride and accomplishment, I told her, no, what I had was a deep sense of humility, that an area that had provided me with so many wonderful opportunities growing up now had the confidence in me to be their spokesperson in this Legislature.

\* (15:10)

I promise to work as hard as I can to continue to earn that trust. It was through the support and encouragement of many people that I began my journey into politics. I was first approached by former MLA Doug Martindale during our monthly breakfast meetings at Eddy's restaurant in Winnipeg's North End. His gesture resonated with me because of his 21 years of public service in the provincial Legislature and the riding of Burrows. I was further encouraged by former member of Parliament for Winnipeg North, Judy Wasylycia-Leis, who took the time to explain to my family the possible challenges and rewards of public service.

Marilene Bartlett, the executive director of the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, not only provided me with my first job in community development but has always given me guidance and support throughout my career.

Through my friendship with the honourable Yvon Dumont, former Lieutenant-Governor of

Manitoba, I have gained a mentor who has provided me with advice, encouragement and support for the past 10 years. I remember asking Yvon, how do you know if you should run politically? His response was: It's not something that you should decide for yourself; it's something that others see in you and if enough people approach you and encourage you, then it's something that you should consider.

I am thankful for the people I have mentioned and so many others for their seeing the potential in me as a candidate and public servant.

Point Douglas is a diverse constituency that includes much of Winnipeg's historic North End. People from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds have come here to set down roots. This is where I was born and raised.

Although I grew up with limited financial means, the people in this community made me wealthy in other ways. It was the people in this community, my teachers, coaches and neighbours, who provided the supports I needed growing up. From this nurturing foundation, I was able to earn an athletic scholarship that allowed me to attend university and attain a bachelor's degree with a major in justice and law enforcement and a minor in physical activity and sports studies.

From there, my very first job involved working with young people at the Aboriginal centre. I became active as an outreach worker with different school divisions, which led to my involvement with the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre. Our work at WASAC was all about finding ways to extend the school day with enrichment programs that included sport, recreation and cultural activities.

One of the programs we developed, working in partnership with then-Manitoba Moose chairman Mark Chipman, used the game of hockey to increase academic achievement for children from low-income families. Mark became a close personal friend, and I would like to take this opportunity in the Chamber to acknowledge the impact that the Manitoba Moose Yearling Foundation has had on improving the lives of children and families throughout Manitoba. I know that under Mark's leadership, this valuable work will continue with the new Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation.

During my time as co-ordinator of the University of Winnipeg's Innovative Learning Centre, we built partnerships with schools, community organizations

and non-profit groups to increase graduation rates and improve access to post-secondary education.

With the encouragement of Dr. Axworthy, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, we were able to develop programs such as Eco-Kids on Campus and Eco-U summer kids camp. These programs allowed grades 4, 5 and 6 students to learn from university professors. For many, this is the first time they or anyone in their family has had the chance to set foot on a university campus. Suddenly, the idea of staying in school or pursuing post-secondary education doesn't seem so remote. This is the kind of tap on the shoulder we need to provide to our children. I want to thank Dr. Axworthy for his support and ongoing advice.

I learned from my work experience that if we don't provide children and youth with something positive to belong to, they will seek out something negative. This government has worked hard to support positive alternatives for kids, like the Lighthouses program which is reaching out to kids across the province.

That is why I'm proud that our government's Throne Speech outlines a crime prevention strategy that will work in partnership with individuals, schools and non-profit organizations to make our communities safer. This strategy will include 50 more police officers walking the beat, creating and expanding meaningful after-school programs for youth at risk, and working with Ottawa to make gang recruitment a crime. All of these measures will help create a safer and stronger Point Douglas.

The Point Douglas community is a reflection of my story. This is where I have built my career and where I'm raising my family. I want to try and provide the same supports and opportunities for others that were provided to me when I was growing up. When people looked into my eyes, they were able to see past my hardships and see my potential. Instead of focusing on the shortcomings, they were able to see possibilities. The same is true of this riding. Point Douglas is a resilient community. We may face challenges, but we're not defined by them; we are defined by how we overcome them. There may be hardships, but there is also potential. There may be shortcomings, but there is also possibilities. That's what makes me excited about politics and that's why I decided to run for MLA.

Many people know that my political journey actually started in the 2010 federal by-election in Winnipeg North. I am very grateful for that—that

during that experience I became friends with the late Jack Layton. When we lost that election, I was, of course, very disappointed, but Jack and others helped me through that difficult time. Jack reminded me to be mindful of all the other important wins that had happened, all the people we had become friends with, how we were able to engage first-time voters and how we united a community for causes we all believed in. These were all very real wins that Jack never let me lose sight of.

It was those same, those very same, wins that allowed us to enjoy success in the provincial election. We were able to create a sense of belonging for everyone in our campaign office from all walks of life and all parts of the riding. We weren't just interested in winning votes; we were interested in building relationships. We wanted to get to know people and make them feel good about being part of the election process. We wanted to show them that everyone could use their skills and talents to make a contribution.

We also wanted to share another experience that is so important for building community, the experience of generosity. I define generosity as giving away something that is very important to you. I believe that people with more money should not be able to be more generous than people with less money. That is not what true generosity is. True generosity is about people giving away something that is valuable to them in a meaningful way.

One thing that we all have that we never seem to have enough of, but we can all choose to give away, is time. We all have time that we can share with others. During our campaign, hundreds of people came out and gave freely of their time, their energy and their enthusiasm. I want to thank each and every one of them.

Mr. Speaker, in Point Douglas we were able to generate almost 350 volunteers for our campaign. We were able to inspire 1,100 new voters to come out and be part of the democratic process. That is a 29 per cent increase over the 2007 election. We were able to use the talents of local volunteers to produce an innovative campaign video about my journey into politics. I know Christian Procter's here, Sean Procter and Rom Cueto, the architects behind the video. We worked with, literally, hundreds of people, seniors and families who now see themselves as citizens with the right and responsibility to vote. These are all important wins. We were able to raise

voter turnout because people gave their time to encourage one another to vote.

Our supporters in Point Douglas made sure that they asked their neighbours to be part of our team. We encouraged volunteers to bring their children to our campaign office, and to take their children with them when they went to vote, to help reinforce the importance of participating in their community. I am honoured to have been part of that amazing effort to bring people together and help people realize that their vote does matter. The strength of a community is measured by its people, like the people who helped raise me, like those who worked tirelessly on this campaign. I am so proud and humbled by their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use the same grassroots approach to act as a springboard to improve the Point Douglas area. I want to make life better for people of Point Douglas by working with them and being a hard-working and accessible MLA. I want to continue engaging community to help access and maximize the resources that governments provide. I want to make sure that everyone feels they can be part of a political process and contribute to our community's improvement. I believe that politics can let us see possibilities where others see barriers, to see potential where others see challenges. That's what gets me excited about politics and that's why I am so honoured to take part in this reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a great privilege to stand here in this Chamber and speak on behalf of the people of St. Paul. I have given many speeches to the throne as the member of the Legislature for Springfield. This is, however, my first opportunity as the new MLA for St. Paul to put some comments on the record and be able to reply to the Speech from the Throne.

\* (15:20)

Before I get into my comments, I do want to just thank the people of St. Paul. The new constituency of St. Paul is made up of East St. Paul, West St. Paul and Springfield, a part of Springfield—that would be the west side of Spruce Road going north-south and everything to the west of Spruce Road. They were very kind and very generous. I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time going door to door pre-writ and then—during the election period itself—and was surprised by the wonderful turnout that happened in



my community. It was the highest vote count that I have ever received in the years that I've run; that would be the last four elections that I've run as an MLA.

I want to also give some very special thank-yous to individuals who helped on my campaign. I would like to first of all thank my campaign manager, Gladys Hayward Williams, who ran, by far, the best campaign that I've ever run in. It was so well organized, so well-thought-out, so well done. We sat one afternoon at a campaign meeting and I said, you know, I'm surprised there's so little stress in this campaign, it almost looks like we should be looking for some stress, and she said, no, no, I'm okay with it this way. She had planned it all out. It ran like clockwork, and I want to thank Gladys for all the time and effort and work that she put into my campaign.

I also want to thank my official agent, Cam Hay, who did and is doing a great job, dutifully approving all of our expenditures, listening to all our phone calls, coming down and meeting with us. He's doing just a great job.

Also, I want to thank the everything and go-to guy, Matthew LaPage, who did just an outstanding job in whatever needed to be done in the campaign, and invaluable, invaluable to the team Schuler campaign that we had going in St. Paul.

I also want to give extra thank you to the queen of Springfield, and that would be Gayle Dowler. She has been in my office with me for the last 12 years. In fact, she started working for my predecessor, Glen Findlay.

And right before the campaign started, Gayle Dowler's husband unfortunately passed away. So we had a funeral of her husband, and Gayle never stopped. In fact, I called her on the Friday after the funeral, and I asked her how she was doing, and she said, okay. And I said, well, Gayle, you know what? I think we owe you at least to have today off to mourn and maybe the weekend, but it'd be nice if you were back at work on Monday; we actually need you more than you need us. And she laughed, and by Wednesday she was back at work and spent every day at the campaign, and that is just remarkable. She is the rock. She is the individual who knows politics intuitively and has just done amazing work for the people of Springfield. She represents me at a lot of events and probably does a better job than I do. And I want to thank Gayle Dowler from the bottom of my heart and may God bless her during this tough time.

