

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

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

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The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**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
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	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
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
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, Hon.	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
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
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
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STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
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WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

### MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege, and, in accordance with our rules, the matter of privilege will be followed by a motion.

Mr. Speaker, I rise at the earliest opportunity to raise a matter of privilege about the events of the last 24 hours that we have seen in terms of flooding in Manitoba, in particular, the unprecedented move yesterday by a number of individuals who blocked the operation of the Portage Diversion and of actions that were not only—that involved individuals but also involved a member of this House and were fully supported and sanctioned by the Leader of the Opposition and by the Conservative Party.

I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, by indicating that at 11 o'clock yesterday we received a recommendation from senior officials to operate the Portage Diversion. The Portage Diversion has been an integral part of the management of our flood risks in Manitoba to the point where if it's not used annually, it's been used probably every second year. It's a critical part of the infrastructure that includes the Fairford outlet from Lake Manitoba, the Shellmouth Dam and the floodway. It's particularly critical at this time of year because we also, in addition to managing very significant flows of water, have to deal with the very real and imminent threat of ice jamming on the Assiniboine River.

At 11 o'clock the recommendation was received, but concurrent with that, Mr. Speaker, a protest was organized. And I want to stress, by the way, this is Manitoba; no one is questioning anyone's right to protest. I believe I probably protested on occasion myself. But I can tell you, when that protest involves going onto Crown land, wilfully blocking the operation of the Portage Diversion, it takes on a very different character.

But what was particularly concerning, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that the Conservative Party tweeted about this protest, later tweeted in the day its

full support for this protest, not only sent out tweets in support of this protest, but the MLA for Portage went there. And I, you know, I could table pictures. I know it's been part of the media as well, but he was a wilful part of all of the efforts that took place to prevent the operation of the Portage Diversion.

I want to stress, by the way, what the consequences would have been if we were not able to operate the Portage Diversion—as I indicated, the recommendation from officials to operate it. By 10 o'clock at night we had received an inquest—and I do want to also credit the RCMP who went out and urged people to, basically, obey the law and to leave the area, not only to allow for the operation of the Portage Diversion but to ensure their safety. And I want to indicate that we had indicated that there was a real risk of ice jamming leading to a surge of water.

We received indication—and I was meeting with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) at the time—we were receiving, hour by hour, in fact, probably, regular reports every 30 minutes. Around 10 o'clock in the evening we received a clear indication that we were a matter of hours away from a potential surge of water that could have had very significant impacts downstream from the diversion.

And I want to tell you what happened overnight. We were able, finally, after 12 hours, to operate it. There was indeed a surge of water. It went from 2,000 cfs in the Portage Diversion to 4,000 to 6,000; by morning it was at 8,000. So, if anybody didn't believe it was a reality, if anybody didn't believe that the recommendations from our engineers and our hydraulic specialists that indicated this was a risk, the events subsequently have shown that that was not the case.

And, Mr. Speaker, again, the—we dealt with this in terms of the events on the ground. But what is, I think, particularly unique—and I have never seen this—is the fact that a member of this Legislature and a political party sanctioned this action, fully supported it.

Now, I can tell you I did talk to the reeves of the three downstream communities around 7 o'clock, and I can tell you they were pretty blunt. A couple of the reeves—and I'm talking here about Cartier, St. François-Xavier, and Headingley—they were pretty

blunt about what this meant to them. They know the situation during the spring run of ice, they know the capacity of the Assiniboine River, and they were not pleased at all. And I told them that certainly, as a Minister responsible for Emergency Measures, I said that I don't believe that's the way we do things in this province, period.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, what that action yesterday did was not only create a very difficult circumstance for a number of the people involved, it created a very difficult circumstance for our staff, for the RCMP, in having to go and get people out of there so we could do nothing more or less than operate the Portage Diversion.

And, by the way, if anyone wants to know what the impact would be in terms of Lake Manitoba—and I stress again, the outlet operates year-round; it's been operating year-round since 2010—it would have—by the way, is anticipated to raise the level of the lake about 2 inches. It's currently well within the operating range and well below the flood stage. Again, the—one of the key reasons for that was the emergency outlet that was put in a number of years. So this was a very clear case of operating the provincial infrastructure for the benefit of Manitobans.

And a member of this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I believe, interfered with one of the most fundamental aspects that certainly I, as a member of the Legislature that's been given the honour to serve as Emergency Measures Minister and response for Infrastructure and Transportation, dealing both with the emergency side and also the operation of our flood infrastructure, it significantly interfered in my ability as a member of the Legislature and a minister in this province to put in place the clear recommendation, the clear direction from our staff. And I can't say strongly enough how irresponsible, how reckless and how dangerous that action was.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I look at individuals who were there, perhaps they weren't aware of the consequences of their action, but I expect, and we all expect, better from members of the Legislature. And I particularly expect better from the Leader of the Opposition, who's a former minister responsible Emergency Measures. I expect better.

And I would anticipate that if they don't know the risks, they attempt to find those risks out. If they believe, Mr. Speaker, that they know better than our staff, I think that says a great deal about their judgment or, dare I say, lack thereof. But it also has

set a precedent that we cannot allow to remain in the future. We cannot and we must not allow this type of action to take place.

Right now, as we speak, the floodway has been opened, once again saving thousands of people from flooding. What if someone was to take the same action? What if someone had blocked the operation of that facility? The Shellmouth Dam, Mr. Speaker, we've actually had situations in the past where people have welded the doors shut on the Shellmouth Dam, absolutely unacceptable behaviour. But, you know, we can deal with that kind of action through the legal process, the courts, and we can deal with it through, as we did yesterday, through the police authorities.

But what is particularly noticeable to my mind, in this particular case, is that 24 hours later we have not heard from the opposition one iota of regret. I know not that long ago at a public meeting the Leader of the Opposition got up and joked about flooding the city of Winnipeg. And I know he said, no, no, no, no, we're not talking about that, you know. I won't quote him, but I think it came down to sort of, just kidding, at a meeting with people from along Lake Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

\*(13:40)

But one of the consequences yesterday that we had to—that our staff were very concerned about is without the imminent operation, Mr. Speaker, of the Portage Diversion is—there was an increased risk of a failure of the facility itself. And if we lost the ability to use the Portage Diversion in this flood situation, it would have led to very significant increases in flood levels not only along the Assiniboine River but into the city of Winnipeg.

And I want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, we're all Manitobans. As a member of this Legislature, we should be concerned about all Manitobans. What I saw yesterday was actions that put Manitobans at risk, lives at risk. We would have potentially been dealing with flood at 3, 4 in the morning.

And whatever members may think of the actions of the individuals involved, one of the reasons that I'm bringing forward this—and I'm sure I can speak for many other members of the Legislature—is we expect better from members of the Legislature, and we expect better from party leaders.

Blocking the operation of our flood mitigation, Mr. Speaker—[interjection] You know, they may try and shout me down. Yesterday they tried to stop the

operations of flood mechanisms, but the reality—it's unacceptable to have the Portage Diversion or any other flood structure inoperable for 12 hours through actions that were irresponsible, were not legal actions and supported and aided and abetted by the member for Portage and the Leader of the Opposition.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe the honourable thing to do would be if members opposite would actually apologize to members of this House to commit that it wouldn't happen again. I don't think it would take away from the clear indication that they're prepared to be that reckless in promoting a political agenda. But this goes far beyond any political debate of the day. We as members of the Legislature have a duty to uphold the law. We have a duty to protect Manitobans by using the flood infrastructure we have. That was what we were attempting to do yesterday. We were blocked for 12 hours because of that—those reckless actions.

And that is why I, as is the case with a matter of privilege—again, it's a matter that should rarely come up. I have never seen anything like this in my time in politics. *[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, they laugh at 12 hours, with their support, of not being allowed to use flood infrastructure. That's unprecedented; it's unacceptable.

And that's why, for these reasons, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), that the House direct the member of Portage la Prairie, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) to apologize for their role in this serious incident.

