

**Winnipeg Youth Town Hall Meeting with Ministers
February 21, 2003
Legislative Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba**

Background:

At Rural Forum 2000, the Premier hosted a “Premier’s Youth Round Table”. At the youth round table, there was a strong consensus of opinion from the youth that the discussion process with Manitoba young people should continue. As a result, the Department of Education, Training and Youth hosted a town hall meeting at the Rural Forum in 2001 and again in 2002. In addition, two “Northern Youth Town Hall Meetings with Ministers” were held in Thompson, Manitoba in February 2002 and 2003.

Overview:

A first “Winnipeg Youth Town Hall Meeting with Ministers” was held on February 21, 2003 at the Legislative Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The “Winnipeg Youth Town Hall Meeting with Ministers” gave students in the Winnipeg area an opportunity to meet and discuss issues relating to living in the city and surrounding areas. This event was open to student leaders in all Winnipeg and surrounding area high schools. As a result, several schools from the Winnipeg area participated in a “Town Hall Meeting with Ministers” for the first time. Students from the surrounding communities of Saint Pierre-Jolys, Winkler, Fisher Branch, Sanford, Arborg, Teulon and Oak Bank were also in attendance.

The day was organized into two sessions. The morning session involved a general naming and categorizing of problems identified by the youth and posting them on a “Problem Wall” according to the ministry. Students chose the problem or issue of greatest concern to them and stood next to it. Facilitators assisted to group the issues within each of the participating ministries. Youth were then directed to join the table labeled with the ministry of their choice to talk over their particular issue and how best to frame and prioritize questions for use in the afternoon town hall session.

One facilitator, contracted through Manitoba Council of International Cooperation, was assigned to each Ministry attending. Recorders were assigned to each group of students to ensure all exchange of information was captured in as much detail as possible. The recorders were staff members of Manitoba Education and Youth.

Sixty-seven students from thirty-two schools engaged in discussion with the following four ministers:

- Honourable Becky Barrett
Minister of Labour and Immigration
Minister responsible for Multiculturalism
Minister charged with the administration of
The Workers Compensation Act
- Honourable Diane McGifford
Minister of Advanced Education and Training
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Seniors

- Honourable Tim Sale
Minister of Energy, Science and Technology
Minister responsible for The Gaming Control Act
Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act
- Honourable Scott Smith
Minister of Transportation and Government Services
Minister responsible for Emergency Measures
Minister charged with the administration of
The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act

An added bonus for students at the “Winnipeg Town Hall Meeting with Ministers” was that an invitation was extended to Members of the Legislative Assembly to attend with ministers. The following four MLA’s accepted the invitation and participated in the questions and answer sessions:

- Doug Martindale, MLA for Burrows
- Harry Schellenberg, MLA for Rossmere
- Chris Aglugub, MLA for Maples
- Nancy Allan, MLA for St. Vital

A sample of issues of importance discussed included: criteria for a minimum wage, immigrants, job programs for youth, the Aboriginal Justice System, labor laws, abuse of the Welfare System, Young Offenders Act, prevention of youth crime, gang violence and gang colors, transit fares, drop in clinics for youth, keeping doctors in Manitoba, abortion, gambling addictions, improvements to downtown Winnipeg, and search and rescue operations.

Honourable Becky Barrett
Minister of Labour and Immigration
Minister responsible for Multiculturalism
Minister charged with the administration of
The Workers Compensation Act

Harry Schellenberg, MLA for Rossmere

1. What criteria factors does the government use to raise minimum wage? Will you continue to raise the minimum wage every year if you are re-elected?

- Before 1999, there were no regular increases to the minimum wage.
- Our government’s election commitment was to conduct regular annual reviews and adjustments to the minimum wage. From April 2000 to April 2003, the minimum wage has increased three times - 25 cents each time.

2. Is there a plan to change the 40-hour work week to a 30-hour work week? What would be the results?

- At present there is no government plan to decrease the hours in a typical work week.

- The work standards are outlined in the Employment Standards legislation that provides regulations for employers and employees; an especially important legislation for those non-unionized workers.
- This is a difficult issue. A decreased workweek would mean more jobs for more people, but the decreased work week puts pressure on the employer who would have to hire more people and pay out more in wages.