It's not been that long since her husband passed away. May God bless and keep her.

I also want to thank the hundreds of volunteers who worked on the campaign. And we had just a tremendous organization, amazing young people. In fact, we had a campaign evening where we were out door to door with a van full of young people and one of our constituents called up and said, you know, you had this young woman come to the door and she's all of 16, and he said, one of the brightest young people he's ever met, and just presented so well.

And that's what we want to see. We want to see young people getting involved in the process, understanding what it actually takes to be elected. And that means going door to door, you know, getting out of that comfort zone that we're so used to, and these young people certainly did that.

And I want to thank the entire campaign once again to the people of St. Paul who I have now, you know, certainly, with West St. Paul, come to acquaint myself with and the people of East St. Paul and Springfield who have once again elected me as their MLA. I want to thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, however, over the past six elections, whether it was for school board, which I ran in in two elections and four as MLA, I'd have to say, over those campaigns, I made it a policy of mine to never mention my opponent. I felt that you should never throw dirt at an opponent; you should focus on your campaign. You should be running for something; you should be running for election rather than running against an opponent, running against someone.

This 2011 campaign, unfortunately, the NDP ran probably the dirtiest campaign I've ever been in. The personal attacks were unwarranted. The weekend before the campaign, 200 of our signs were missing. In fact, Garven Road and 206 and 207 and PTH 15 had no signs left. As we said, the Liberal signs were all bent over, the Conservative signs were missing, and the NDP signs stood strongly. And it was just indicative of the way that the campaign went. But the personal attacks, the kinds of stuff that was done was unwarranted, and it was really just a foreshadowing of what was going to happen in the central campaign.

I was surprised my opponent, Cynthia Ryan, put out a brochure in which she spoke about the kinds of things that she and the NDP had funded. For instance, they had funded East Dugald School, École Dieppe in Dugald for improvements, and the

interesting part of that is that neither of those schools exist in Springfield, never mind in Dugald. In fact, I don't even know if there's an École Dieppe anywhere outside of the city of Winnipeg. There certainly isn't an East Dugald School.

There were all kinds of credit taken. For instance, Springfield Wellness Coalition, past member—she took credit for being a past member. Spoke with the Springfield Wellness Coalition; nobody's heard of her. Kin Place Health Complex, Oakbank health-care provider. Maybe she was a casual nurse. Nobody heard of her. It was the kind of campaign, taking credit for things that didn't exist and attacking myself personally.

And it is, basically, a Pandora's box, and we saw that from the NDP central campaign. And Pandora's box is where Pandora, against her better judgment, opens up the box and allows demons loose. I can remember over the years hearing various members of the NDP get up and talk about, we don't want American US-style campaigning; we don't want American-style US attack ads. Interestingly enough, it was the NDP, the very members who spoke so against it, that started the attack ads, and not attack ads against policy—and we understand that we disagree on policy issues—but attack ads that actually went after personalities. They went after the individual. It wasn't a debate on policies. And just like with Pandora's box, there's now no going back. The NDP under this Premier, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), has now opened Pandora's box on personal attacks, on attack ads, American-style, US-style campaign ads. And how unfortunate.

Now, what is so terribly ironic about that is then the member for St. Boniface, this Premier got up and he talks about voter turnout, and that he's going to have to talk about, you know, discussing why people didn't vote in the kinds of numbers that he thought they should've, when it was he and his campaign that were discouraging people to vote, by putting less-than-factual stuff out there, attacking individuals, going after personalities, being so far away from the truth and then somehow thinking that people are then going to vote. It was the most Americanized, American, US attack-style ad campaign in the history of this province. And shame on the NDP for that. It was unfortunate and it was gratuitous at best.

We know that there are a lot of problems that face Manitobans. Unfortunately, we didn't have the

kind of healthy debate that we should've had in the province. Unfortunately, it ended up being personal attacks against our leader and against our candidates.

\* (15:30)

But we do have serious issues, and I want to focus on two in the short time that I have, crime being No. 1. Crime is rampant in our city of Winnipeg. It is a problem and I'm glad to hear from other members that they want to now, after 12 years, start looking at it and perhaps dealing with some of the problems. We are the violent crime capital of Canada, and it is not something that's necessarily going to go away quickly. I listened to the Justice Minister today chastising the Conservative opposition, that they didn't have enough ideas. We have a government that hasn't had any ideas in 12 years of governing and are looking to the opposition for more ideas. We have a government that is bereft of ideas on how to deal with this rampant crime taking place in our communities and our cities. And, over the years, I know that we will be putting forward various ideas. And the NDP, being who they are, will first of all disparage those ideas until they've had the opportunity to implement them themselves. Crime is one of those issues that is going to have to be dealt with over the next four years. It is serious and it is eating away at the confidence of Manitobans in this great province.

The next terribly serious issue trying to be glossed over by the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) is our economy. Over the last years, I have stood in this House, as have other members of the opposition, and have warned the NDP about the storm clouds building. And the storm clouds have been growing and growing and growing. We have a government, an NDP party, that spends uncontrollably, funded by a very generous federal government, and with the kind of economic difficulties that we are seeing, not just across North America, but to some degree, even a larger degree, in Europe. And we see that the Canadian Finance ministers and others have spoken about the kind of difficulties that Europe has to face, in fact, telling them it's time to rein in their spending.

And yet, here in Manitoba, it's as if we live in a bubble. We have a government that spends more than it takes in, considers debt that is going to be foisted on future generations as being something positive, and there is no schedule for repayment, there's no trying to deal with trying to rein in that

spending. The economy is going to be an issue. And when I listened to the Throne Speech, I did not hear a government that felt that they were facing a serious issue when it comes to economic issues facing us.

Mr. Speaker, I will basically stop there and reiterate, it is a great opportunity to be here. I look forward to the next four years representing the people of St. Paul, bringing forward the kinds of issues and needs that they feel are needed and wanted for their communities. I look forward to representing them in this Chamber, and thank you for this opportunity.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** Mr. Speaker, I can finally say I made it. I want to begin by congratulating you, as all of us has done, on your new office, and I wish you well in your new role. I'm a Ph.D. in Canadian history; I've done my fair share of reading political history, and I know that yours is a most important role in the democratic process, and you have my commitment to work with you in a respectful and dignified manner, in order to ensure that we serve the people of this House—to serve the people that elected us.

I am honoured and humbled to be here, and while I know I have a seat in this House, I also know that this is not my House. This is not your House; it's not our House. This is the people's House where we conduct the people's business, and it is our job to work together to improve the quality of life for all Manitobans. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, like all rookies here, that I am awestruck by my surroundings. To be part of a parliamentary tradition that stretches back more than 140 years is, indeed, a privilege to be part of it. I'm honoured to be a member of this Assembly, privileged to represent the new constituency of Fort Garry-Riverview, and very proud to be the first member of my family ever to serve in the Legislature.

The icing on the cake here, though, for me, Mr. Speaker, is that I am also now a member of what is clearly the most progressive government in Canada, and I am delighted to join my colleagues in continuing to put people first. Manitobans have entrusted us with yet another mandate because they believe in the Premier (Mr. Selinger), a humble, honest and noble man, and they trust this government to work with them, to keep Manitoba moving forward well into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, I would not be here today were it not for the love and support of countless people. Since I began my own personal political odyssey

over a decade ago, I have been blessed with an incredible circle of friends and colleagues who have stood behind me no matter what the outcome. They are my political angels. They know who they are, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

The fact, though, that I have a seat at all in this House that I was lucky enough to win in the election just this past October, is a testament to my campaign team. And so Liz and Rachel, if you're out there, I'm thinking about you, and Kate, I'm thinking about you here as I'm making this speech.

I'd also like to thank the army of volunteers, not quite like the member from Point Douglas, but the army of volunteers that came out to support me, and I'd like to express my sincere and enduring gratitude to each and every person who worked on my behalf.

I also want to acknowledge my debt to the former member of this Chamber, the former member from Lord Roberts, the honourable Dr. Diane McGifford. Her incredible contribution to this House over the past 15 years and to my community was truly amazing. Those of us who know Diane know her to be quite serious. She's also very funny. She's incredibly erudite, incredibly literate and one of the most caring and compassionate people I've ever met. Diane is a champion for women's rights, an uncompromising advocate for literacy and education, and a tireless worker on behalf of her constituents. Mr. Speaker, Diane has very small feet, so I won't be able to fit into her shoes, but if I'm half the MLA that she was I will be doing very well indeed. She is my mentor and my inspiration, but most of all I'm proud to call her my friend. My intention is not only to embrace Diane's legacy, but to build upon it just as she once embraced and built upon the legacy of the legendary Muriel Smith who also once held this seat.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge my family, to thank them for their unconditional love and support, and most of all to thank them for still loving me even after another election campaign. Election night was very much a family affair for us and I want to thank my wife, Susan. She's up in the gallery here today. She's a professional in her own right. She's a clinical research nurse in pediatric nephrology at Health Sciences. She's an incredible life mother-life partner, an incredible mother. I love her very deeply. Thank you for still loving me, Susan.