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to recognizing other members who may wish to speak to this matter of privilege, I wish to remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether or not there is a prima facie case that has been established.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** I'm surprised. We have listened to 10 minutes of rhetoric, and it was rhetoric from the Minister responsible for Infrastructure, and in that 10 minutes, he didn't put on one word—one word—of evidence. And I understand this isn't a court of law, and you showed great patience with the minister, Mr. Speaker, but not one word of evidence that the Manitoba Conservative caucus was involved in any

way with the organization of what happened yesterday at the diversion.

It was simply—clearly, what it is is a diversion in itself. This is a government that is having difficulty explaining tax hikes, that's having difficulty explaining many other things, and it's simply looking to change the channel, trying to find something else to talk about.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what the minister indicated was that our members should not have freedom of speech; they shouldn't be able to speak to people. In fact, that in and of itself is a protected right of privilege. Now, I understand that privilege is generally restricted to things that happen within the context of the Legislature and not outside the House, and that would in and of itself rule the minister not having a matter of privilege. But freedom of speech of members in and of itself is a protected privilege. And to the extent that the member for Portage or other members spoke to constituents or spoke to Manitobans, that is a protected right that we have.

In fact, I mean, I understand that the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) phoned individuals who were on the diversion, Mr. Speaker, and told them that if they didn't stop what they were doing, they would never see compensation. That is what the member for Interlake did in a phone call. And in fact, he said if they continued, if the people on the diversion wanted to continue to snuggle up, or words like that, with the Conservatives, that they would never receive compensation. That is a phone call that was relayed to us by the member for Interlake. Now, he has freedom of speech too. He has freedom of speech just like our members who may have spoken to people on the diversion have freedom of speech, a protected privilege. The member for the Interlake has freedom of speech.

I might question whether it's wise to say to people who have already had their lives disrupted, who already have not been told the truth by this Premier (Mr. Selinger) and this government in terms of what would happen, who have been misled in terms of what would happen to compensation, whether it would be wise to phone those individuals at a time and say, if you don't stop what you're doing, you are never going to see compensation. I would say that's a very unwise and shameful thing to say to Manitobans by the member for the Interlake, but I would defend his right, his freedom of speech. I would never defend what he said, but I would defend his right to say it.

And so I would say to the member responsible, the member who raised this matter of privilege, perhaps he should go into his own house. He should go into his own house and speak to the member for Interlake about what he said to those people.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what has happened here in this House, and it's unprecedented, because what the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who's been here a long time—some might say too long, but he's been here a long time—and he would know that I've never seen anybody raise a matter of privilege, not on members of this Legislature, because we have, you know, the freedom of speech to be able to speak to people, and I hope he's not trying to shut that down, although we've seen the Premier try to shut other similar things down. But I've never seen a matter of privilege raised against Manitobans, and that is essentially what he has done here. He has raised a matter of privilege against Manitobans who were yesterday expressing frustration.

And let's not forget—let's not forget—what it is that those Manitobans were frustrating—or were expressing. We can have differences of opinions, and people can have differences of opinions in terms of the actions that they were taking, but never forget why they were taking those actions. They were taking those actions because they were made a promise by this government that they would get fair compensation, that it would come quickly, and that compensation didn't happen. That's why they were there, Mr. Speaker. They weren't driving by the diversion and decided to stop by. They went for a reason. They went for a reason, because this minister, the very minister who raised this matter of privilege, and his Premier and other members of that Cabinet said that they would get fair compensation and that it would come quickly. That didn't happen, and now it takes a whole lot of chutzpah for a minister who made that promise to stand up and raise a matter of privilege against people who he's denied—who he hasn't spoken the truth about.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say, in summation, clearly, this is not a matter of privilege. It is something that has happened outside of the context of the Legislature. The minister gave absolutely no evidence to his allegation that any member of this party, or any other party for that matter, was involved with the organization. He didn't speak to his own member for the Interlake who phoned those individuals who have been waiting to get their life back on track and tell them that they wouldn't be getting compensation if they continued to do that,

which could be considered a threat of freedom of speech, but it certainly could be considered that, and we have a protected privilege of freedom of speech as collective members and as individual members.

\* (13:50)

And finally, I would say, Mr. Speaker, it's the height of arrogance. It's the height of disrespect. It is the height of contempt for members of the public to raise a matter of privilege on members of the privilege—members of the public—that this government has denied and who has told them something and then not followed through. They want to get their lives back on track. The Premier promised them that they would get compensation, that it would be fair and that it'll be fast. This government should be ashamed of itself.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

The honourable Government House Leader, on the matter of privilege.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Yes, on the matter of privilege.

I listened very 'attently' to my colleague across the way. I heard his calls for evidence. I am going to table for this House copies of comments made on Twitter by the Manitoba PC caucus.

The first one from yesterday, the first one says—advertises the rally that was held yesterday—says, rally at control structure of Portage Diversion 1 p.m. Monday, April 29th, to protest; MLA Ian Wishart to attend.

And then a subsequent post on Twitter, after the protesters, I believe, had taken the action that they had taken to block the operation of that control structure, says very clearly, PC Manitoba caucus supports the protesters at the Portage Diversion who are fighting for compensation from the 2011 flood. So I'm happy to table that.

I also have here, Mr. Speaker, a picture from, I think, the online version of the Winnipeg Sun that clearly shows the member for Portage in—with the protesters in front of their machinery. I believe this was taken while they were in the channel while they were blocking the control of the diversion. I'm pleased to table that for information of members opposite.

I want to say very clearly, Mr. Speaker, nobody in this Chamber is questioning the rights of members opposite or the rights of Manitobans to freedom of

speech. Very clearly, members opposite have that right. Members on this side have that right. Manitobans have the right to protest. I think the minister, when he raised the matter of privilege, was very clear this is not about questioning people's right to protest. Many of us have taken part in protests. What this is about is taking action that compromises the safety of Manitobans, the safety of Manitobans who are subject to flooding and the safety of those Manitobans who we asked to do the hard job of protecting people from the flood.

And I think what this matter of privilege is about and why it is a matter of privilege is that by the actions of the member for Portage and the support from his leader and his caucus, they have put Manitobans at risk, but they have interfered with the ability of the government and the ability of this minister to fulfill his duties to protect Manitobans.

Freedom of speech is not the question here, Mr. Speaker. The question here is the responsibility—when you become elected, you are a leader. Whether you are on the opposition benches or the government benches, you are a leader, and when you are a leader you have a responsibility not just to the people who elect you but to all Manitobans to do your best to make sure that you're looking out for their well-being. That is the responsibility the member for Portage has.

All we are doing is asking—and I know that he is an honourable man. I don't doubt that, and perhaps he got carried away yesterday and that happens to all of us. He has an opportunity to stand in his place, not diminish the grievances of his constituents, not diminish the issue that he is trying to gain attention for, but to stand in his place and to apologize and for his leader to apologize, not to us, Mr. Speaker, but to the Manitobans who by their actions and whose—and by their support of those actions have put at risk. That's what this is about.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights, on the matter of privilege.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor on the matter of privilege.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the matter of privilege that has been raised by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation.

And clearly we're in a season where we have got a lot of water coming quickly down the Red River and the Assiniboine River, and we need to be—make sure that conditions are as safe as they possibly can be for people.

I want to make very clear that I do not in any way condone the blocking of the Portage Diversion in the protest by farmers and others who feel so hurt, so disappointed in this government that they are moved to take this extraordinary and desperate action as they call for this government to come to its senses. I think there is a serious safety issue and I will speak to that and more in a moment.

But I understand the very strong feeling that exists among farmers and among many others with respect to this government and the government's failings with respect to the flood of 2011 and the large number of shortcomings with respect to how the flood of 2011 was handled and the compensation that was promised and in many ways never came.