3. How can we find out our labour rights?

- The Employment Standards Division in the Department of Labour and Immigration will provide information on your labour rights and handle any grievances.
- The phone number is 945-3352 and 1-800-821-4307.

4. What are the job programs for youth, Aboriginal people and homeless people? Why are we not aware of them?

- There are training programs in the Department of Education and Youth and Advanced Education and Training. Visit www.MB4Youth.ca for more information. It highlights over 220 programs for youth.
- Both departments offer Aboriginal training programs, which is a necessity because 25% of people entering the workforce will be Aboriginal in the very near future.
- There are housing programs in the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. Proper housing is extremely important because with proper housing, families are less likely to move and students will stay in school for longer periods of time.

5. What is your screening process to insure people are not abusing the welfare system?

- The Department of Family Services and Housing provides assistance and it has many safeguards in place to ensure that the appropriate people receive the appropriate amount of funds.
- Welfare fraud is extremely infrequent, 1-2% at any given time.

6. What is the government doing to prevent youth crimes and gang violence?

- The Departments of Justice, and Education and Youth have recently implemented a Safe School Initiative. Safety is central to the well being and development of Manitoba's students. Schools must be places that are free from dangerous behavior and discipline problems that can interrupt learning. Manitoba Education and Youth is committed to ensuring that all students are provided with a safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, and is taking important steps towards achieving that goal. The initiative addresses concerns such as violence, bullying, and gang activity in the school system. Safe Schools Manitoba includes representation from educators, students, parents, school trustees, school superintendents, police, and the government. More information is available at: www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca.
- The Department of Justice has an excellent program called "Lighthouses" which provides alternatives to gang activity. Lighthouses, launched by Manitoba

Justice, is a fund designed to help support recreational, educational and prosocial programs after hours for young Manitobans. An initiative of Neighbourhoods Alive, Lighthouses makes use of schools, recreation centres and other existing community facilities after hours for sports, arts, music and other activities identified and organized by local youth and community stakeholders. More information is available at:

www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lighthouses.

- The cause of gang violence is the result of many factors, such as poverty, a bad home life, low level of education, low self-esteem and a feeling of being un-connected to a community.
- Our government and other stakeholders need to develop more positive programs that will address the needs of youth. We also need to go after gang recruiters who actively pursue young people and pressure them to join gangs.

7. Explain the young offenders act for serious offences?

- The Young Offenders Act is the responsibility of the Federal Government. Those under the age of 12 cannot be tried as an adult, but those over 12 can be tried as an adult. For more information visit: www.gov.mb.ca/justice/additonal/young

8. Are there any plans for an Aboriginal justice system?

- Unfortunately, there are a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people in the jail system.
- The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry outlined several recommendations and one of them was a separate justice system. Many of these reforms were intended as transitional steps to the establishment of an Aboriginal justice system, while others were intended to address issues that would arise in those communities where Aboriginal justice systems would have no jurisdiction. For more information visit: www.ajic.mb.ca/reports/final-toc.html.
- The Government of Manitoba is proud that its child and welfare system has been redesigned so that an Aboriginal office manages Aboriginal children and families. It is hoped that the re-organization will lead to many positive outcomes, one being fewer incarcerations.

9. Could free language training be provided for jobs that are in high demand? For example those in high School?

- Free language training is currently available.
- The Department of Labour and Immigration's Settlement Services provides assistance such as language training to immigrants. For example, the Department provides language training to workers in Brandon's Maple Leaf plant who recently immigrated from Mexico.
- The Government spends \$1.7 million on English as a Second Language (ESL) in Winnipeg School Division 1.
- Bilingual training is available for small French communities.
- ESL training is available for German immigrants who have settled in the Pembina Valley (Altona, Morden, Winkler, and Steinbach).

10. What are we doing in MB to accommodate immigrants?

- In addition to activities noted in the response to questions nine, the Government provides support to employers who need immigrants for their workforce. We also try to attract immigrants with specific skill sets.
- Government also supports programs for war affected families.