My daughters, Sarah Jean and Hilary, couldn't be here today, although I know they're thinking of

me, I've received the text, their way of communicating with their dad as he fiddles with his new BlackBerry. But my son, Donovan, is here and he's a giant among Allums at six foot three. He's also a giant of a young man no matter what he does in his life. I'm very, very proud of him. I want to thank all of them for walking with me every step of the way over the past decade.

Mr. Speaker, I come from very humble working-class origins in the Ottawa Valley where my grandparents raised seven children in a two-bedroom house on one very modest income during the worst of the Great Depression. My parents, Walter Allum and Jean Barclay met in Ottawa as teenagers. They went on to raise five children. I have two older brothers and two older sisters, and I want to say publically they could have treated me a lot better. But my parents raised our family—I'm just kidding about that—raised our children on the modest stipend of a clergyman's salary.

I was raised in Dundas, Ontario, which, for most of you who don't know southern Ontario, is just outside of Hamilton. I count Trent University where I got my BA and my MA and Queen's University where I got my Ph.D. as my alma maters.

My life in Peterborough and Kingston was very important to our family life, very important to my formative being as a person, and I think of them all the time. In my family growing up faith and education were valued above all else—well, actually hockey fits in there, too, somewhere—and unlike my dad's siblings all my brothers and sisters were lucky enough to attend university. Sadly, my mother died of cancer after I had just turned 12. Mr. Speaker, not a day goes by where I don't think of her, but I know she's out there somewhere watching me today.

\* (15:40)

Mr. Speaker, my family history is the real reason why I'm privileged to stand here today. I spent the formative period of my life listening to my dad, a Presbyterian minister, preach the social gospel and pound the pulpit fighting for social justice. My dad is primarily motivated by faith, as were his political heroes Woodsworth, Douglas, Caldwell and Knowles. It's no wonder that his political heroes are also mine. His constant reminder of our duty not to ourselves but to one another and his clarion call each Sunday to work not for private gain but for the private good are at the very heart of my political convictions and why politics serves as a vocation for

me in the same way that his ministry served as a calling for him.

Mr. Speaker, my dad couldn't be here today. He's 89. He lives in Waterloo, Ontario. He's at the bedside of his second wife, the Reverend Helen Allum, who's nearing the end of a life spent working with those who had very little to call their own. I pray for Helen, but I want to say that were it not for my dad, I would not now be standing here.

I had the chance during the election campaign to listen to a man whose family member had been severely injured after a violent confrontation. But what he wanted me to know most of all during the time that we talked together on his doorstep was that he was not interested in revenge; he only wanted justice, legal justice, for his family and for his child. Mr. Speaker, I want justice for his family too. I think every member of this House is here to serve justice.

But, if history has taught us anything, it is that we cannot have legal justice without economic justice. We cannot have it without social justice. And in the 21st century especially, we cannot have it without environmental justice. These four pillars of justice—economic, social, environmental and legal—are what animates my political life and why I ran for office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm still a relative newcomer to Manitoba, having only moved here in 1996. It took almost no time at all for us to learn that there are no degrees of separation in this province. Everyone seems to know everyone else and, frankly, we now know everybody too. We also quickly learned that, though we're a hockey family, that winter in Manitoba is much too long and spring and fall are much too short. Yet looking back now, we can hardly believe our good fortune to have made so many good friends and to have laid such deep roots in such a short period of time. We decided to come here not just to work but because we heard that this was a city and a province that was family-friendly, affordable, composed of awesome neighbourhoods rooted in strong community values. We've not been disappointed. Our life in this magnificent prairie province has far exceeded our expectations. Though I was born and raised in southern Ontario, I want to say that today I'm a proud Winnipegger and a proud Manitoban.

We also know, however, Mr. Speaker, that not all of us share in the benefits that Manitoba has to offer and that we need to continue to work toward a more equitable and sustainable community. These

are the values that I have worked for in my academic and professional and personal life, and you can expect no different from me now as a member of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to represent the new constituency of Fort Garry-Riverview. It's composed of three interconnected neighbourhoods: Riverview, Lord Roberts and Fort Garry. As I just said, it's proven to be an incredible place to live and to raise a family.

Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, a river runs through my constituency, not only literally but 'figurally.' The Red River touches us geographically, but it also touches our lives historically, culturally and, especially, recreationally.

The rich tapestry of life in my community is a product of my constituents' commitment to the neighbourhood. Many families have lived in this constituency for two, three and, sometimes, four generations because there's nowhere else in God's good earth that they would rather live.

We in Fort Garry-Riverview have great schools and strong community assets. We are blessed with a stunning canopy of trees, wondrous green spaces, beautiful parks and a fantastic network of trails and bikeways. We live in some of the most beautiful but older homes in the city, and my house was built in 1913. And we have many of the best amenities for sports and recreation in Winnipeg.

But, best of all, my constituents are engaged citizens who actively participate in the safety and well-being of their own community. I was elected not only to work for them but to work with them to make our neighbourhoods even better than they are today. I'm honoured by the trust my constituents have placed in me, and I intend to work all day every day to serve them to the very best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, I've devoted my life to community development as an educator, as a public servant and as a community activist, as a neighbourhood volunteer. I believe in these things. I believe in community activism and I believe in community develop, because I know that when my community is strong, my family thrives, and when my community falters, my family suffers. My commitment to the people of Fort Garry-Riverview is to work with them to build strong, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods in all parts of this constituency.

Mr. Speaker, when I moved here, I came here to work for the City of Winnipeg, first as an archivist at

the beautiful city archives on William Avenue, and, if you haven't been, it's the old Carnegie Library at 380 William. It's a fantastic institution. And then, for the past 10 years, I've worked in the chief administrator's office. There's some interesting monkey business going on in the CAO's office these days. That happened before I—after I left, I'm relieved to say. But I'm also proud to say that, as a public servant, I'd never met another public servant who wasn't completely committed to their job, wasn't completely committed to their community and didn't work each and every day for the public good. I respect public servants; I consider them my friends and my colleagues, and I hope this Chamber also continues to respect the people that make our lives possible as elected officials.

Now during my 10 years in the CA office—CAO's office, Mr. Speaker, I somehow earned the reputation as a policy wonk. I'm not actually sure what that is, but if it means working with an assortment of committed public servants and community activists who try to build a better city, then a wonk I admit to being.

During my career with the City I worked on a number of important community development and environmental issues, but I am most proud of the work I did with the local Aboriginal community. My eight years on this file I worked with Councillor Gerbasi and Councillor Vandal, and then-Mayor Murray to develop the first municipal Aboriginal policy in Canada. It's called First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways, which, ultimately, spawned the city's highly successful Aboriginal youth strategy.

We also worked with the Long Plain First Nation to bring Winnipeg its first urban reserve. And then in July 2010 the City signed a Memorandum of Collaboration with the federal and provincial governments, an unprecedented agreement that requires the three levels of government to work in partnership with the Aboriginal community to promote positive economic education and wellness outcomes for Winnipeg's Aboriginal citizens.

Mr. Speaker, there are many heroes in the Aboriginal community. I'm looking at one here, another one here, another down on the front bench, and there are many, many more champions, and I want them to know that they are an enduring inspiration to me. I, along with my colleagues in the NDP will not rest until every First Nation, Métis, and Inuit person in this province enjoys the full benefits of citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne represents the government's values, goals, and aspirations for the people of Manitoba. It also sets out an ambitious agenda for the next session and lays the foundation for innovation in health care, in education, and for investment in public assets and services to ensure that we continue to grow and develop the economy for the benefit of every Manitoban. I'm proud to be a part of a government that moves forward quickly on its election commitments as we have done in the recent Throne Speech. These are our commitments and this is what we set out to do. We'll leave it to others to say one thing during the election and then do something else while they are in government.

For the past 12 years we have provided strong and steady government that has proven that economic and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive but belong together. But, Mr. Speaker, we in the NDP are a humble group, much accomplished, more to do. While global challenges and perils surround us, the path we have charted allows us to face the future with the hope that we can work productively each day to make the world a little bit better place than it was the day before.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this election the Premier (Mr. Selinger) dedicated our campaign to the late Jack Layton. My friend from Burrows and my friend from Wolseley—by the way, he could be the minister of defence on any hockey team I'd play on—both referred to Jack's comments and his letter, and I want to do the same thing. So let me conclude my remarks by quoting from the letter that Mr. Layton sent to all Canadians in the final hours of his life. He said: "My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world." Let these words serve to guide our work in this House. Thank you.

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** And myself, as all members have, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. It's certainly a great step in your legislative career and we look forward to your presiding over us here in the House as well as the various other duties that the Speaker entails. And perhaps I will be able to get you out to some of our schools, to visit our schools as to help our children understand the role that the Legislature plays in the province. So I look forward to that.

And, of course, as an address to the Throne Speech, it's a—I will speak in favour of the amendment brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen). Obviously, the Throne Speech falls way short in my expectations. I should probably temper that a little bit. It's about what I expected; it just falls short of Manitoba's expectations.