Our Manitoba Liberal Party report of the flood of 2011 provided in considerable detail the list of these shortcomings, the lack of fair and adequate compensation for so many who were hurt so badly. It is an extraordinary circumstance that we have normally law-abiding citizens who feel driven to such great lengths to put this blockage up on the Portage Diversion, to such desperation to communicate their concerns to this government. And this government, time and time again, has turned a deaf ear.

One of the questions, for example, that the government in two years after the flood has not answered fairly—has not answered at all: Were people artificially flooded in 2011? All the evidence that I and many others have seen says yes, there were many, many people who were artificially flooded. This government hasn't even set a clear process to answer the question, right? The two reports clearly didn't answer the question, as we were—heard from the chairs.

I think it is important to emphasize that while I don't condone the action was taken, that I can certainly understand the depth of feeling, the desperation of ordinary citizens of our province who have felt so let down by this government.

The government has not indicated, and it should, a readiness to engage in a serious conversation with the people who feel so hurt by this government, to try and get the answers that they are seeking. This is

not a one-sided issue, and the minister must come forward and address and meet with the people concerned and look for some better solutions than we've had.

But saying that, I agree with the minister that safety for people in a flood season must come first, that there is no question that we need to be assured that the operations of, whether it be the floodway or the Portage Diversion, can be managed in a way that doesn't put people at risk. I've lived for many years, as the minister himself knows, along the Assiniboine River between Portage and Winnipeg. I understand flood surges in this area and the concerns of people.

\* (14:00)

And, indeed, it was to save so many people in 2011 in this area in Winnipeg that the water was diverted and artificially flooded so many people and hurt so many people who are still hurting. There are still almost 2,000 people still not able to go home and that is not fair and these people are still hurting. This needs to be addressed and it hasn't been addressed in a way it should've been. So I think it's time that the minister recognized and reassessed how badly people have been hurt.

The opening of the Portage Diversion has been done, historically, as I said, to save many, many people. But it puts at risk and it hurts people along Lake Manitoba, and we need to better recognize this. We need to acknowledge, as I have called for in my report, the people who are artificially flooded and apologize to them and to make sure that there is adequate compensation. And I would hope that the minister and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and their governments will address these matters and, even as we see what we can do together to ensure safety, that the Premier and the ministers and his Cabinet and his government should take another look at the situation of people who have suffered so much around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin and really work hard to see if that suffering can't be better addressed.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of privilege—matter of privilege raised by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), I want to thank all members of the House for their comments with respect to this matter. I, as your Speaker, always take matters of privilege and points of order as very, very serious and I treat them as such, and I'm going to take this matter under advisement and consult with the procedural

authorities and I'm going to report back to the House on this matter.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### **Bill 32—The Manitoba Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Amendment Act**

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that Bill 32, The Manitoba Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Struthers:** This—the institute of Purchasing Management Association Canada act brings our institute here in Manitoba up to speed with the other changes that have been made in other provinces, Mr. Speaker. It's, I think, an important way for us to move our province forward in terms of this area, and I do hope for the support of all members, each side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Any further introduction of bills? Seeing none, we'll move on to—

## PETITIONS

### **Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal**

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

This is the background for this petition:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipality with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announced on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues

currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force amalgamations with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

This petition signed by W. Ramsey, L. Neely-Carter, R. Peters and thousands of other concerned Manitobans.

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

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect

they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by W. Wutzke, J. Scott, D. Wilson and hundreds of other concerned Manitobans.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities with this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

This petition is signed by T. Anderson, S. McKee, B. Milne and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than a thousand constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any municipality should be voluntary—any amalgamation should be voluntary in nature and led by municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than a thousand constituents to amalgamate.

This petition is signed by B. McCutchin, C. Morton, D. Wiebe and many, many other fine Manitobans.

\*(14:10)

#### **Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this is signed by A. Zwaagstra, E. Penner, N. Warkentin and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba Hydro was mandated by the provincial government to commence a \$21-billion capital development plan to service uncertain electricity export markets.

In the last five years, competition from alternative energy sources is decreasing the price and demand for Manitoba's hydroelectricity and causing the financial viability of this capital plan to be questioned.

The \$21-billion capital plan requires Manitoba Hydro to increase domestic electricity rates by up to 4 per cent annually for the next 20 years and possibly more if export opportunities fail to materialize.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro create a complete and transparent Needs For and Alternatives To review of Manitoba Hydro's total capital development plan to ensure the financial viability of Manitoba Hydro.

And this petition is fined—signed by the following: B. Potter, S. Wiens, P. Hiebert and many more fine Manitobans.

#### **Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this position—petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the

PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this petition is signed by D. McDonald, E. Plezia, L. Plezia and thousands of other Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by the following fine Manitobans: M. Shaughnessy, D. Catellier, R. Kapiec and hundreds of many more fine Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the

PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by F. Jackson, A. Horner, M. Elliot and many other concerned Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions? Seeing none—

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** I'm pleased to table the Manitoba Employee Pensions and Other Costs Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2013-14 Departmental Expenditure Estimates report.

I'm also tabling the Civil Service Commission Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2013-2014 Departmental Expenditure Estimates report.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm also tabling the Manitoba Enabling Appropriations and Other Appropriations Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2013-2014 Departmental Expenditure Estimates report.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I'm tabling the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Family Services and Labour, the 2013-2014 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further tabling of reports? Seeing none—

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Portage Diversion Operations

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** I rise in the House today to outline a very serious chain of events that unfolded yesterday at the Portage Diversion which puts a thousand people living along the lower Assiniboine River at risk.

As people know, the Portage Diversion is operated at spring breakup to manage ice flows in the lower Assiniboine River. When flows reach 5,000 cfs on the river, the additional flow is diverted through the Portage Diversion to protect the communities of Cartier, St. François-Xavier and Headingley and individual properties from damage caused by elevated water levels as a result of ice jams.

Flood control management knew as early as 11 a.m. yesterday that 2,000 cfs would have to be diverted into the Portage Diversion to prevent extensive ice damage and flooding.

An incident in the Portage Diversion channel delayed the critical operation of the Portage Diversion by close to 12 hours.

Approximately four hours after the channel was operated, a surge of water and ice came down the Assiniboine at the Portage river control structure. Mr. Speaker, at one point during the night, a 13,240-cfs peak Portage reservoir inflow required a 7,000-cfs flow to be diverted through the channel to protect communities and individuals downstream.

The 12-hour operational delay not only created a situation where Manitobans' lives and property were at risk due to ice jams, but also forced the flood control management team to operate the Portage Diversion at night where there was no way of monitoring the structure. This created the very real scenario that the control gates could have been damaged by ice.

If the control structure had been damaged, the Province would have lost control of the Portage Diversion, creating a situation where the volume of water in the Assiniboine River at its crest would have overwhelmed the lower Assiniboine dikes and caused a catastrophic breakout similar to what could have occurred in 2011 where communities east of Portage la Prairie would have been wiped out. Low-lying properties in Winnipeg would also have been at risk, and Highway 1 would have almost certainly been closed indefinitely.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I thank the minister for his statement. The big thing that is in question here in his last paragraph is the fact of if.

And as we understand it, the equipment was taken away from the diversion when it was asked, and obviously this minister has done a poor job in handling the flood of 2011. This is coming back very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that this government made

commitments; they didn't live up to those commitments. These people stood up for what they thought was their right and their responsibility.

The action of this government, the way the government handled the past floods, in particular that of 2011, if they truly addressed those issues and those issues alone, we may not have seen what we seen yesterday. If they would have built the outlet that was recommended to this government, it would have not probably been an issue yesterday either.

This government has no credibility—no credibility—with the folks, the fine hard-working Manitobans that put their lives and their business at risk as a result of this government's mismanagement and the incompetence of this government, Mr. Speaker. It's such a shame.

\* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, I know very clearly that the folks that the minister's referring to in his statement certainly meant no ill will, and for this minister to stand up in this House and insinuate so is an insult on all Manitobans' rights and a privilege of this fine province which we represent.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** I want to thank the minister for his statement on the situation yesterday. I have already talked at some length on the matter of privilege earlier on.