11. What is Government doing to attract people to Manitoba?

- The Government has a provincial nominee program that aims to bring 10,000 highly skilled individuals from outside Canada to Manitoba.
- Another important goal is to ensure that the 10,000 stay to live and work in Manitoba.
- The Government also has the program “Come Back to Manitoba” that connects with Manitobans who left the province to try to encourage them to return to the province. The regularly published journal highlights the good points of Manitoba – great jobs, diversified economy, good place to raise a family, affordable cost of living, and so forth.

12. What are Government’s criteria for selecting immigrants?

- The Government of Manitoba abides by the regular standards – checks on their health status, VISA, criminal record, etc.
- Our position is that we want immigrants and we need more people in this province. We want to abide by the standard checks and balances, but do not want to be overly sensitive.

13. How does the Government balance the needs of immigrants and needs of residents who might live in high poverty?

- A balance is needed.
- Studies have shown that refugees and immigrants rarely use the social or judicial system because they enter the province via a sponsor and quickly connect with an existing community. Government addresses the needs of the immigrant community, but also the needs of the disenfranchised people.

14. How has Government changed the compensation for firefighters?

- We are pleased that the Workplace Safety and Health Board have changed the worker’s compensation for firefighters who are more susceptible to five types of cancer.
- Usually, employees have to prove that their illnesses are a direct result from the job; with firefighters, employers have to prove that the firefighters’ cancers did not directly result from the job.

15. How can we know more about Workplace Safety and Health?

- Youth need to know about workplace safety and health because youth, and especially young males, get hurt the most on the job.

- The Employment Standards Division in the Department of Labour and Immigration will provide information on your labour rights and handle any grievances. The phone number is 945-3352 and 1-800-821-4307.
- The program “Workers of Tomorrow” educates high school students about job safety.

16. How is Government encouraging health care professionals to stay in Manitoba?

- Government provided more funding to training programs for health care professionals, and as a result, we will have more graduates in the health care field.
- Studies show that Manitoba graduates are more likely to stay in the province. Minister Chomiak notes that 95% of the nursing graduates are staying in Manitoba.
- The Government is also providing scholarships to medical students if they stay to work in the province for a few years.

***Honourable Dianne McGifford
Minister of Advanced Education and Training
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Seniors***

Nancy Allan, MLA, St. Vital

1. What is the game plan for the provincial government to identify the degree of the drug problem in schools? What steps will they take to resolve the problem?

Nancy Allan

- *Senior management needs to determine if drugs are an issue in their school and determine the proper process to address the issue of drugs in their school.*
- Having locker searches will violate the rights of students.
- The Provincial Government can't mandate a solution – senior management needs to approach the issue.

Dianne McGifford

- A balance needs to be created between human rights and active legislation.

2. Who decides how much money each school receives and how the school spends it?

Dianne McGifford

- Spending is determined by the Provincial Government as a whole.
- School funding is based on a funding formula. Once funding has been distributed to School Divisions, the School Divisions are responsible for determining how much money will be given to each school.
- 85% of funding to school goes to pay for teachers, custodial staff, and bus drivers etc.

- 15% of funding to schools goes to identify programs such as French Immersion, Continuing and Adult Education, etc.

3. Shouldn't infrastructure issues be important in schools eg. mold, tiles, floors etc.?

Nancy Allan

- Professional development, staff training and ensuring good staff is much more important to ensure that students receive a proper education.

4. Schools are run down and need funding. Is there anything that the Provincial Government can do to help fix infrastructure?

Nancy Allan

- When money gets tight you have to decide what is more important, teacher quality or structure of buildings.
- The Provincial Government has made a decision that no new schools are going to be built, instead old buildings are being restored and this takes time and money – it is being done one day at a time.

Dianne McGifford

- Post-secondary buildings are prioritized based on need. One example is the engineering building at the University of Manitoba that had a roof that was falling down.
- 50 million dollars has been given to the University of Manitoba for infrastructure.
- 14 million dollars has been given to the University of Winnipeg for infrastructure.
- Red River College has a brand new building located downtown.
- 5 million dollars has been given to the University of Brandon.
- 1 million dollars has been given to St. Boniface College.

5. What is the government's plan on offering more French Immersion Programming? How can the government make it a more attractive program to take?

