

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
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
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
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

Monday, June 10, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 209—The Special Olympics
Awareness Week Act**

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present—or I move, seconded by the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 209, The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine de sensibilisation aux Jeux Olympiques spéciaux, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm pleased to have the incredible honour of introducing this bill, which proclaims the second week in June in each year a Special Olympics awareness week in Manitoba.

And I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize a few people we have with us in the gallery today from Special Olympics Manitoba: Simon Munday, the president and CEO; Murdoch MacKay, the past chair of the board of Special Olympics Manitoba; Larry Chornoboy, the vice-chair of the board. And, of course, I want to welcome all the athletes that we have in the gallery with us today and those who could not be here, Mr. Speaker. To each and every one of you, you are an inspiration to all of us, and we wish you all the best in the 2013 Special Olympics Manitoba games on June 21st to 23rd.

And we look forward to celebrating Special Olympics awareness week in Manitoba for the years to come with the passage of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Any further introduction of bills? Seeing none—

PETITIONS

Highway 217 Bridge Repair

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

And this is the background for this petition:

The bridge over the Red River on Highway 217 outside of St. Jean Baptiste was built in 1947 and provided a vital link for economic opportunities and community development on both sides of the river.

The Department of Infrastructure and Transportation closed the bridge after spending significant sums of money and time on rehabilitation efforts in the summer of 2012.

Individuals require numerous trips across the river each day to access schools, businesses and health-care facilities. The bridge closure causes daily undue hardship and inconvenience for residents due to the time requirements and higher transportation costs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to repair or replace the existing bridge as soon as possible to allow communities on both sides of the river to return to regular activities.

And this petition is signed by J. Leclair, D. Sabourin and T. Nieustater and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Further petitions?

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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.

The 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 this Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is submitted on behalf of M. Vlaming, L. Edmondson, A. Somers and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

This is the reason 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 hurt 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's signed by M. Letemplier, B. Drad and C. Hink and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

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

(4) 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 D. Hewins, S. Hewins, D. Hayward and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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 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.

* (13:40)

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 this petition is signed by E. Millier, C. Parisien, L. Urmin and many more fine Manitobans.

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 S. Stein, L. Makarorsky, E. Skundberg and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

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

And 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 petition is signed by A.J. Lindsay, B. Dwornick, T. Pinchusley and many, many other Manitobans.

Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

(3) 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 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.

This petition is signed by G. Johnson, L. Kastrukoff, J. Dalgeish and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) 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 legally—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 not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by L. Davidson, T. Pochill, B. Robinson and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

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

(4) 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 is signed by G. Belous, A. Brinkworth, D. Skyhar and many, many other Manitobans.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

(3) An increase in the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) 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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by A. Osiouray, D. Tigchelaer, J. Tigchelaer and many, many other Manitobans.

Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

(3) 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 wish—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 signed by J. Morton, L. Vinok, P. Tomms and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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 J. Butler, J. Reimer, L. Francis and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

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

(4) 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 R. Pauls, G. Schuler, J. Voth and many, many more fine Manitobans.

* (13:50)

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) 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.

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

(4) 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.

Signed by G. Grandmont, J. Stewart, C. Boyer and many other fine Manitobans.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate municipalities 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 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 petition is signed by J. Dell, V. Vandaele, J. Wylie and many other Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have a report to table. I am pleased to table, under section 3.1 of schedule B of Bill 33, The Elections Amendment Act, the permanent voters study list report prepared by the Elections Manitoba office.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Forest Fire Update

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I have a ministerial statement for the House.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to provide an update on the forest fire situation that evolved over this past weekend which saw the evacuation of more than 200 from the communities of Ilford and War Lake and the Keeyask work camp.

Going into the weekend, dry lightning sparked 11 forest fires in the Ilford area. Fire attack crews were successful in the initial fire attack; however, one fire was too large to attack directly and spread to 250 hectares. On Saturday the fire advanced within one mile of the community of Ilford. There were 107 people evacuated from War Lake First Nation and the community of Ilford.