I would, however, make one observation and one question. The minister presumably had an opportunity to go out and meet with the people at the Portage Diversion and to, you know, help facilitate this and resolve this quickly. It would have been an opportunity which he might well have used.

Mr. Speaker, that's all I will say for the moment. I've commented at length already at the matter of privilege, but I am hopeful that things during the rest of this flood season will go a little more smoothly, and I'm also hopeful that the minister and the Premier will bend over backwards to see if the situation which is still there from 2011 with people being hurt can be resolved in a better way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Flooding (2011) Compensation Claim Settlements

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I think it's important that we don't get too distracted by the zany antics of anyone opposite, Mr. Speaker.

I want to highlight basketball player Jason Collins today, the first active athlete in any of the major Big Four sports in North America to come out. And I think we should applaud that, and I think that's a tremendous thing and good for him.

The flood of 2011 affected people in a real way, and it still does, and the Premier and the minister of mouth made big promises when the cameras were on, Mr. Speaker, but as the water began to back away, so did they. And as they backed away, their promise of a hundred per cent commitment to flood victims deteriorated to the point where hundreds and hundreds of Manitobans are so tired of waiting that they're ready to give up.

Now, a few of them stood up yesterday and continued the fight, but others have given up, and they are all fearful of their future, Mr. Speaker.

Now, these flood victims took the hit for their friends and neighbours downstream, and I'd like this government not to try to divide Manitobans and pit them against one another. What I would like them to do is treat both those groups fairly.

Can the Premier do that?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. With that unprecedented flood of 2011, we made an unprecedented commitment of support for people around the Assiniboine valley and Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. That commitment amounted to \$1.2 billion.

The program, the Lake Manitoba compensation program, Mr. Speaker, for roughly 250 producers, was in the order of \$120 million. The average compensation was in the order of \$300,000 per producer in that area. This is the kind of support that has never been offered before in Manitoba.

We recognize that those people had a very—they had a very traumatic experience. It was an extremely difficult time for them, Mr. Speaker, which is why we put unprecedented resources in place and which is why we are now, under the Manitoba Building and

Renewal program, making an unprecedented commitment in the future to provide permanent flood protection for the people in that area.

**Mr. Pallister:** A commitment to permanent flood protection 13 years too late for a lot of Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the Minister of Water Stewardship called flood victims irresponsible, and he said, quote: They didn't even have the decency to accept responsibility for what they did. How about accepting responsibility for what the government did, Mr. Speaker?

Here's why they're angry. We have affidavits which state that the Manitoba Finance Minister on July 2011 at a meeting with flood victims committed the Province to a multi-year compensation program, yet no money flowed last year and many of the 2011 claims remain unpaid and that the government blames these people who protest. Picture this. They're real people, Mr. Speaker. They have real families. They're fighting for economic survival, and the government makes false promises that raise hope for them and then they walk away and leave them with nothing.

Now, there's thousands of miles put in by this group over here getting to know these people and trying to help them in every way we can and thousands of excuses emanating from that side of the House.

When will the MLA for St. Boniface tell the truth and keep his word to these victims of flooding not of their own making?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping the member from Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Opposition, will take his next question to correct the record.

There's a \$120-million program put in place for the producers that lived around Lake Manitoba. On average, \$300,000 compensation was offered out of a total program in 2011 of \$1.2 billion.

It was an unprecedented flood never before seen in the history of the province. The response was an unprecedented response by this government on this side of the House. We built a channel under emergency conditions in an area where a channel had never been built before. We provided additional protection along the dikes. We brought in the military as required to shore up the dikes. We provided compensation programs of which over

ninety-'frive' per cent of them have already been paid out.

For the member opposite to say nothing was done when the average compensation is \$300,000 per producer is an inaccuracy that I hope he will correct, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Pallister:** Mr. Speaker, the Assiniboine diversion's not the only diversion around here today, that's for sure.

This Premier remains steadfast in his disingenuous nature. What was the flood of the century for victims has become the excuse of the century for this government and it's the shame of the century for this NDP party.

Now, he deliberately flooded Manitoba families, then he made promises to help, then he broke his word, and now he makes excuses and he tries to place blame. Well, he's placing blame on the opposition and we don't mind; we're used to it. But he's blaming the victims. He's blaming the victims of the flooding, Mr. Speaker.

It is long past time for the MLA for St. Boniface to pretend he's a real leader and take responsibility for something, or is he just a Pinocchio Premier?

**Mr. Speaker:** I've provided a fair amount of latitude to members of the House. I've been very open, allowing members the opportunity to speak their minds. I've always believed in a respectful workplace. I've said that a few times before to this House.

So I want to caution all honourable members, please. Please pick and choose your words very carefully so that we can treat each other with respect and act in a dignified manner, because we have folks from the viewing public and folks that are watching us at home, and I'm sure we would want to leave a good impression to all of the folks that are here to observe our proceedings. So I caution all honourable members, please, please act in a dignified manner.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the historical record on flooding in Manitoba is one where we've seen, since 1950, floods that have been very dislocating and very difficult for the families that have experienced them. And after every one of those flood events governments have come along and put in place resources that provide long-term solutions to that. In 1961 the outlet on Lake Manitoba was built. In 1969 the inlet, what we now call the Portage Diversion, was built.

That was done at a time when the Progressive Conservatives were in government, and that was a visionary decision that was made at that time. That's the very decision that the Leader of the Opposition is complaining about tonight—today. He's denying the history of his own political party. In 1978 the Progressive Conservative government of the day decided not to proceed with an additional channel.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken the worst flood that has occurred in the history of the province in the Assiniboine valley and we've responded with unprecedented—

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. First Minister's time has expired. *[interjection]* Order, please.

### **Portage Diversion Operation Apology Request**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see I was missed yesterday.

Yesterday this government drove a group of landowners to desperation. Unable to be heard by this unwilling government, frustrated by unheard appeals, they staged an orderly, legal protest in front of the Portage Diversion control structure. No one from this government came to meet with them. Instead, this government chose to fear monger in this House.

Will this government correct these wrongs and apologize to these flood victims?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday a group of individuals trespassed on Crown land, impeded the operation of the Portage Diversion for 12 hours, put Manitobans downstream in St. François and Cartier and Headingley and, potentially, in Winnipeg at risk.

If there's anyone going to apologize, it should be the member for Portage who was aiding and abetting and participating in that action.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

Time in question period is very precious. I know all honourable members recognize that, but I want to caution all honourable members. I have taken a matter of privilege under advisement, and I'm going to consult with the procedural authorities. And I'm

asking for the co-operation of all honourable members to not stray into that territory that I've taken under advisement. Please pick your statements and choose your words very carefully so it doesn't impinge upon the decision that is still pending.

**Mr. Wishart:** We'll go on.

#### Point of Order

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I'm standing up on a point of order.

I heard the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) make a comment with regard to this being politics and this would really win your opportunities in south Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I begged to differ with this member. This is about families who are at—in a situation where their lives are put at risk, their livelihoods, their families. These are individuals who care about what's happening and are very concerned that this government has made promises they can't keep. We have agreements that are not being followed through. We have families who are breaking down. How many families has this minister met with or this government met with who cry in front of them, saying that they have not received their compensation, that this government has worn them down and they've given up?

So for the member for Brandon East to be saying that this is politics, Mr. Speaker, this is about Manitoba families who are asking this government to stand up and do something for them.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** On the same point of order.

I recognize there's a lot of passion in the House today because these are very important issues. They're very important issues to all of us, and I think we heard about that at the outset. You've taken a matter under advisement. We respect your ability to rule on that, Mr. Speaker.

This is not about politics; this is about protecting all Manitobans, the families of Manitobans. This is about not pitting Manitoban against Manitoban, by doing what we've always done in this province when we're faced with flooding, when we're faced with natural disasters, and that's coming together. That is the action of this government. That is what we

continue to do, and this is time for all of us in this House to come together and do that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Riding Mountain, I did not hear the comments that she's attributing to another member of this House. I will review the Hansard proceedings of today, and then I will report back to the House.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, where were we? The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, I believe, was asking the next question.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, this minister has continually mishandled compensation programs, and now continues to fear monger. Perhaps the best defence is a great offence in this case.