Nancy Allan

- South St. Vital will be receiving a brand new French Immersion School.
- Decisions regarding French Immersion programs are made by the parents and usually for very specific reasons.
- **Student Statement** - With the decrease in French Immersion students there has been a decrease in French Immersion resources including teachers.

Diane McGifford

- Thank you for your concern regarding the French Immersion program. You have made a very valid point and I will keep that in mind.

6. The government would like to keep youth in Manitoba. What is the government doing to improve the quality, selection, affordability, and accessibility of post-secondary education in Manitoba?

Dianne McGifford

- Tuition at Universities has decreased by 25% since 1999 and College tuition has been decreased by 19%.
- 6.2 million dollars worth of bursaries were given to Manitoba students last year alone.
- Manitoba Scholarships/Bursaries equaled an additional 5 million dollars last year.
- 2.8 million dollars has been provided for the retention and recruitment of medical students who would be willing to work in Rural Manitoba.
- Increased funding has been provided to Manitoba's ACCESS program.
- University funding has overall increased.
- There is a veterinary program in Manitoba that will send students to Saskatchewan to attend veterinary school.
- Students who wish to take a University or College program that is not available in Manitoba are eligible for funding through the Manitoba Provincial Government Bursaries and Scholarships Programs.
- Apprenticeship programs allow students to work and get experience in Manitoba.

Honourable Tim Sale

Minister of Energy, Science and Technology

Minister responsible for The Gaming Control Act

Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act

Doug Martindale, MLA for Burrows

- 1. What is your government doing to educate Manitobans about the Kyoto Conference eg. brochures, advertisements, and commercials? What advancements have been made and what is being done to implement recommendations from the Kyoto Protocol?**
 - There have been pamphlets created, and a mini-newspaper called "Take Action on Climate Change" with an accompanying website, along with 15 second TV ads.
 - Government financially supports organizations such as Fort Whyte Centre, Resource Conservation Manitoba, and Manitoba Econetwork, which are responsible for public education regarding environmental issues.
- 2. Is the government going to assist MB Hydro in compensating for the losses of the nearby reserves due to flooding?**
 - Government has several \$100 million contracts in compensation for the Cree Nation that are or will be flooded.
 - Cross Lake First Nation has yet to agree to any contracts, but the government has committed \$24 million to building a bridge to Cross Lake.
 - The fishery industry is better in these areas now, then it was in the 1960's.
 - New "run-of-the-river" dams limit flooding by harnessing the natural flow of the river.
- 3. Does Manitoba make a lot of money from Hydro exports? Will exports be increased and if so where to?**

- Hydro currently makes \$400-500 million per year that is spent on operations and building new dams.
 - Profit is made by exporting electricity to the US, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.
 - New money is being used to lower Hydro's debt.
 - Future dams are built based on 20-year contracts with buyers.
- 4. What do you believe will be the effects of an ethanol industry on Manitobans, more specifically agricultural producers eg. job opportunities, price of gas, effects on environment, research, education?**
- There are new ethanol plants being currently opened in Minnedosa.
 - Grain would be bought from Manitoba farmers to create ethanol.
 - The ash by-product of the ethanol process is still nutrient rich, and will be sold back to farmers to use as livestock feed.
 - There will be a positive impact on the environment, and it will help the government move more towards the Kyoto protocol.
- 5. Has the government considered the effects of the general smoking ban on youth?**
- There exists an all party committee that will give recommendations to the government within six months.
- 6. Will there be compensation for the businesses that are forced to shut their doors to minors or smokers?**
- The compensation provided to the Manitoba public by the government is provided by free health care to the victims of smoking-related illnesses.
 - There is presumptive legislation in place for certain types of cancer caused by employment hazards.
- 7. Is there a clause in the smoking by-law that will protect the interests of small businesses such as cigar and cigarette providers?**
- This is a municipal issue.
 - Minister believes that it must be a consideration before any action is taken.
 - If a ban did occur, the government would give sufficient lead-time for businesses to change their focus.
 - The ban is currently being examined by an all party committee.
- 8. What is being done about lowering the teen suicide rate in MB?**
- Government is trying to create programs to address underlying issues like poverty, unemployment, and family situations.
 - Government is creating more opportunities for higher education, and creating more resources to help people to cope with mental illness.
 - Programs have been created to deal with issues such as bullying and discrimination, and are not stigmatizing.