But, first of all, I want to thank my family, particularly my wife, Dianne, and my daughter, Janice, for their help during the campaign. Certainly, if you don't have your family on side to do something like this it is not really possible at all to do. So I want to thank them. I want to thank the volunteers that helped on my campaign team. In the rural areas we have to travel long distances, and my—to get from one end of the constituency to the other, and my new constituency of Midland has expanded, so we put a lot of miles on to get between points there, and certainly that affects the—we appreciate the effort that our campaign team put in to cover that ground.

And, of course, I would like to thank the voters of Midland for their overwhelming support. It is not something that you take for granted, ever, and it is humbling when those results pour in on election night, albeit the overall results were not what we were hoping for, what we were campaigning for. But in terms of Midland constituency, to see the support that I gathered is certainly overwhelming and it's very humbling.

And I just want to add that I had a wonderful conversation with my NDP—I'll call her a candidate, I won't call her an opponent because she is a wonderful person from Notre Dame de Lourdes, Jacqueline Theroux, who was the NDP candidate, and we had a wonderful conversation on election night. And I look forward to meeting up with her again as—over the next four years. So—

And I pledge to continue working for the good folks of Midland, with their concerns and their issues, and to reflect their values in this Legislature, which is my job, to reflect their values here in this Legislature of Manitoba.

Now the name has changed. I used to be the MLA for Carman; I'm now the MLA for Midland. And maybe that puts me in rookie status, so I'll try to draw on the rookie perks that I can, but I doubt whether that will work. But just as a bit of history, just so people are aware, the—where the name of Midland comes from, it pays tribute to the rail lines

in my constituency. And rail lines have been a very important aspect of our communities, and they continue to be a very—have a huge impact on our communities.

The Midland railroad was actually built in 1906, and it started in Portage la Prairie. It ran through Carman, Kronsart, which is southeast of Roland, a community southeast of Roland, Gretna and then through into the United States. The line was actually built in 1906. In 1926 the line was abandoned from Portage la Prairie to Carman, and it just shows you how fast things move, even in the rural areas that long ago.

The remaining line, from Carman through Plum Coulee, Kronsart and Gretna and into the US continued operating until the 1960s and then was torn up in 1976. And during my previous career of farming, the former rail line, Midland line, from Portage to Carman, passed through some property right behind our property, and the rail bed is still there, be it overgrown with bush and whatnot. But it was—it's a bit of history that most people don't realize.

The disturbing part, in terms of railways, is that Elections Manitoba still shows two rail lines in our—in my constituency that are no longer there. They've been abandoned in the last number of years and that's—

**An Honourable Member:** But they funded them. I bet you the NDP funded them.

**Mr. Pedersen:** —and that's the unfortunate part.

We do have, however, the one and only community—or jointly owned, privately run railway in Manitoba. The boundary trail rail company is in operation from Morden to just west of Manitou. It's a little siding called Binney Siding, and this has been a huge success for these producers who have loaded producer cars. There has been three new loading sites built on there, private investment, farmers going together to build these sites using their own money, and it's been very successful. I understand they have had a successful year last year, in their last operating year and are looking forward to even more success in the coming years because they have done some contract work with Quaker Oats to ship oats directly from the area down into the Quaker plant in Iowa. So there is lots of potential there for more work.

We are also on the cusp of another short-line railway becoming operational in my constituency and also in the neighbouring constituency, and that's

from Rathwell to Nesbitt. The River Hills Railway is about to start operations very shortly, and we certainly look forward to that—to the investment that will come in there. The community investment is already in and the private investment from farmers who believe that they know how to market their own grain, and they will decide where and when and how their grain is being sold. And it's not just grain.

They're also looking at other products on the short-line railways in order to diversify. So I look forward to that. That's where the name Midland comes from in renaming this constituency, and as well, I've also—the constituency has grown. I now include the rural municipalities of Pembina and Louise and great communities down there. So I am right down to the US border on the west side of Morden, and so I'm sure there'll be some international trips happening down there once I'm visiting constituents in the south end of my constituency.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as far as the Throne Speech was concerned—the Throne Speech was interesting not for what it contained but for what it was missing. There was no reference made at all to how this NDP government will pay for their spending spree. The question remains: how will they pay for these promises, these spending promises that they've made? And there's a number of ways of how it can be paid for if they do follow through with the spending. And if they don't follow through on their spending promises, it'll be just more broken promises by then. But if they really do continue to spend this money with flat or declining revenues, the money has to come from somewhere.

So the question remains. How will they pay? Are they expecting increased transfer payments? Somehow that doesn't seem very credible. But I guess if you've lived on that, maybe you'll expect the transfer payments to increase. You can raise taxes and fees and that's what my real fear is, is that they will somehow try to pay for all this by raising taxes and raising every imaginable fee out there. They can run higher deficits, more debt. That's what they've been doing for the last number of years. The balanced budget—there was no mention at all in the Throne Speech about balancing the budget either by 2014 or any time in the future. There was no financial input in there at all. So how will it happen?

\* (16:00)

We know, as Manitobans, we know that we cannot continue in our household budgets, in your

business budget, wherever you are, that you cannot continue to spend more on less revenue without either raising your source of income or without going into more debt. So that was a huge shortfall in this Throne Speech is not to address the shortcomings of revenue. We know we already have the lowest basic personal exemption here in Manitoba as compared to any province, not indexed to inflation. We don't even get the benefit of having our basic personal exemption indexed to inflation; it just remains flat, way behind every other province.

We're the highest—we have the highest personal taxes west of Québec. In the Throne Speech there wasn't even a mention of joining the New West Partnership, of the three western provinces which are in the New West Partnership now. Trade is so critical to Manitoba and yet we remain like an island here in the middle of the country, wallowing in debt, no action at all on trade, on increasing trade. We have—this government is doing everything it can to work against the business climate in Manitoba.

The Throne Speech was absent in terms of agriculture, other than mentioning more regulations. And that's disturbing for us in rural Manitoba who understand what is really happening out there, that a government will ignore a total sector of—not only a total sector of the economy, but a significant portion of the local—of the provincial economy.

And, of course, there was passing reference in the Throne Speech to Bipole III, namely the west route, west of Lake Winnipeg. Now, whether that was a typo or whether it's the beginning of a flip-flop, I guess we'll have to wait and see.

But I would certainly encourage this government to reconsider this wasteful decision, this meddling in Hydro's affairs. It doesn't work technically to run the west side. It doesn't run—it doesn't work financially. And this government must realize—they must realize that they can't treat landowners in southern Manitoba as second-class citizens. Our landowners have been totally ignored in this whole process. There has been no input allowed from them. They shut them down in committees. They wouldn't let them speak in committees. They wouldn't—they won't listen to them. I—today, again, I have five questions posted on the Order Paper, written questions posted on the Order Paper. Didn't take me long to do these questions because all I did is I went back to the previous Order Paper back in the spring session and reprinted the same questions because we never got an answer back in the spring.

You're ignoring the very landowners who you're telling us you're going to roll over top of them with a Bipole III line. We need answers to these, and I encourage whoever becomes the new Hydro—minister in charge of Hydro to answer these questions, to give me an answer back to these questions so that I can go back to my landowners and I can say, okay, this is how the government is answering to this. Right now with no answers, they can only fear the worst, and they should fear the worst.

Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of—lot missing out of that Throne Speech from a government that's been around as long as they have and no plans, no hard plans, as to how they're going to confront the economics—economic issues that are facing the world, that will affect us here in Manitoba, that are affecting us here in Manitoba. It's unfortunate that they think they can ignore the rest of the world and keep spending without any semblance of financial management. We will pay for this down the road; we know that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think, just in summing up, what my biggest concern is, is not what was in the Throne Speech but what is out there in the perception of my constituents because I represent my constituents in this Legislature. And that concern is about the rural-urban split. I believe government must reach out to the rural areas where they don't have representation. They have to reach out to the rural communities, and it's not about who you vote for, it's about representing all Manitobans in this Legislature and serving all Manitobans. In the Throne Speech, they talked—the one mention about agriculture was that they were going to introduce more regulations, and that's fine if it's scientific-based regulations, but if it's regulations—if it's political regulations built on their base of power, that one at the expense of the other, that is unfortunate, and that is what I'm hearing back from my constituents. They have a real, deep concern about being left behind, about being ignored, about being taken for granted. And that cannot continue.

And I urge this government in the next four years to reach out to rural Manitoba. Look at Bipole III. Answer these questions about Bipole III. Help agriculture step up. There's going to be massive changes in the next number of years in agriculture. We know that. There's massive opportunities, though, in agriculture and in manufacturing, and we can do this in Manitoba. But you cannot do that



hiding in Winnipeg, hiding in urban Manitoba and forgetting about rural Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll close with that. I just urge this government to reach outside of the Perimeter to constituents like mine, because they really do feel left out right now, and that's unfortunate and that's something that this government needs to address today. Thank you.

**Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East):** As I begin my remarks, I want to congratulate you for successfully being elected to the Speaker's Chair. I know you will do a fantastic job in that office. I've had the privilege to know you as a very good friend over the last number of years, and I wish you all success in the future during your tenure for the next 12, 16 years, Mr. Speaker.

I also, Mr. Speaker, as most of my colleagues have done previously, want to remark on the election campaign just past and give thanks to some folks who were very significant in achieving yet another victory in Brandon East. This is my seventh successful election campaign, four times as an MLA and three times as a city councillor, and I have to say, this particular election campaign was probably the most gratifying of all.