I quote Kevin Yuill, a Portage farmer: Our frustration is nobody has ever come to talk to us. It's just typical bullying. Just like 2011 when they flooded us out and didn't care.

Will this NDP government apologize to over 500 victims of the 2011 flood, or is it their intention to create fear and frustration?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the member for Portage clearly didn't—still doesn't recognize the risk that was created yesterday by the 12-hour delay in the operation of the Portage Diversion.

But while we're talking about apologies, Mr. Speaker, you know, at a public meeting—and we've attended many public meetings—the Leader of the Opposition said, and I want to quote: Okay, and how many people of us really, really 'genery' would like to flood the whole city of Winnipeg? He then went on to say, I hope the media didn't use that piece. He basically then tried to suggest he was only kidding after yesterday when the downstream communities of St. François, of Cartier and Headingley were put at risk and there was potential risk in the city of Winnipeg. I wonder if he really was kidding.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition will apologize for supporting the inappropriate actions yesterday.

**Mr. Wishart:** Lies, lies and more lies. This morning, the member for Thompson accused these flood victims of breaking the law by suggesting that protesters were not allowed to express their views by way of an orderly, respectful protest when, in fact, they had cleared with the local RCMP. It seems that

once again this NDP government is trying to shut down debate in this province by refusing to allow peaceful, legal protest to take place.

The minister said this protest was illegal trespassing. Will he table any proof he has to offer on this?

Will the minister rise today and apologize to this group of protesters who were participating in an orderly, legal protest on public lands, or is the minister against freedom of expression?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation has the floor.

**Mr. Ashton:** What my concern—what our concern is—of a government is individuals impeding the operation of our flood protection systems, Mr. Speaker. That was the issue. We had to seek a court injunction to have those individuals removed. But, you know, they're entitled to express their views.

The real question here is why the member for Portage and the former member for Portage, now Leader of the Opposition, aided and abetted—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. *[interjection]* Order, please.

A few moments ago I asked for the co-operation of all honourable members of the House to respect my ability as your Speaker to take this matter of privilege under advisement and to not make comments that may impinge upon that decision. The comments that I just heard a few moments ago by the minister clearly strayed over the line. So I'm cautioning all honourable members of the House, please—please—give me the opportunity to make a ruling and to bring it back to the House and do not make comment about the matter that is currently under consideration.

### **Flooding (2011) Compensation Claim Settlements**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, it's a shame the minister is known as a dean in this House, doesn't follow the rules and he should know better.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) to answer a simple question in regards to flood compensation. He sat in his seat, he refused to last—answer the last seven questions and since refused to meet with flood victims yesterday,

and the victims been asking this government to keep its promise.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister culture today: Will he stand up for farmers?

Protesters yesterday stated: Our frustration is nobody has come to talk to us. It's just typical bullying like 2011 when they flooded us out. They didn't care. Shame on this government.

\* (14:40)

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I think the question may have gotten into some areas that I might have responded to, but we do have the matter of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce what the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said earlier. We've put in unprecedented programming in and around Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin, in fact, throughout the province, unprecedented in protecting and providing compensation and assistance to seasonal cottage owners.

And in terms of producers, we've provided over \$120 million, an average of \$300,000 for the 250 producers. In fact, we had a single claim in which that individual received \$570,000. We've provided significant compensation.

We've been working, as our Minister of Agriculture has, with the federal government to stress the need for covering some of the multi-year costs, but we have been there and the member should—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Eichler:** That's eight questions now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government lied in 2011 to the flood victims when they promised, and I quote: We are going to get cheques flowing as fast as we can. It's going to be comprehensive.

And the flood victims are fearful for their futures, and this Minister of Agriculture refuses to stand up for them in this House. This government refused to listen and consult with these farm family victims. They continue to create fear about their future.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Minister of Agriculture to apologize to the 500 flood victims

who broke their promise—and the compensating in a fair and efficient manner.

Mr. Speaker, those families are telling the truth. When'll this government do the truth?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I want to stress that we have been there. We have met with numerous groups and individuals. In fact, there was a public meeting. I quoted the Leader of the Opposition's joke about flooding the city of Winnipeg a few moments ago, and our Finance Minister was there.

Mr. Speaker, the events yesterday—I could tell you, we've been meeting with flood victims, in fact, going back to 2011. Well, I've been in Langruth. I've been in Eriksdale. I've met with numerous flood victims, as has the Minister of Agriculture, but more than just meeting with flood victims.

Despite the fact that many of these cases we do not have support from the federal government, we brought in \$120 million for producers, an average of \$300,000. That speaks volumes for the commitment not only of this government but to Manitobans for being there for flood victims.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Lakeside, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, obviously this minister is misleading the public once again. This is National Honesty Day. This disrespectful, misleading government has refused to deal with the promises made in 2011. Protesters have every right to stand up to this government for compensation promised by this man-made flood of 2011. The government lacks any credibility of any type.

Will this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) stand up on question No. 9 and say, yes, I'll be there for you farmers? I'll be there—for this government that misled the people of Manitoba.

Shame on this government, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, no one has the right to prevent the operation of flood protection measures that protect thousands of Manitobans. And the members opposite have had numerous opportunities to apologize for their actions.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record that on this side we take very seriously the kind of risks we had to deal with yesterday. Why are members opposite failing to take accountability of the fact they supported 12 hours of the Portage

Diversion being unable to operate? That is unbelievable. It's unacceptable. It's reckless and it was dangerous.

### **Flooding (2011)**

#### **Compensation Claim Settlements**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, if there's ever been a government that's needed a National Honesty Day, it's this government. This government has lied. They've lied to Manitobans in an election. They went to vulnerable flood victims at the most vulnerable time and said to them, we will be there, we'll be there shoulder to shoulder. And then after the election, they abandoned them.

And now, when they actually stand up and want the government to fulfill the commitment that they made, this minister who is responsible has the nerve to stand up and do his political stunts. No wonder they're not getting compensation, because he spends all of his time with cheap political stunts.

Why don't you do your job, go back to your office, get some compensation like you promised you would?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

I understand, having been in this House for a number of years, that things can get very heated from time to time. I know members feel very passionately about a number of topics that come to this Assembly, but I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please, when you're making your comments, please place them through the Chair. We want to make sure that we have a fair and reasonable debate here.

The honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, to respond.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday I was doing my job as Minister for Emergency Measures trying to deal with the situation where for 12 hours the operation of the Portage Diversion was being blocked with the full support of members of the opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, I did my job. My department officials did their job. The RCMP did their job. We opened it—11 o'clock last night. Thank goodness we did, because if we had been unable to open it, today we'd be dealing with the potentially devastating impact of flooding downstream. That is doing your job.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, you know, it's as though the minister just woke up and he realized, oh, people are looking for compensation. This has been going on for two years. Two years ago, he made a promise. Two years ago, the Premier made a promise, and all of a sudden he's woken up and he says, oh, we're going to do something.

Those people were driven to the diversion out of desperation. They were desperate for compensation. They were desperate for this government to live up to their promise. They didn't go there because they wanted to be there. They didn't go there because they're protesters. They're farmers, Mr. Speaker. They were driven there by desperation because they didn't live up to the word.

Mr. Speaker, will this Premier (Mr. Selinger) stand up, live up to your word and do what you said you would do, sir?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, nothing justifies obstructing the operation of our flood protection systems—nothing.

And I want to indicate that the people of Manitoba, working in partnership with the federal government—not on every program, because there's a lot of them are stand-alone provincial funding. We have put in, in the 2011 flood and with the consequences of that, \$1.2 billion. I know members opposite have a different agenda. They would be cutting those budgets. They would be leaving those flood victims with nothing.