9. Why isn't HIV/AIDS a more prominent issue in education?

- Many parents are uncomfortable with the issue of HIV/AIDS.
- HIV/AIDS is already a serious part of the health curriculum.
- Minister believes that there are also many emotional aspects of the disease that should be discussed in schools.

10. We believe the reservations in Manitoba are below standard. What are you going to do to better the situation? Where will the funding come from?

- There exists a vast range of reservations in the province.
- The success of reserves can be linked to many factors such as road access, and positive leadership.
- There are more aboriginal teachers on reserves now. Approximately 60% are aboriginal.
- The constitution states that it is the responsibility of the Federal government to govern reserves.
- The provincial government does not want to take over the Federal responsibility.
- Provincial government helps fund organizations such as the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Southern Chiefs Organization.

11. What is being done about keeping/attracting/educating doctors in MB?

- There are more doctors in the province now than four years ago.
- The government offers guaranteed salaries to rural doctors.
- Medical school has been expanded to accept 90 applicants.
- A program exists to increase immigration of qualified doctors by reserving residency positions for foreign-trained doctors.
- More government funding is available to create medical research facilities in order to attract medical specialists.

12. What education is there about the effects/procedures/dangers etc. about abortion?

- The government created the Healthy Child Program, which provides education.
- They have opened a clinic in one Winnipeg high school in order to provide support to the school community.

13. What kind of abortions are legal/illegal?

- Abortions are only performed in legal medical settings.
- Minister prefers if abortions are performed in public funded facilities.
- All types of abortions are legal in Manitoba, and are selected depending on the circumstances and the length of pregnancy.

14. How is the government dealing with the issues of youth violence, gang violence, gang colours, etc.?

- The Minister of Education and Youth has banned gang colours, but it is up to school principals to enforce and interpret the ban.
- The Winnipeg School Division has a no tolerance policy on weapons.
- There are programs in place to train former gang members in trades, so they can leave the gang and make a positive contribution to society.

Miscellaneous questions addressed to Doug Martindale, MLA for Burrows

- **Student Question:** What does the costs of an ambulance go towards?
- **Doug Martindale:** The Municipal government maintains the staff and therefore this question should be asked to a city counsellor. The Province brought in 80 ambulances.
- **Student Question:** If entertainment tax is dropped, what is the effect?
- **Doug Martindale:** City is looking at dedicating funds for culture. If there is no entertainment tax, a revenue replacement will be needed elsewhere.
- **Student Question:** What factors are used to determine which highways are upgraded?
- **Doug Martindale:** There is a plan, which is priority-based. The Federal Government collects huge gas taxes. 3 to 4 million dollars goes into rural roads from the federal government.
- **Student Question:** Manitoba does have an ESL curriculum. We heard that 1/3 of the students in British Columbia dropped out because of the curriculum. What is Manitoba going to do?
- **Student Response:** Some students have localized programs. Some teachers are given second rate jobs and pay. They are not seen as qualified teachers.
- **Doug Martindale:** He stated that he knows students from Afghanistan going into engineering. While there is a Manitoba curriculum, ESL is not mandated. Approximately 30% to 70% of ESL students drop out before graduation.
- **Student Statement:** Teachers just got a wage increase; perhaps the system aims at mediocrity. They are given no incentives to do more.
- **Doug Martindale:** Teachers receive a regular increase of 2 to 3%. They have done well in proportion to other professions.
- **Student Question:** Why aren't inner city schools not getting textbooks?
- **Doug Martindale:** Schools have an increase in funding every year of about 2 to 4%, which parallels with the Cost of Living. In most schools, enrollment is going down. These issues could be raised with School Trustees. Students could write letters to Minister of Education & Youth.
- **Student Statement:** Regarding the situation of ESL in schools. The student found a quote that "Provincial and federal government are aware of the problem, but political will is lacking."
- **Doug Martindale:** Cities benefit by immigrants, but school boards have increased expenses as a result.

- **Student Question:** There is a movement towards Senior I to IV in high schools. Is there a mandate or something that school boards promote?
- **Doug Martindale:** I think that changes have occurred as a result of previous government.