A handful of local citizens stayed behind to assist provincial fire attack crews set up protection sprinklers on the homes and buildings in the community while 65 firefighters, provincial water bombers and retardant tankers worked to extinguish the fire. Provincial attack-air attack crews were assisted by two Saskatchewan land-based retardant tankers.

A significant fire burned near Keeyask infrastructure camp over the weekend which saw the

evacuation of 134 workers. Provincial water bombers and firefighting personnel were on the ground to protect the structures. Ten firefighters continue to work on securing the fire line near the camp today as there is still some risk to the camp. So far, no structures have been lost.

I have been told that fire—the fire danger remains high for the northeastern region of the province today and that fire attack crews and fire spotters remain vigilant. Some precipitation is forecasted for the area for today and tomorrow, which should assist firefighting efforts.

The Manitoba government is better prepared to protect Manitobans from the threat of wildfires than ever with the addition of a fourth new Bombardier CL-415 turboprop water bomber to the provincial fleet, all at a total cost of \$126 million. These planes hold more water, fly faster and make almost twice as many drops per hour than the older CL-215 water bombers. They are the newest and world's best water bombers and will require less maintenance while using less oil and cleaner fuel. These new water bombers will greatly improve our capacity to quickly fight fires and protect forests, communities and lives everywhere in the province.

Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I wish to thank the Minister of Conservation for that update in regards to the status of the fires in northeastern Manitoba.

And certainly we are thankful that none of the 200 residents that were evacuated have received any kind of injury. We certainly are supportive of the fire crews that are doing the attacks on the ground and making sure from both the ground and the air to make sure that these large acreages of fires have been kept under control and will eventually be brought under control.

We certainly look at the Keeyask infrastructure camp with 134 evacuees in that area and wish them speedy, I guess, recovery of—being able to get this under control and back into their camps, Mr. Speaker.

The firefighters, as I've said—we're glad to see that there has been no infrastructure damage lost in this whole blaze at this point, Mr. Speaker, and that the 10 firefighters continue to work on securing those fire lines. Those are much needed in being able to keep these kinds of fires under control.

And so I look forward to any further updates that the minister may have on this and wish all the best to those fighting these blazes.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I seek 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 and the update on the fire situation.

I think all members of this House are cognizant of the dangers and the dry condition of the forests up in the northeast part of the province. Certainly it is important that we are vigilant, and we want to be thankful for the efforts of the firefighters and the utility of the water bombers in providing the protection, and hopefully it will be successful in preventing damage to structures.

And we hope that the next time the minister gets up, it's a more positive note that the fire is out, but we need to be vigilant and thank those who are helping. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further ministerial statements? Seeing none—

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I want to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have quite a few guests and visitors with us this afternoon.

In the public gallery, from Melita School, we have 22 grade 6 students under the direction of Ms. Leanne Bugg. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire).

Also in the public gallery, we have Manitoba Parents for Ukrainian Education, 58 grade 5 students from Springfield Heights School, East Selkirk Middle School, Bernie Wolfe Community School, Oakbank Elementary and Ralph Brown School, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Mr. Kostyshyn).

And also in the public gallery today, we have with us Georgette Jhass, chair of the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride, who is the guest of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PST Increase Flood Infrastructure Estimates

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): And the many folks who are here supporting Special Olympics should be acknowledged as well, I think.

The government's been failing in its ability to make a case for the PST hike, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier on Friday in Estimates commented that the estimated cost of the flood channel—which surprised us—was \$250 million. Now, that's a coincidence because it's roughly the amount of the PST hike, and it conflicts with the previous estimate that came out just two years ago—less than two years ago—from AECOM and KGS consulting, which said the actual amount was about half that.