The bottom line is we're undertaking the challenge not only for the impacts of that flood but building in the future. And, in fact, last week we saw them vote against the budget, which is going to give those flood protection—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Goertzen:** We voted against a minister and a government who lied to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue—

**Mr. Speaker:** The comments of the honourable member for Steinbach have strayed over the line. I've cautioned the House several times today and in past days of this session to not personalize the debate that's going on here and to direct comments, especially unparliamentary language, to another member of the House. I'm asking for the co-operation of the honourable member for Steinbach and all honourable members, please place your

comments through the Chair. We don't want to personalize the debate; we want to make sure it's open and fair.

The honourable member for Steinbach, please.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, we're talking about flood victims, flood victims who have waited for two years for this Premier and this minister and all of the members opposite to do what they said they would do and give them fair compensation and give it to them quickly. They were driven to the diversion as flood victims because they felt they had no other choice because this government hasn't done for them what they promised to do.

I'll ask the Premier: Sir, Mr. Speaker, the Premier made the promise. It's a disgrace that he hasn't lived up to that promise. Won't he stand up, apologize to those individuals who were driven to the diversion because he hasn't lived up to the promise that his government made?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, when the 2011 flood occurred, we moved very rapidly on a special compensation program. We moved very rapidly with a special compensation program which has paid out \$120 million to over 250 producers, with an average at least of \$300,000 per producer.

\* (14:50)

That money has already been paid out as part of a \$1.2-billion commitment which—it included an emergency channel on Lake St. Martin which has brought down Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba an additional 3 feet so that now we are operating within the normal range, Mr. Speaker. That money has been paid out.

And in this budget we have moved forward with the Manitoba Building and Renewal program which has a priority commitment to building long-term, permanent flood protection for people of the Assiniboine valley, for people of Lake Manitoba and for people of Lake St. Martin. I hope—I only hope the members opposite have the—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. First Minister's time has expired.

### **Manitoba Hydro Rate Increases**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** And unfortunately for Manitobans, things keep getting worse. Last week taxpayers were hit with the 8 per cent big NDP PST lie, leaving this NDP's integrity in damage control.

On top of the 8 per cent big NDP PST lie, ratepayers were hit with a further 8 per cent hike for their hydro. One of the major reasons given for this 8 per cent rate increase was to hopefully save, and I quote, Manitoba Hydro's financial and credit rating integrity over the long term.

Why has the NDP compromised the financial integrity of Manitoba Hydro and then forced ratepayers to pay the hefty bill?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):**

Similar to what's been happening all day, the member is wrong in his facts, Mr. Speaker. Last week's increase that was determined was 3.5 per cent. As well, PST does not apply to home heating. In fact, the rate for home heating is 1.4 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I told the member yesterday, who, by the way, said in Hansard he'd sure like to hear all Manitobans to hear the presentation, to hear what Manitoba's doing with their dollars, when he said he wanted to hear all Manitobans hear about Hydro, I pointed out that we have the lowest hydro rates in the country. In fact, compared to Saskatchewan, which has a residential rate of \$131 per month and have had a 4.9 per cent increase and are spending \$15 billion for coal and nuclear, we've—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Schuler:** Mr. Speaker, this minister is being funny with the truth, because it is an 8 per cent increase in the last 12 months. In fact, Manitobans now have to pay for the 8 per cent big NDP PST lie. Saskatchewan pays only 5 per cent PST. Manitobans now pay 8 per cent more for the NDP mismanagement hydro hike. Saskatchewan only pays 5 per cent more.

Why has the NDP compromised the financial integrity of the Province of Manitoba and then force taxpayers to pay the hefty bill?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member needs to spend a little bit more time reading the PUB report and perhaps learning the facts.

Manitobans do not pay GST like the GST on home heating. We don't pay it in Manitoba. Members opposite want us to go to HST so we'd have to pay that on home heating. We don't do that.

The increase was 3.5 per cent. Members opposite want to go to market rates, which is double

what Manitoba's paying, Mr. Speaker. We pay the lowest cost for hydro in the entire country. If we follow the members opposite's recommendation, we'd pay at least twice as much.

They do not know the facts. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba pays 5.7 cents per kilowatt hour. Québec–Washington pays 6.84; Idaho, 7.18; Saskatchewan pays more than that—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Schuler:** Mr. Speaker, it was an 8 per cent hike in 12 months. In Manitoba we have the 8 per cent big NDP PST lie. Saskatchewan pays only 5 per cent PST. In Manitoba we now pay 8 per cent more for hydro. Saskatchewan pays only 5 per cent more.

And, Mr. Speaker, this just in from Saskatchewan, and I quote: In terms of all provincial taxes, that same family will pay \$668 in Saskatchewan in 2013 compared to Manitoba, \$2,915.

Why has the NDP compromised the financial integrity of the Province of Manitoba and then forced taxpayers to keep paying the hefty bill? Why is that?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know that our hydro investments provide 98 per cent clean electricity and hydro power to all of Manitoba, as well, export power across the country.

Manitobans know that we're going to run out of power in 2022 unless we build more hydro or we do what Saskatchewan's doing and spend \$15 billion on coal and nuclear and spend tens of billions of dollars on coal and nuclear, and not like in Ontario, and pour dirty power into Manitoba.

If we go the way the members opposite go and we stop building hydro, we'll have the highest rates in the country and we'll be importing dirty power from outside of Manitoba. If that's what they want, Mr. Speaker, then let them say so. The Leader of the Opposition's already said so, the critic's already said so. I'll go with the Manitoba way of building clean energy now and into the future.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Tuxedo has the floor.

**PST Increase  
Upcoming Protest**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Well, Mr. Speaker, on a day that's entitled national honesty,

I've never heard so many lies spewed out of this NDP government than I have today.

They lied about Manitoba flood victims. They lied to Manitoba tax payers. They lie to Manitoba Hydro ratepayers. Now, Mr. Speaker, they are trying to take away the right for Manitobans to have a say in an NDP illegal PST hike.

This Thursday they'll—there will be a PST hike protest at the Manitoba Legislature.

I'd like to ask the Premier today: Will he allow this process—this protest to take place, or he—will he label these people as criminals too?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, members opposite need to do a lot more homework than what we've seen done today.

The budget we presented and dealt with in Manitoba presented us with some very tough choices. I—that is true. The choice that we made was very clear. The choice that we made was to move forward our Building and Renewal Plan, a plan that invests in Manitoba's futures, very pertinent—today's discussion, a plan that invests in flood protection for Manitoba families, for Manitoba businesses, for Manitoba farms—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Legislature, I last heard, was located on Crown land as well. And so if it is, I'd like to ask—and certainly they ran the people off the Crown 'lound' who were protesting the fact that this government wasn't giving them the flood claim compensation that they promised them.

I simply ask the Premier of this province today: Will he allow for the protest to take place this Thursday on their NDP illegal PST tax hike, or will they deny those people the access to the Manitoba Legislature just like they did in the Portage Diversion?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the question from the member opposite because it allows us to make the distinction that is very important here. Of course people have a right to come and express their views about any measure taken in this Legislature. But other citizens do not have the right to protest in a way that puts downstream communities and downstream lives at risk. That's exactly—

**An Honourable Member:** They moved. They moved.

**Mr. Selinger:** Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite from St. Paul is saying they moved.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, the protest at the Portage Diversion was a very serious action that put the lives and communities downstream of the Portage Diversion at risk. That is unacceptable. That's why an injunction was granted by the courts.

I only hope the member from Tuxedo recognizes the difference. Is she really standing up and saying today that putting the lives of people downstream at risk is acceptable in her view? I hope not.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, what we're standing for in this House today is the protection of flood victims and their families in this province. Shame on you, Mr. Premier, you have done nothing [*inaudible*]

\* (15:00)

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has done everything they possibly can to try and shut down debate. They have acted as dictators in our province. They have made a mockery of democracy in this province.

They did that yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and now I'm asking the Premier: Is he going to allow this peaceful process to take place on the Manitoba Legislative grounds on Thursday, or is it his intent to shut that down too?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I think the First Minister was very clear. I'm sorry the member couldn't hear the answer.