- **Student Question:** What is the government doing in regards to drug and alcohol use?
- **Doug Martindale:** The government does not fund treatment directly, but it funds addiction centres. *Scott Harland, a representative from the department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism also stated the Province funds a particular youth segment in Addictions Foundation Manitoba. There was a study done that indicates gambling has increased significantly among youth.*

- **Student Question:** What is being done to prevent an increase in drug suppliers?
- **Doug Martindale:** This is a policing issue. They are looking at an increase in hydroponics plantations.
- In Ontario, a heat-sensing surveillance was thrown out by a judge as it was deemed illegal.
- Neighbors can be shocked that the growing of hydroponics is going on in their neighborhood.
- **Student Statement:** Good idea for government to enforce the banning of drugs. Heard in some places, there is the use of sniffer dogs. The use of techniques in some of the good schools goes against the civil liberties of students. Police should be used more often. There is also a lot of drug use going on in the rural areas.
- **Doug Martindale:** The government has heard that it needs to get tough on enforcement.
- **Student Statement:** Police going undercover might not work in small towns. Student has heard in schools about random urine samples for drug use. Treatment is good if people are committed to making a change

- **Student Question:** What will the decriminalizing of marijuana do?
- **Doug Martindale:** This is an issue for the federal government. One thing that may happen is that people would lose criminal charges. There are issues on both sides.

- **Student Question:** What are your feelings regarding smoking in schools?
- **Doug Martindale:** I am in favour of a total ban.

- **Student Questions:** What is your thoughts on the Gun Control Registry?
- **Doug Martindale:** The Minister of Justice has taken a strong stand on the Gun Control Registry.
- **Student Statement:** To get a gun registered for such a minimal use is expensive in the rural areas.

- **Student Question:** A gun is a dangerous weapon. We need to protect people. You can't put a price on people's lives. Has the crime rate gone down?
- **Doug Martindale:** The crime rate has decreased since 1976 since the abolishment of capital punishment.

- **Student Question:** What is the government's stand on a school that doesn't give out birth control? Why does a principal have the right to decide whether birth control will be in school or not?
- **Doug Martindale:** This is more a matter for the school trustees.

Honourable Scott Smith

Minister of Transportation and Government Services

Minister responsible for Emergency Measures

Minister charged with the administration of

The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act

Chris Aglugub, MLA for Maples

1. What is the government hoping to gain through graduated licensing and to ensure regular refresher test for all drivers, especially seniors?

- Every province has a different licensing program.
- It may be a surprise to you, but graduated licenses are targeted to people of all ages and not just youth.
- Graduated licenses apply to anyone who is trying out for a driver's license for the first time.
- There is a 35-40% decrease in crash rates because of graduated licensing, which equals an incredible savings of \$10 million a year.
- Government took into account nine months of driving when creating a probationary period. The period hits seasons to give an opportunity for the driver to experience winter driving and other seasonal changes. The period could've been longer.
- Drivers' education needs to include gravel road experience during an in-car session.
- Government looked at changes in Driver Education and experience required for driving.
- Aged 17 to 22 year old drivers have the highest accident rate.
- Seniors are better drivers by about three times.

2. What measures are being taken to improve our roads and make them safe to travel on eg. potholes, narrow highway lanes, paved shoulders?

- Budget has increased. Capital costs have increased by 16%.
- Over a five year period, roads will be rebuilt and widened.
- Of the gas tax, \$0.11 on a litre of gas goes to the Province of Manitoba and \$0.10 goes to the Government of Canada.
- As Minister responsible for Highways, I have been working with Western Canada Ministers of Transport to get more money from the federal government.
- It costs double the money to keep roads at the conditions they are at now.
- It costs \$1 million per km to build large highways eg. highways 6, 7, 8.
- Up North, the cost of highways doubles or triples.
- We have 18,000 km of highway in Manitoba, 12,000 km are paved.
- Need to put more revenue back into highways; the Minister asked the students for their suggestions.

- Manitoba receives one of the lowest amounts of tax revenue from gas in Canada, for example BC gets \$0.19 per liter.
- Roads may have to be closed down if there is not an increase in revenues.