Our team ran a very, very good campaign with some boundary redistribution issues that put us a little bit behind the eight ball going into the campaign. We were able to, substantially, in fact, given the numbers of the redistribution, increase our plurality in Brandon East substantially, and that's always a very gratifying occurrence when one can increase their level of support in their constituency. So, in no small way, that was due to two factors: one, as I said, the team that we had working with us in that campaign; but, second—and I'll speak more to that as my remarks proceed—but, secondarily, by the fact that this government has invested in Brandon at a rate and at a level higher than any government in provincial history, and that investment is everywhere to be seen in Brandon. And, as I said, I'll touch more on those investments as the speech progresses.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to give personal thanks to a number of people who assisted in this election campaign just past. First and foremost, my mom, Bea Caldwell, and my partner Shandra MacNeill, who give me such a solid foundation in my home and family life; my brother, Grant, his wife, Kelly, who always participate in the election, especially on E-day. They come into Brandon and help pull the vote. It's very, very exciting to have my family with

me throughout campaigns and this campaign was no different. Also, I guess I should do a shout-out to my nieces, Stephanie and Kristie, and my brother in Calgary and his wife, Craig and Laura and their kids, Jennifer and Jared.

\* (16:10)

Mr. Speaker, we had a, as I said, a very, very successful campaign. We ran our campaign in-house. All of the team was—are composed of Brandon East folks. We take a considerable amount of pride in the fact that we do run campaigns in-house. My campaign manager, Lee Anne Jaworski, who's also my constituency assistant, was really thrown in the deep end in this election campaign. She'd never had ran a campaign before and, in fact, had never had any training before. In fact, the only person that had ever ran a campaign before this election was me, which is kind of a sad commentary on the level of competence available to us at the beginning of the campaign. But Lee Anne Jaworski did a fabulous job as my campaign manager, and I'd like to thank Lee Anne and her family for the job well done.

Mr. Speaker, Jennifer Nicholson was in charge of the volunteer co-ordination for the campaign and Jennifer did an extraordinary job, and I'd also like to thank her family for giving her up during this time to help out to secure re-election. My official agent, Jan Chaboyer, who did a remarkable job in ensuring that all the i's were dotted and the t's were crossed for Elections Manitoba, she did very good work this election and has had some experience before. Jan is a city councillor in Brandon and a very, very able city councillor she is, and we're privileged to have her as part of the Brandon East team. Her husband, Brent Chamberlain, also assisted with Mike Abbey. Mike was the chair of our sign campaign, and Mike and his family and Mike and Brent did an extraordinarily good job in the sign wars. It's always my favourite part of the campaign, in fact, is the sign campaigns because everybody that you approach, if they've got a sign in their yard, they're very friendly so it's a—it's nice to be in charge of a sign campaign and I know Mike had a very good time. We put up more than a hundred signs in addition to the '07 sign count. So, there was a very good sign campaign in Brandon East this last election. I'd like to thank Mike Abbey for that.

Jake Janzen was my, euphemistically, my bag man, my chief fundraiser, and Jake—Brandon East is a very modest constituency. It's a very low-income constituency. It's a constituency of humble people,

active people, hard-working people, but fundamentally humble people with not a high income, and Jake was able to very successfully fundraise in the community to be able to mount the campaign that we did. Of course, we'll be outspent by several thousand dollars by the opposition during that campaign, but that's a normal state of affairs in Brandon. As my friend, the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) said, money can't buy you love, Mr. Speaker, and— but love can buy you love and we love our constituency of Brandon East. And I feel very privileged to be both a lifelong resident of Brandon East and also proud to count myself amongst my community as a member of that community and very proud to be an activist in that community.

Mr. Speaker, my E-day campaign was run by Kim Fallis, who has ran E-days for me before. Kim also did an extraordinary job. It was a pleasure to have her back working together with us. Gail Cork, who was Len Evans's constituency assistant when I was just a kid, Gail assisted extraordinarily well with outreach into our seniors homes. We've got a dozen seniors homes, apartment complexes, personal care homes in Brandon East, quite a large number in fact, and Gail was absolutely spectacular in providing for teas, coffees, singalongs in the personal care homes and seniors homes in Brandon East during this campaign. In fact, Gail did bring in Len Evans for a couple of days, and we had Len and Gail and myself. Len was playing accordion very well. Gail was singing very well. I was singing not so well but I was singing along with a chorus of other folks when we were singing, and we had a lot of fun visiting seniors homes, personal care homes with Len Evans and his famous accordion during this campaign.

Mr. Speaker, we also had a very strong and solid telephone campaign, outreach campaign, during this election, again, all in-house in Brandon East. There weren't calls coming from foreign exchanges into Brandon East from the Brandon East NDP campaign; the phone calls were coming from people's homes into other people's homes in Brandon East. They were neighbours talking to neighbours, and I think that's a very important fact.

The phone campaign was—I will give again credit to my mother, who made hundreds of calls during the campaign, and I—as I said, my mom has been a very strong supporter of mine over the years, as has the rest of my family. Karen Campbell, Mr. Speaker, ran a very strong phone campaign out of her home. She was also very instrumental in electing

and phoning for Mayor Shari Decter Hirst last October, and Karen has been a long-time supporter and her husband, Gord, long-time supporters of mine over the years, and I'm very grateful for her support and the support of her husband and her family.

Mr. Speaker, Rita Blaikie, Barb Strutt, Diane Teichrow, Brian Hay were all very active in our phone campaign. There were many, many, many other phoners, but I want to acknowledge those who did really spend days on end on the telephones doing our phone canvassing.

Mr. Speaker, as I was canvassing door to door, which is something that I enjoy doing; once we get into the rhythm, I really enjoy it. We had very friendly responses at the doorway. I followed the lead of Len Evans who is my mentor in legislative politics, at any rate, and Len always canvassed by himself as opposed with an entourage. He felt it more personable; he felt it more inviting and friendly to people. It's intimidating when you go to a door with a half-dozen people in your entourage. Len always advised me to canvass with either by myself or with one other person only so that it was a one-on-one exchange that was taking place at the doorstep, and Len did canvass with me a couple of days during this election campaign.

I was also joined by my good friend, Vince Barletta, who is a former city councillor and a neighbour of mine who canvassed door to door with me. Jerry Storie, who's a former member of the Legislature here as well as my good friend, Harry Van Mulligan, who's a Brandonite and former Finance minister of Saskatchewan. And Harry and I were having a competition to see who could get the most signs during our canvassing, and we were always neck-and-neck. So I want to have Harry back next time too because he was very, very good at the doorstep.

I also want to acknowledge Errol Black and his wife, Margaret. Errol and I go back an awful long way in terms of politics in Brandon. Of course, I learned a great deal from Errol because he's got a lot to teach, and Errol was a big part of this campaign again, Mr. Speaker, canvassing. He's having some health challenges right now, but there is not a man with more integrity in my—that I've met in my life than Errol Black, and I want to pay homage to Errol and Marg who have been at the centre of progressive politics in Brandon for my entire lifetime. It was a privilege to once again work with Errol and Marg in this successful election campaign.

And, last but not least, I want to acknowledge my running mate in Brandon this campaign, Jim Murray, who ran a very, very strong campaign in Brandon West, and his team composed primarily at the front end of Margaret Richards, Donna August, and Ray Berthelette. We shared office space this election, Mr. Speaker; we ran a team Brandon campaign. It was a very positive campaign. We both knocked on each other's doors in each other's constituencies and had a very, very positive experience in bringing the message of this government to Brandon and into the homes in our community.

\* (16:20)

I should also acknowledge the member from Brandon West, my friend, who was successful in his campaign, and I look forward to working with the MLA from Brandon West as we have worked together for many, many years in the past. I think our first—you know, it's not ironic, but it is poetic—our first successful project together was the creation of the Stanley Knowles-Tommy Douglas—Knowles-Douglas Centre, student union centre at Brandon University, when the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) and I were both students and young alumnus to make sure that that student union centre was built in Brandon, and I know we worked very well on that project and I expect that we will work well in building—work well together in building Brandon in the years to come, and I look forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, and thanks to those who were central to the campaign in Brandon East this election, I do want to now turn my attention to the Throne Speech for a few moments. And those members of the House who have been here for many years will recognize the general theme of these remarks because it's been fairly consistent over the last 12 years. Generally speaking, during the Throne Speech debate I take the opportunity to go through some of the major agenda items in Brandon and to review the work in progress that has been made on those agenda items during our time in office.

This particular—*[interjection]* my friend the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson) reminds me that I only have 15 minutes, and indeed he's right. I could talk about the work that our government has done in Brandon for hours, Mr. Speaker, without any problem. As I do only have 15 minutes I'll make a very, very, very brief summary of some of the work that we've

undertaken and some of the work that we have to do in the future to carry on and continue building a better Brandon.

But this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, was a continuation of the election campaign just passed. It did discuss, in a meaningful sense, the mandate of a new government and the agenda of a new government looking forward to a new four-year term building upon the 12 years previously.

We are focused very strongly and very acutely on improving health care in this province and creating health-care excellence for all Manitobans wherever they may live in this province.

We are focused very intently and acutely on—through creating educational excellence and educational opportunities for young Manitobans and Manitobans of all ages.