But, of course, protest is legitimate in Manitoba and we expect people to come. We expect people to come to the Legislature and participate in that. Many of us in this House have come to the Legislature in other times and participated in that.

But we are also very clear that in a democracy your right to protest does not mean that you have the right to put others at risk. It does not mean that you have the right to put the lives and safety of Manitobans, Manitobans who live downstream, Manitobans who are working hard to protect others from the floods—your right to protest does not mean you have the right to put others at risk.

I am incredulous that people on the other side of the House who purport to be leaders in their

community would say it's okay to put other people at risk; if you have a point to make, it doesn't matter what the damage.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Flooding (2011)  
Meeting Request with Premier**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the issues that people are so concerned about, the residue of the 2011 flood, people who feel that they've not had the compensation that they need—I understand one of the concerns from people like Joe Jonasson and others.

Joe Jonasson has led a significant group around Lake Manitoba. For example, that they're—have never had an opportunity to meet directly and be able to talk with the Premier himself.

I would ask the Premier: Would he be ready to sit down with people like Joe Jonasson and others who are so concerned and talk directly with them?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, this government has met with people all around Manitoba that have been impacted by flooding, and we will continue to find a constructive way to do that.

But I have to say, again, that having a protest that puts the lives and communities downstream at risk is not a way to make demands on any government or any Legislature in this province of Manitoba. That is not acceptable behaviour.

I only hope the members can come to that realization soon, because every member of this Legislature is elected to lead their communities and to lead and provide leadership to the province of Manitoba. And when they do that, when they express their legitimate views and their legitimate concerns and their questions, we have to do it in such a way that we do not create risks for other Manitobans, unnecessary risks.

The Progressive Conservative Party in the '60s built that diversion for a very noble reason: to protect as many lives as possible in Manitoba. And that diversion has played an extremely important role, if not every year, at least every second year, in diverting waters from downstream communities. We have to—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. First Minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, 2011 the Premier was the face of the flood on TV. But now it's not enough

for the government to meet—you know, the Premier has to meet with people, and I think it's very important that the Premier does meet.

I think one of the things that people are hurting about is the fact that there has not been adequate recognition that people have been artificially flooded. One can argue the extent of the artificial flooding. People like Scott Forbes have said it was very considerable.

I would ask the Premier: Would he meet with people? Would he acknowledge the artificial flooding and provide apology to those who were so badly hurt?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, we saw the events of 2011, the unprecedented water that came through the Assiniboine valley, and in every community, in every step along the way we worked with the local leaders to provide as much protection as we could as rapidly as possible.

In addition, we put \$120-million compensation program in place for the 250-plus producers in that area. That money has been paid out with an average payment of \$300,000 per producer. That is the reality. That is on the record. That money has already been paid out.

That does not give anybody the right—that does not give anybody the right—to put other Manitobans at risk, to put their lives at risk or to put other communities at risk because they are not pleased with the \$300,000 average payout that they have already received. They should not take actions that will put other lives at risk.

And the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) and the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), should—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

I caution the honourable First Minister with respect to the discussion we've had previous and the matter of privilege that I have before me to make a decision on yet. I am asking for your co-operation to allow me to make that decision and do not comment about those matters.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, right—it's not about what has been done and how much has been spent. There have been some reasonable things done, but the reality is that there are some significant gaps and some people who are still hurting, including people—almost 2,000—who have not yet been able to return home.

And so I would ask the Premier: Would he meet individ—as an individual, as a Premier, with these individuals? Would he look honestly at the matter of artificial flooding and apologize to those who were artificially flooded, and will the Premier look sincerely at options where there are gaps at revisiting certain areas of compensation so that people who feel they have been really, desperately hurt can be helped?

**Mr. Selinger:** I thank the member from River Heights, the Leader of the Liberal Party, for the question. And I thank him for acknowledging that some reasonable efforts have been made to assist Manitobans. That is a—head and shoulders above what the official opposition has done, and they've been in complete denial about the \$1.2 billion that has been spent.

And I say to the member from River Heights, we launched an independent review of what happened around Lake Manitoba. We've launched an independent review of what the levels of the lake should be. We have received those recommendations and those recommendations are reflected in the budget that we've put before the Legislature and why we have brought in the legislation for the Manitoba Building and Renewal program.

We have set it as a priority to provide long-term flood protection for the people who were affected by the 2011 flood. That is our commitment. We will follow through on that. We will build those essential pieces of infrastructure, including taking the emergency channel that was built in record time and making it a permanent channel, including looking at another outlet from Lake Manitoba, an opportunity the Progressive Conservatives had in 1978 and they turned it down. We will now right the—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

The time for oral questions has expired.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** On a point of order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, I listen to the member for River Heights pose three questions, all regarding whether or not the Premier would meet with flood victims, those who've been affected for the last number of years. The Premier refused to answer the question three times. He has options under the House

of Commons Procedure and Practice, 2nd edition, O'Brien and Bosc: He can—page 508—he can defer the answer, he can take the question as notice, he can refuse to answer.

But I would call—ask you to call him out of order for not answering the question of the member for River Heights, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I know that you have ruled on this previously and I know that the leader of the House, for the official opposition, pays close attention to your words and your rulings and I know that he would not want to put you in a position of having to decide which questions are good and which answers are good. That's not your role, Mr. Speaker, as you've said before. Your role is to maintain order in this House and I know that you know the rules very well and I trust you to rule appropriately on this point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Opposition House Leader, I must indicate to the House that on O'Brien and Bosc House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 2nd edition, 2009, page 509: Questions, although customarily addressed to specific member—ministers, are directed to the ministry as a whole. But also, more importantly, is that the Speaker cannot compel any member of the government to answer any specific questions. That's up to the government itself to determine which minister will respond to the question that's posed.

\* (15:10)

So, therefore, I must respect—and also on page 510, the members may not insist on an answer, and nor any member insist that a specific minister respond to his or her questions. That's up to the government itself to make that determination.

So, therefore, I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, with respect, we challenge the ruling.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair having been challenged, all those in favour of the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

#### **Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, could you assemble the members for a recorded vote.

**Mr. Speaker:** Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

\* (16:10)

Order, please. The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. Therefore, I am instructing that they be turned off. We'll now proceed to the vote for the House.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

#### **Division**

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

#### **Yeas**

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

#### **Nays**

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.*

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 34, Nays 19.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

Now, members' statements I believe we're at.

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **National Honesty Day**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, it feels like I've been waiting all day to say this one.

I rise today to inform all honourable members that today, April 30th, is celebrated as National Honesty Day. It was invented by Hirsh Goldberg who chose the last day of April to be the counterweight of April Fool's Day known for its celebration of falsehood.

On this day anyone participating may ask any question they choose and the opposing person should give a truthful and straightforward answer. Every April 30th, Goldberg himself gives out honesty awards to companies, organizations, groups and individuals that have remained truthful to their people.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that any members from the NDP would receive one simply because one must wonder how this NDP government has gotten away with so many broken promises in recent history.

Were they honest when they said they would end hallway medicine? Were they honest when they promised to balance the budget and not raise taxes? And were they being honest when they promised that there wouldn't be a raise to the PST last election, that the idea was nonsense?

The bottom line is that the NDP, particularly the Premier (Mr. Selinger), stated last election that there would be no new taxes.

Mr. Speaker, this is without mentioning the biggest scandal and lie in Manitoba history surrounding the Crocus fund. The NDP government lied to Manitobans about the fund's viability and security. People were robbed of their savings while the members opposite were still trying to sell its great investment potential. This is all because of false promises by then Finance Minister, now the Premier of this province.

Today the Progressive Conservatives—members are wearing crocus pins not to celebrate but to mourn all the financial losses by Manitobans affected by the NDP's fraudulent actions with the Crocus fund. We hope that in the future members opposite will join us to remember those affected, and take a lesson from

National Honesty Day, to be straightforward with their constituents, taxpayers and all Manitobans.