3. How much revenue does the government receive for lotteries and where does the money wind up? How does the government prevent gambling addiction and how do they help those that are addicted?

- Average this year is \$252 million in profit from casinos, Lotto 649 and Video Lottery Terminals.
- Money is allocated to government expenses such as health and education.
- Communities also get a share of revenue.
- The voluntary sector also gets revenues from lotteries.
- In the 1990's, 3% of gamblers had a gambling problem.
- To help prevent addictions, some casinos have set clocks in VLT's.
- Counselors are also located in casinos, for example at the office at McPhillips.
- The government hopes to dedicate profits to programs that address addiction problems.
- Another solution to tackle addictions includes prompts on the VLT's that say: "you have been on for 15 minutes, do you wish to continue?"
- Machines need to be installed that will show the gambler that they are experiencing a decrease in money when they continue to gamble, not just credits.
- The government will never promote gaming.

4. What is the government doing to improve the quality and response time for emergency measures like 911 calls, RCMP, etc. in both rural and urban areas?

- Manitoba has its maximum number of RCMP officers. The provincial government recently increased the number of RCMP from 580 to 590.
- Municipalities have 80 new ambulances.
- Since September 11, 2001 there has been a higher degree of security in Manitoba.
- **Student Question:** Are there regulations that ambulances have to get there in a certain time? In the City of Winnipeg it is usually four minutes. If you lived on a farm, it is difficult to set a response time for emergency services.
- Most communities do a good job in emergency situations.

5. Why is the revitalization of downtown focusing on building new buildings instead of revitalizing old buildings? What is the government doing to improve the situation in downtown Winnipeg?

- From day one, the government has been committed to the inner city.
- Values in homes have decreased in the inner city.
- Depopulation has been occurring in the inner city
- The cost of the new Red River College building in the Exchange District is about \$40 million.
- Both the city and the provincial government agree in preserving older buildings.
- An energy needs to be created to have people invest in downtown.

- Government would like people to see there is a reason to come downtown, eg. new arena.
- The government has suggested to both MTS and MB Hydro that when their lease is over, to come downtown and help regenerate the downtown.
- Minister Sale has developed a partnership with the city resulting in reinvestment in parks and playgrounds.
- There is more money being spent which will be a benefit to everyone.
- Crime rates will go down.
- **Student Question:** Are the leases becoming lower in the inner city?
- In Manitoba, we have rent control, which has been at 1% for a number of years.
- If you had rental rates in “free flow”, that is rent control did not exist, rent would be increasing at a rate of 20-25%.
- Rent control is incredibly important.
- Overall, in a 1.5 km radius of the Legislative Building, rents are the cheapest.
- **Student Question:** Has government looked at increasing the business taxes of places located in the suburbs?
- The Minister noted that this almost becomes a Municipal government issue, as they are responsible for zoning.
- It may be worthwhile to have tax incentives in the Exchange District.
- Student noted that at the University of Winnipeg, there is mesh to catch falling stones.
- Minister noted that throughout the ‘90s capital expenses in school such as Keewatin Community College, Red River College and Assiniboine Community College received a base level of funding. There was, however, actually a decrease in capital expenditures at these institutions. Although inflation increased, there was a decrease in what was being spent. Minister Caldwell invested \$100 million in these institutions.
- **Student Question:** Is the skywalk going to be completed?
- Minister noted that it is going to be connected again. In fact, some money will be dedicated strictly to the skywalk.
- **Student Question:** When will we see the city revitalized?
- With the Neighborhoods Alive projects, we are seeing pockets of improvement. Money is being dedicated to make repairs. The funding is facilitating an increase in parks. The Selkirk and Salter neighborhoods are becoming alive again. These are positive changes.
- Further to the last point, a student expressed concern that suburbs will deteriorate. Minister stated that not everyone wants to live in the inner city and that you always need to see growth.

6. What role does the provincial government play in transit fares? How does the provincial government subsidize fares? What is the government doing to promote an increase in use for transit?

- Not all urban centres have transit.
- The government is looking at how to generate such things as alternate fuel sources like fossil and hydrogen fuel.
- The government is also looking at studies that have been done at Boston University on pavement. They are examining the top surface of roads and how to cut down friction on public service vehicles, for example separate lanes.