Mr. Speaker, moving forward we are focused very much on infrastructure renewal and infrastructure development in this province.

We're focused on managing these agenda items with a sound fiscal framework, within a sound fiscal framework and, Mr. Speaker, we've been recognized internationally as a province for our fiscal management, extremely good fiscal management over the last 12 years, and certainly that will be our tack moving forward.

We are a government that's committed to building better communities and better neighbourhoods in terms of affordable housing and neighbourhood renewal, protective services, firefighter services, public safety, funding—directly funding police officers in this province. This is a government that believes in building a better Manitoba each and every day. And it's a caucus that believes in working hard in supporting each other in achieving that ideal of building a better province each and every day, and I'm very grateful for the fact that we are a very strong family in this caucus, Mr. Speaker, that work together each and every day for the benefit of this province and supportively of one another as we do that work.

So, Mr. Speaker, in Brandon the Throne Speech and, in fact, the election campaign that preceded the Throne Speech, committed to our work continuing at the Brandon Regional Health Centre. We have proposed a \$12-million reconstruction of the medical beds—the bed tower at the Brandon Regional Health Centre, something that hasn't seen significant investment in it for a few decades. But it's part of a

larger package in Brandon of course. We have completely transformed since being elected in 1999, completely transformed the Brandon Regional Health Centre.

When I ran for office in 1999, I sat on the board of directors of the Brandon Regional Health Authority, Mr. Speaker, and, at that time, we had a 1960s-era building that hadn't seen any investment in it at all during the 11 years the members opposite were in office. Despite numerous promises to reconstruct and build the Brandon Regional Health Centre, there had been no investment in that centre for over a decade. That regional health centre has been completely transformed during our time in office: a \$58-million reconstruction of the main medical building at the Brandon Regional Health Centre; the CancerCare treatment centre that was opened about three months ago now; Manitoba's first MRI unit outside of the city of Winnipeg; the complete replacement of the Brandon ambulance fleet; the redevelopment of the Westman lab; work under way to assess the potential for a medical school and enhance medical training in western Manitoba.

On all cylinders, we are firing on health care in Brandon. And this Throne Speech committed to the further development of that regional health centre with the \$12-million investment in the medical bed tower. And we're all looking forward to that work beginning. And we do know in Brandon—in fact, we do know in Manitoba—that when this government makes a commitment to undertake an initiative, we get it done.

On the education front, Mr. Speaker, we've committed to the third phase of the redevelopment of the Assiniboine Community College campus on Brandon's North Hill. This is an extraordinarily historic investment, not only in western Manitoba and Brandon, but for the province as a whole. When this project is completed, Brandon will be home to the finest post-secondary campus in the college system, I dare say in the country, but certainly in western Canada. There's been major investments undertaken at the Manitoba Institute of Culinary Arts, which has been up and running for a number of years now. The Len Evans Centre for Trades and Technology that's been up and running for—this will be its first full year. That centre will soon be joined by the complete redevelopment of the Parkland Building, which is proudly, in terms of historic buildings in Brandon—or in Manitoba, second only in size to this magnificent building that we call home

here at the Manitoba Legislature. So we're all looking forward to that development proceeding.

At Brandon University, Mr. Speaker, although we're having some bumpy times right this second, with the labour dispute, at Brandon University sod has been turned on the Wellness and Fitness Centre, an appropriate home for the Brandon University Bobcats, which are national champions over and over and over again in terms of our basketball and post-secondary athletics in this country.

Brandon will become known in the future, Mr. Speaker, and we're well on the way to developing that as a college community, as a university college community with major provincial investments at Brandon University, the historic home of Stanley Knowles and Tommy Douglas—they're both graduates of that institution, as well as at ACC. And I think the town and gown interaction is going to hold Brandon in very good stead in the future for high wage, high skill, dynamic, culturally vibrant community. And I'm very, very proud to stand with those of us on the government side of the House that believe in making that investment, significant investment, historic investments, not only in Brandon, my home community, but in other communities throughout Manitoba.

In terms of infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to build Brandon. The eastern access route is under construction, as we speak. That's an ongoing project that's costing tens of millions of dollars in investment, provincial investment to create greater trade opportunities for businesses in Brandon and western Manitoba generally. There's significant road construction on Highway 10 south. Last year we completed the twinning and reconstruction of both 1st Street and 18th Streets to the Trans-Canada Highway, along with major bridgeworks over the Assiniboine River.

And, you know, my colleague from Dawson Trail reminds me that the investment in flood remediation this spring was a major historic investment in infrastructure in Brandon. We are now protected from the Assiniboine River with permanent dikes to 300—one-in-300-year-level floods. We experienced this year a one-in-350-year flood, and all of us worked very, very hard in this House, but also in Brandon. The folks from MIT deserve a lot of credit, provincial employees, the people from the Brandon fire protective services—fire department, civic employees all worked very, very hard, along with volunteers, the Canadian Armed Forces, to

ensure that Brandon was not inundated by the historic flooding of this Assiniboine River this spring.

\* (16:30)

But, importantly, in terms of infrastructure, the infrastructure investment that was made in Brandon wasn't just to avert this one flood, it was permanent infrastructure that is going to be in place for decades into the future to combat future flood events in our community. And I think that is a credit to the foresight and wisdom of our Premier (Mr. Selinger), Mr. Speaker, but also of our government, to make sure that those investments were for the long term and not just for combatting an event of a single year. And that, I think, reflects our government's thoughtfulness and consideration, not only in terms of flood remediation in Brandon, but thoughtfulness and consideration in everything we do as a government.

In terms of Brandon as a community, we have got major investments under way in downtown Brandon right now. The YMCA, the Brandon Family YMCA, the Dood Cristall YMCA, as it's going to be known as, is under way and under construction, complementing the wellness and fitness centre at Brandon University that's also under construction. Those two facilities are going to transform recreational opportunities for Brandonites for decades into the future.

We have major affordable housing initiatives taking place in Brandon right now with the Massey Harris Building under development. The Brandon seniors housing co-op is getting ready to embark upon a major construction for affordable seniors housing in our community.

We are funding the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation which is doing great work at the grassroots level in Brandon developing kids playgrounds and park space, redeveloping business storefronts, assisting homeowners of modest means in renewing their own homes, creating projects that develop and further environmental sustainability through the BEEP program, the Brandon Energy Efficiency Program, which helps modest and low-income families reinsulate their homes get-provides for energy-efficient furnaces, energy-efficient hot water tanks and creates real savings for people who are living in their homes, Mr. Speaker.

On all fronts, health care, education, infrastructure, neighbourhood renewal, affordable

housing, on all fronts of importance to citizens in Brandon, we are working assiduously as a provincial government and investing in Brandon at higher levels than any provincial government in the history of this province. And I'm very, very proud to be part of a government that believes in building Brandon as I do, Mr. Speaker.

During the election campaign, I was asked during a debate by one of the questioners, about would I ever vote against my government, or whatever, oppose my government in this forum, in the Legislature, if there was an issue that—and all of the candidates were asked this question. And my happy response was, well, there's no need to do this at all. We are a government that is one; believes in building this province and believes in building Winnipeg, believes in building Brandon, believes in building capacity, north, south, east, west, our government is represented, north, south, east, west.

We have members in every corner of this province. We don't have a rump, Mr. Speaker, where we've got a clutch of a certain number of MLAs in one region in this province, but north, south, east, west, of all ethnic groups in the province. We, on this side of the House, are representative of the entire diversity of this province, and I'm very, very proud to sit amongst folks that do represent that diversity and that wealth of knowledge, quite frankly, that comes with that diversity in a caucus.

It's not just a single view that this government has. In fact, it's not just single view that New Democratic parties, generally speaking, have, whether they exist in provinces or the nation. We are a feisty party. We're a party that believes in having open and honest debate. We're a party that likes to challenge one another, and each other, in our work, always with the view of building a better society, building a better world. Mr. Speaker, as long as we have that principle of wanting to be a government for all people, wanting to be a government that works hard for all people, with the fundamental *raison d'être* of building a better world for all people, we will be placed in good stead in this House.

And, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues of the next four years in building a better province, in building—putting meat to the bones of this Throne Speech, and creating the ambition and the vision that we have for this province, a province that serves all people, a province that works for all people, and a province that is second to none on the planet.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** And, again, congratulations. I know I congratulated you earlier in the session on your election as Speaker, and we certainly look forward to working with you. Of course, the table officers, we know that we couldn't do any of this without you, and advice that you give each and every one of us in this House is certainly appreciated. And we know that we couldn't do it without you.

And, of course, the pages and the staff and people in Hansard, we salute you as well. We know that the role you play in keeping us all in line and recording the different information that comes forward is very important to the day-to-day operation of this fine province of Manitoba.

Also I want to welcome the new MLAs that have been elected. I certainly look forward to working with each and every one of you. I know that each one of you will want to make sure you represent your constituency well, and I'm sure that, in fact, you will. I know that last spring when we got ready to rise, there was some members that didn't have a chance to say goodbye. One of those, our Finance minister and previous minister of Agriculture, Rosann Wowchuk, which I salute. I enjoyed my years as being her critic. Certainly, we had some interesting discussions back and forth. And there's no monopoly on good ideas, whether it come from opposition or government. So I certainly want to congratulate the member for Swan River for the time that she did serve in this House.