Thank you.

### Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 95th anniversary of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. Since its inception, the church has experienced a rich historical journey here in Manitoba.

Ukrainian immigration has a long history in Canada, starting with the first wave of immigration in 1891 and continuing through to the fourth wave today. The first Ukrainian settlers came to Canada from southwestern and western Ukraine as farmers seeking their 160 acres of allotted land. Throughout the country, Ukrainian people came together in faith, and by 1914, there were 80 churches throughout western Canada. By 1918, a national convention was called in Saskatoon, and the decision was made to form the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, now known as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

With 273 congregations organized into 61 parishes across the country, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada has strong roots here in Winnipeg. As the home of Church headquarters, Winnipeg also is the home of the Consistory, the seat of the Metropolitan of Canada, six parishes, St. Andrew's College, a theology school located in the University of Manitoba. Additionally, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada publishes a monthly newspaper, *Visnyk—The Herald* and the annual 'almakac,' *Ridna Nyva*, while operating a church book, icon and supply house called Consistory Church Goods Supply.

Mr. Speaker, this year is a time of celebrations—celebrations of the history, celebration of faith and celebration of the congregation who work together. Today in the gallery we had with us His Eminence Metropolitan Yuriy, the Right Reverend Protopresbyter Victor Lakusta—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. The member's time has long expired.

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the honourable member requesting leave to complete his statement quickly? Is there

leave of the House to permit the member to quickly conclude his statement? *[Agreed]*

The honourable member for Radisson, to quickly conclude.

**Mr. Jha:** Thank you. So I would have asked, but I ask all the members here in their absence to wish them well and congratulate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada for this 'mementary' anniversary.

Duzhe diakuiu and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Farming in Upper Assiniboine Valley

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Earlier today, the Premier said that some Manitobans were taking serious action, and actually, Mr. Speaker, I agree with him. They are taking serious action. But they're also taking desperate action because this government has failed to listen to Manitobans who have lost their livelihoods, are losing their homes and their farms, and it is creating great stress on families.

So I would like to raise—take the opportunity to raise a serious challenge that farmers are facing in the upper Assiniboine Valley. In August 2012, five MLAs from this side of the House visited communities from Virden to Roblin. Mr. Speaker, we did this because they tried to get meetings with this government and with this minister and this Premier (Mr. Selinger) and they failed to respond to that request.

\* (16:20)

Mr. Speaker, and we're seeing, even from the member from Brandon East, who has indicated this is politics—this is as far from politics, this is about families who are being ignored by a government and who are losing everything and have lost their faith.

Mr. Speaker, the message that resounded strongly from each of these groups was that there didn't seem to be a solid amount of—or any type of communication with regard to water management on the Shellmouth Dam. And so what we find is figures and formulas being used that over 20 years old and actually inaccurate information in a number of areas.

And this doesn't do much in creating faith in a government, Mr. Speaker, when families are continually questioning whether this government actually knew what they were talking about and then apparently, in some cases, they didn't.

So, in the absence of consultation, the NDP relied instead on legislation that they thought would be—would appease them.

In 2008, the Shellmouth Dam and other waters works management compensation act was created, Mr. Speaker, to look at compensation for these farmers and, again, this government did nothing with that act, did nothing to support those farmers.

So what we get is a government who makes promises and then forgets about the families that are being affected by this.

Mr. Speaker, the area around the Shellmouth Dam was flooded extensively and families—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. We're long past the time allocated for the honourable member's statement.

**An Honourable Member:** I'd like to ask for leave to finish my statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for Riding Mountain have leave to quickly conclude her statement?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a no. Leave has been denied.

#### **Polish Gymnastic Association—100th Anniversary**

**Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to a rich history of immigration to our region Brandon is a vibrant and multicultural city. Fifty-six different languages are currently spoken in Brandon, and we are becoming more diverse with each passing year. We have many cultural associations that preserve culture, heritage, diversity; essential to welcoming those who come to build new lives in Canada.

Today I rise to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Polish Gymnastic Association, Sokol, which will be celebrating in Brandon this Saturday with a banquet and dance.

The Sokol was founded by Polish immigrants who wanted to preserve their cultures and traditions. At the Sokol, children were taught the Polish language, traditional dances and gymnastics, which is where the organization got its name.

Building a life in a new country is never easy, and especially in those days the Sokol also became a place for adults to take time off from their difficult lives, attend events and socialize with others in the community.

One hundred years later, some of the original activities held at the Sokol have changed. Children and youth are still given recreational opportunities through sports, and events are still held in the facility's rental hall.

Now, however, members of different ethnic groups have been welcomed, and the Sokol supports many charitable community endeavours. The Sokol Association also manages a seniors housing complex on behalf of Manitoba Housing, and a supportive housing complex for residents who need on-site care.

Throughout changing times, the Sokol still provides a chance for members of the community to come together and enjoy a fun atmosphere, and, of course, some delicious food—home-cooked Polish food.

I invite all members to join me in celebrating a century of this great organization's presence in Brandon, and in wishing them luck in their next hundred years.

Dziękuję bardzo, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Community of St. Jean Baptiste**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, in 1948 the community of St. Jean Baptiste was growing and changing. The town had been incorporated and a ferry system was replaced by the community's first permanent bridge, linking the east side and the west side of the river, facilitating business and agricultural productions on both sides of the mighty Red.

Immigration played a vital role in the area, with the Mennonites settling outside of the town, predominantly on the east side of the river, opening up more agricultural land. Two diverse communities, French Canadians and Mennonites, began a relationship that still exists and thrives today, through agriculture and trade the communities grew together.

Within two years of the construction of the bridge, the 1950 flood hit, devastating the community. The flood of 1966 led to the construction of a dike system around the community, and four floods in the 1970s put the system to its test. Several more floods have hit the community since

that time, and through—and though the community has always remained resilient, even in the worst of times, the community has pulled together and rose to the occasion and continues to prosper and expand.

This is a community that has strong cultural ties and wide-open arm policy inviting all who live in the area to come and enjoy the many amenities as well as the services that are offered.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members in the House to thank this community of St. Jean.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Steinbach—Government Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I observed during question period, questions between the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) about an upcoming protest that will be held at the Legislature on Thursday at 6 o'clock.

I refer to the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, page 495, in regards to answers to questions indicating that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, to deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate.

That is in the House of Commons procedure, second edition, O'Brien and Bosc, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the answer from the Premier certainly didn't adhere to those rules and I would ask that you call him to order.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I thought that you just dealt with this point of order. I had heard the Leader of the Opposition raised a point of order with regard to this question, just previously.

Perhaps there is a subtle difference that I have missed in this but, I know as you have ruled before and will rule again, that it is not your role to pass judgment on the quality of the questions or the answers. Your role is to ensure that this House maintain good order. So I will be glad to hear your ruling on this.

**Mr. Speaker:** Just give me a minute, folks, please.

Order, please. Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader and the comments by the honourable

Government House Leader, I must reference for the information of the House an agreement that was dated April 11th, 2013, where the signatures containing the Government House Leader, the MLA for River Heights and the Opposition House Leader attached to a document a letter that was sent to myself indicating that the following question period arrangements, which had previously been agreed to, will continue to apply for other aspects of oral questions, including 45 seconds for questions and answers, and no points of order are to be raised during oral questions regarding Beauchesne's citations 409(2), 410, 417, 408(2), and, other than these exceptions, points of orders or matters of privilege can continue to be raised during oral questions.

\* (16:30)

And since my understanding—if I understand it correctly—of the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader was referencing a matter that occurred during oral questions, I must, therefore, respectfully rule that there would be no point of order considering that there is an agreement of the House to not have points of order raised on these specific matters.

**Mr. Goertzen:** With respect, I challenge the ruling, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair will please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed to sustaining the ruling of the Chair will please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Goertzen:** A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

**Division**

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

**Yeas**

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

**Nays**

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.*

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 34, Nays 18.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

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