Also, the member for Elmwood, I want to congratulate him as well, even though his stay was short with us. I know that I had the opportunity to meet with him on the wildlife management programs that we brought forward in Brandon. I enjoyed that. I think he had a lot to offer, and I know that he looks forward to some time off with his family. And, of course, as our member for Brandon West said, that bucket list of his that he has that he wants to get at, I'm sure he has one as well. So we wish him all the best.

Actually, I was looking at my picture the other day in the office. As the relocation after we get re-elected, we go through this little transition. We were hoping to move from the smaller offices to the bigger offices. But the public decided, and that's the democratic way. It just didn't work out, so we did do a little shuffle in our banks, and I got a little bigger office. That's one of the beauties about being here a little bit longer. But, nonetheless, I would like to

share you that opportunity in four years if it comes that way. Make sure you look at my office. It's not very big, but it is workable.

But in that office is a picture of the Thirty-Ninth Session, and guess whose picture's in there—the current member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). I took a very good picture then. So he took a very short leave from this building, and we certainly welcome him back. I know he used to sit just behind me one row and over to my left and now he sits behind me to my right. And I think he might be starting to lean a little way to the right, and I think that's probably good thinking. I don't know how you guys ever got him in the first place, but he is a right-leaning, thinking-forward type of guy—but looking forward to have him back.

I know the member for Brandon was talking about his campaign experience and a number of our colleagues as well. I don't have the opportunity to be quite so fortunate in the—of Lakeside. My campaign starts at 8:30 or 8:40 the day of the election. So I have to campaign four years in order to get re-elected. We take it very seriously. We look after all our constituents, and, of course, the people of Lakeside have decided that they wanted to elect me back into this great building, and I'm proud to be here actually for my ninth Throne Speech. And I can tell you what a privilege it is to be able to come forward. So thank you to all those people in Lakeside that had faith in me to help me get re-elected. I'm not going to go into the list of who did what, but I can tell you I'm very proud to be their member in this Assembly.

\* (16:40)

Now, on with the Throne Speech. I wanted to focus mainly on that during my comments. It starts off that the Throne Speech brags it's a great time to be a Manitoban. Well, I know that that's what you really think and that's what you really want to think. Unfortunately, the reality of this is, in fact, it's not a great time for all Manitobans. We have had flood devastation unbelievable. We have a Shoal Lake situation. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) talked a little about the flood that helped—that was in Brandon. And we know that there's things that we need to do to ensure that those people are fairly compensated, that they don't fall through the cracks. We had a prime example this afternoon, and I thank the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) for taking time to meet with just three of those people. We know there's more. In fact,

there's 7,000 people evacuated from Lake Manitoba alone. That's a significant number.

We know on this side of the House, we bring these issues up, not to make political hay but to make sure that these people are, in fact, being looked after. We know that there's going to be problems with any program. We understand that. We know that one program don't necessarily cover off for all people, and we know that. What we need to do is draw them to the attention of the government or the minister that's in charge so that we can deal with those. And I know that, when we're looking at the people on Lake Manitoba, the compensation programs—and I know that there are some problems there. Some of the stories that are coming out—in fact, I've seen some of the reports. As low as \$72 for replacement of a cottage or a permanent home is not enough. The current values are anywhere from \$175 to \$190 a square foot. So let's deal with that.

We know that we promised compensation. We asked to make sure that they were fairly treated. This is not being fairly treated. They need to be brought into values, where they base it on assessed value or a percentage of, but to come out and say it's \$72—but here's the other kicker. A lot of that land where a lot of these homes can't be rebuilt, they're being said, they're saying—the department's saying to them that in fact you're going to keep your land. You're not going to be compensated for your land, even though you're not going to be allowed to rebuild on that land, which makes it virtually worthless. So that is a serious flaw in the program. We need to make sure that program is addressed to cover off that particular issue.

The other problem is that outbuildings are not covered in that program as well, and that's not right either. Whether it be a storage shed, whether it be a second dwelling on there for guests and family to come and stay—some of those are pretty nice. Boathouses is another one, the member from Ste. Rose, or Agassiz, brought to my attention. I know that's very important as well. In fact, I think we've probably all seen pictures that's floated around through either emails. If not, we'll make sure that you get a copy of them because the devastation placed on the number of people not only on Lake Manitoba but Lake Dauphin, people in Brandon, people in the Shoal lakes. They all need to make sure their voice is heard, and that doesn't come from one member in the House.

There's not a monopoly on great ideas. There's not a monopoly on what is right or what is wrong, but let's make sure those people's voices are heard. And that's what we're going to continue to do. We're going to stand in this House each and every day that we can. We're going to write letters. We're going to ask questions to make sure that these people are, in fact, being heard, and we know that that's our job and we take our job very seriously.

In regards to the Shoal lakes, and I want to address that issue, and I know I brought it up in question period today, and in the last session I think there was 130-some questions, of which we asked over 100 just in regards to the flood and those in the Shoal lakes and the Assiniboia river and the other issues there as well. But, in regards to the Shoal Lake, that's our Devils Lake. I've said this in the House time and time again, and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) did take the initiative to go out there.

We still have some problems that we have to deal with there, and some of those will be taking the buyouts and the same with the cottages. And the buyouts is an option that we need to look at, but what we also have to look at is sustainability for the RM and whether that be the RM of St. Laurent, which is going to be hugely impacted, which works out just the cottages and the permanent residents, works out to about 80 per cent of their budget. When you take 80 per cent of the budget, that leaves only 20 per cent of the people to pay for the rest of the bill, and that's not going to be acceptable. We have to look at ways to make sure those people rebuild and that they have a growing economy, a growing assessment department within their own budget so that they can make sure that municipality is sustainable.

So, with the Shoal lakes, they continue to grow. The Department of Water Stewardship, unfortunately, approved another major drain this spring into the Shoal lakes. The Shoal Lake has no outlet—has no outlet. There's no place for this water to go. We need to deal with that. I know the first priority is, of course, to make sure that those families and farm operations are safe, make sure that they get compensated fairly, but the long-term problem is not going to go away. We have to ensure that we get a drain built, and now is the best time to be building that drain.

Yes, we know Lake Manitoba can't take another drop of water. We know that, but it will. It will

because of the fact that there is the drain being built on Lake St. Martin. We also feel very strongly that the Fairford drain needs to be drained as well and needs to have some work done on it so why not do the other two. Do Wagon Creek drain. That water cannot come through the Grassmere or through Sturgeon Creek.

When you drain water it's going to go onto somebody else, and if you drain it down the Grassmere, it's going to go into West St. Paul and No. 9 highway, and I know the member from Gimli knows this very well. That's the flattest part of the riding and that's where the water's going to bottle up and it's going to be stored there over the winter and when the spring thaw comes, we'll either flood West St. Paul or we'll flood the city of Winnipeg and that's not going to solve anything.

So I'm asking—I'm encouraging the government to move forward on the Wagon Creek drain in order to make sure that those people living around—they don't want to move. These people want to have their farm location. They want to stay where they are. They want to be able to make their living. In fact, I just talked to a fellow the other day up at Inwood. His name is John Dyck and he's been in that area for his whole life. He's hunted muskrats. He's trapped. He's got 125 head of cattle. His wife is stressed to the limit. They don't know what to do next. They want to stay in the area. He's a great farmer. He's a great naturalist and he knows that that's where he wants to be and I encourage him to stay there. Unfortunately, he lives on a PR road that's not accessible because it's under water, but yet he still wants to live there. So, we need to find a way so those people that do want to stay, whether it's build them a new road, whether it's access to their property, to feed, to services and those are so important. And I know that if we focus on draining down the Shoal lakes, a lot of those problems will go away, so I'm encouraging the government to do that.

Also, for those people that commute back and forth, because we talk about families, schools, family services, ambulance service, people that want to do trade through business one way or the other, it's also important. So, we have a situation—I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) is familiar with it—and I'll mention their names. It's the Tarrant family. They been living in that area for roughly 40 years and I can tell you that they're devastated. They have to drive 90 miles, 90 miles around the Shoal Lake, to get their mail, to check their cattle. It's not acceptable and I know the minister knows that. I'm

encouraging his colleagues to join him and join us and ensure that, in fact, something gets done in a very timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, 415 and Highway 229 are the two major connecting routes between Highway 6 and Highway 7. They are both under water, anywhere from two feet to four feet, and Highway 229 has had some local travel on it and I would encourage the government again to make sure that this winter during the freeze-up, once the freeze-up comes, start those trucks, start hauling some gravel, make sure that we have that road open, at least Highway 229. That's a doable job and it's something that we can make sure that happens, so I encourage the government to do that.

Also, those farmers that are located around Lake Manitoba, I would be remiss if I didn't speak about them. What has happened, their land has not had the opportunity to get water free so they relocated their cattle. A lot of them have sold their cattle herds off, and I know we've been able to defer some of the tax on that through the provincial and federal government, but what I'm concerned about is the long-term viability of the cattle industry in Manitoba. We've worked extremely hard, and I know we all work hard, to make sure that we do keep the cattle industry alive and well in Manitoba. But, as you know, as you drive through there, the average herd is anywhere from 200 to 500. There's a lot of thousand-cow herd operations in that area. We need to get that lake drained down as quickly as possible, and I know that the government's working on that but I'm encouraging them to work harder. Do—just take that little extra step because next spring, the sooner we get this land back into operation, the sooner we can start getting the cattle business back alive and well.

\* (16:50)

Once—it's easy to get rid of a herd of cattle. It's hard to build them back, We get our genetics—I know the member from Emerson, he has Charolais, or, yes, and I have Simmental, and we always like to kibitz back and forth about, you know, what the best breed is but I can tell you, we work hard on our genetics. We make sure that whatever we want to build our herd up to, whether it's white, black, red, it really doesn't matter to me, but they're all good. They're all good cattle and that's what we take pride in. But it's not easy to get them back. You can go out and buy somebody's cows that are a problem, and I'm not saying all farmers sell off their worst ones



because a lot of them sold them off this time that were the good herd that they really wanted to keep, but through no fault of their own, they had to evacuate their—get rid of their cattle. So I'm encouraging the minister to make sure that he does pay attention to that. I know he's on top of it.

In fact, I know the member from Agassiz, yesterday, asked a set of questions on the restoration program. And I encourage the minister to make sure he does look at that and address that in a very timely manner, because we know for each year it's roughly five to six years to bring that land back, and we've got the same problem, you know, all the way around Lake Manitoba. So I encourage the minister to make sure that he does that as well.

My, it's amazing how time flies. I didn't realize that I had spoke 15 minutes. But in regards to agriculture, I wanted to talk about that too. Where was it in the Throne Speech? We missed it again—we missed it again. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers), if he'd had any say in it, he'd have made sure that agriculture was mentioned in there. But again, it got missed. We—this is what Manitoba was built on. Mr. Speaker, 25 per cent of our provincial economy comes from farming and agriculture. That's the reality. And I know they talk about the Wheat Board and they talk about other things, but let's don't forget where our base is, and we have allowed farmers to be forgotten about—and that is our backbone. We got to make sure that we are there for them in a time of need and we are there to make sure that we are their voice, and we do meet with these producers each and every day. And I know that we're going to do everything we can, again, to make sure the minister has those tools, to offer him suggestions in order to make sure that those farmers are, in fact, viable.

One of the great news that come out of the campaign was the elimination of the education tax on farmland, and I applaud the government for that. I think that's a great move. I don't think it went far enough. I think we should have been looking more at the education tax overall. Being a past administrator of a school division, I know how the taxation system works. And I know that when we're a little short provincially, we don't have to fund it as much. So guess what? It goes on the property tax—it goes on property tax.

So again it comes back to where we're at as a government, and it's an easy way to off-load—it's an easy way to off-load. So even though you take it off

the farmland, let's make sure as a government we do put enough dollars in there. And I know the Minister of Education's (Ms. Allan) taking notes because she's working on her BlackBerry, sending it off right now to ensure that does get done. So I thank the Minister of Education for paying attention on that.

Healthy living: I think that that's something we need to focus on as well, and we did talk about it in our platforms somewhat. To my liking, not enough, and I don't think we do enough. We have an aging population. Our personal care homes: we've had one on the build list. It's been the No. 1 request for the people in Lakeside and the surrounding area to increase the beds in our area. Yes, the allocation numbers are there but that means our families are being relocated out to either Selkirk or to Winnipeg. Not everybody wants to move to Selkirk or to Winnipeg. And a lot of those farm families, quite frankly, cannot have the—or do not have the opportunity to commute back and forth.

But having said that I just want to leave the final note on for—the record in regards to the finance of this province. I know that it is something we need to deal with. I'm concerned about the debt per individual for those here in Manitoba, based on our total debt. I'm encouraging the government to be responsible. I personally don't feel they're going to be able to budget—balance the budget by 2014. I will be watching very closely as well as the members of this House.

So, with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, congratulations on your election and your ascension into that chair to watch over all of us. I know you'll do very well at that job.

I want to begin by saying how impressed I've been with the speeches of the new MLAs. I'm a little biased, but especially the ones on our side, you know. But I—welcome to this Legislature. I hope that your experience here has been as good—will be as good as some of the veterans that you see around the Legislature. I think we all understand that when we come into this building, that it is something special, that not everybody gets to experience this and make the kind of contribution that new members and some of us who aren't so new anymore get to experience.

It's an important job that I think that we do. It's sometimes a job that is maligned, I think, unfairly

maligned. But I think we know that the work we do here can and does make a difference for the lives of people living in our province of Manitoba. I think it's also a spectacular building, full of history and full of stories from over the generations of leadership that have been through the front doors and travelled up the Grand Staircase to participate here. So congratulations to all who have been re-elected.

I also want to—I was really impressed with the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) acknowledging that our friend, Rosann Wowchuk, didn't get much of a chance to say her final comments here in the Legislature. I thought that was very classy on the part of the member for Lakeside.

I, too, want to join in and say that because Rosann was very much a huge help for me when I first—when I was a rookie and I first came to this Legislature. There is no MLA that worked as hard as Rosann on behalf of her constituents, and I include myself in that list. There's such a legacy that she's left, not only for her constituents in Swan River but for the people of Manitoba—the first woman to be the Agriculture Minister, not just in this province but throughout the country; the first female Finance Minister; a record-setting person in this Legislature who served her constituents with great distinction. And I think I want to join in saying my appreciation to Rosann for the work that she has done.

I do quickly want to say a little bit about the election that we've been through. "Been through" makes it maybe sound a little too much of a grind than what it really was. But elections don't start on the day that they're called. Elections start well before that, as we all know, as we've all participated in. And I do want to acknowledge all of you in this House who worked so hard to represent not just your own views but your political party's views and the views of your constituents—and also the people who weren't as successful as we 57 in attaining the seats that we represent.

I do want to pay particular attention to Lloyd McKinney, the Conservative candidate in Dauphin, and to Tamela Friesen, the Green Party candidate, who campaigned very hard and in the Dauphin constituency, and I think need to be recognized for their contributions to the democratic process.

I do also want to thank all of those who worked on my behalf in the campaign, not the least of which were the staff that I've worked with for quite a while: Rosalie, Pat, Kim in my Roblin office, and many of you know the fellow who was my special assistant, Chris Sanderson. And he worked on many agricultural issues with members in the House. Chris has moved on to take courses in urban planning and made a very good contribution. It was an excellent essay. So I wish him well as well.

Saved the best three to the last—I do want to acknowledge members of my family. And I think we all need to remember, and I know that we do, the contributions that our families put forward. I'll give a good example. Ste. Rose is a new part of my constituency, and I told members that my secret weapon was my mother-in-law. My—I was about to say her age, but in case she reads this I'm not going to say her age. But my mother-in-law was my secret weapon in this provincial election. And we did fine in those new polls, mostly because of the contributions of my in-laws in that area.

But I do want to say very much the kind of support that I received from Michelle—my wife, Michelle—and our nine-year-old son, Alex—our nine-year-old son Alex, who said, Dad, you know, if you don't win this election, you can always run the Scrambler at the Tinkertown. So—

**Mr. Speaker:** When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will have 24 minutes remaining.

The time being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Thursday.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, October 26, 2011**

**CONTENTS**

|   |     |   |     |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| <b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>                      |     | Manitoba Agricultural Museum                |     |
| <b>Petitions</b>                                |     | Briese; Struthers                           | 121 |
| Newborn Universal Hearing Screening Program     |     | Briese; Marcelino                           | 121 |
| Rowat   | 111 |   |     |
| <b>Members' Statements</b>                      |     |   |     |
| PTH5–Reducing Speed Limit                       |     | Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences Awards |     |
| Briese  | 111 | Jha   | 122 |
| Coulter Bridge                                  |     | Shelby Gillies                              |     |
| Maguire   | 112 | Briese                                      | 122 |
| Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba |     | Bethania Group Fundraiser                   |     |
| Graydon   | 112 | Wiebe                                       | 123 |
| Smook   | 112 | Southeastern Manitoba Wildfires             |     |
|   |     | Smook                                       | 123 |
| <b>Oral Questions</b>                           |     | National Pancreatic Cancer Month            |     |
| Crocus Investment Fund                          |     | Gerrard                                     | 124 |
| McFadyen; Selinger                              | 113 |   |     |
| <b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>                        |     |   |     |
| Education System                                |     | <b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>                  |     |
| Cullen; Allan                                   | 116 | <b>Throne Speech</b>                        |     |
|   |     | (Fourth Day of Debate)                      |     |
| Homicide Rate                                   |     | Braun                                       | 124 |
| Goertzen; Swan                                  | 117 | Graydon                                     | 125 |
| Shoal Lakes Flooding                            |     | Chief                                       | 130 |
| Eichler; Struthers                              | 118 | Schuler                                     | 132 |
| Automated External Defibrillators               |     | Allum                                       | 135 |
| Rowat; Oswald                                   | 119 | Pedersen                                    | 138 |
| Child and Family Services Agencies              |     | Caldwell                                    | 141 |
| Gerrard; Mackintosh                             | 120 | Eichler                                     | 146 |
| Canadian Wheat Board                            |     | Struthers                                   | 149 |
| Kostyshyn; Struthers                            | 121 |   |     |

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