And a lot of that—given that a lot of that work has already been done and the amount of just two years ago was half as much, I guess, I just have to ask the Premier: Is he highballing the—this estimated flood project in an attempt to make a case for the PST hike?

* (14:00)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for the question. The member will know that in the environment we're working in, the estimate is an early estimate on work that will take several important years to accomplish. That's the leading—latest engineering estimate that will be further refined.

As we make the emergency channel permanent—Mr. Speaker, the emergency channel was built in record time—the emergency channel will require some permanent equipment in terms of gates and control structures attached to it. The new channel going through Lake Manitoba to Lake St. Martin will also have to be done in a way that it'll last for many decades into the future.

These are very important investments, Mr. Speaker. I only need to remind the members opposite they would not be possible under their program where they are actually proposing to cut government services, actually lay off teachers and nurses and at the same time not do these important investments like we did in the Red River Valley. We spent a billion dollars there to protect the people in the Red

River Valley and \$670 million to build the floodway around the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Pallister: So the Premier is highballing the estimate, then, Mr. Speaker. We've established that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, within hours of this inflated announcement, the Province began immediately blaming the federal government for not supporting them in their announcement. But the federal government's on record—there's a letter from the Prime Minister just two years ago that said that the federal government is in for 50-50 on permanent flood mitigation work.

So, in fact, the Premier is doubling his estimate from an estimate of two years ago and ignoring a 50 per cent federal contribution which has already been committed to. So I have to ask—that means a quarter as much is committed as the press release read.

Did the Province leave out the federal government from their announcement just so their commitment looked twice as high as it really is going to be?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member may want to carefully re-examine what is said. We appreciate that the federal government—and I do recall having the meeting with the Prime Minister in May of 2011 when we were going ahead and making a hundred per cent investments in diking along the Assiniboine River, additional protection for the communities of Peguis, additional protection for people around Lake Manitoba, additional protection in Brandon. Many of these were mitigation projects that were intended to reduce the potential damage of the flood events that were coming.

The members opposite have erased this from their mind, but they actually said we were doing too much. They actually said we were spending too much money and we were making too big of a deal out of the 2011 flood. Such was not the case, Mr. Speaker. All of those investments provided very substantial protection to people, and I was pleased that the Prime Minister came along and also agreed that spending on mitigation would make a difference and was willing to participate in that. I commend him for that.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that the members of the opposition are completely wrong in the way they're characterizing what's going on.

Mr. Pallister: Well, they're still making too big a deal out of promised spending and not getting results, Mr. Speaker, and that's the problem.

You know, the reality is the Premier hasn't even bothered to have a meeting or put in an official request for federal infrastructure support for the Watchorn Bay channel, and that is an insult to the people of this province who deserve that protection, Mr. Speaker.

Desperate to justify a big tax grab, first he overstates the estimated cost by double, then he leaves out the federal share—so he's overstating by four times as much as the actual commitment—and now he does a private and exclusive self-promotional announcement as a PR exercise and wonders why we ask him a question about it.

Maybe he could answer this question: Is he simply more interested in selling Manitobans on an unnecessary PST increase than he is in actually preventing future damage by flooding?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member will know that when we did the original press announcement on May 29th, we indicated in there that the latest engineering studies indicated it would be about \$250 million to build these additional channels and to make the existing emergency channel permanent. The member opposite, in his supercilious tone, likes to pretend that there's something new here.

The reality is this, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite voted against all the resources necessary to protect Manitoba communities. It was the Leader of the Opposition when we were building the floodway in southern Manitoba on the Red River that called for a halt to that. He called for a halt to it because he thought the price was escalating too high. Those investments in the Red River Valley have saved \$30 billion in damage to our communities—\$30 billion in damage.

And only the Leader of the Opposition wanted to halt it then, and only the Leader of the Opposition wants to halt it now. We will build it. They will stop it.

Mr. Speaker: While I appreciate that our guests are here visiting us this afternoon, I must caution them, please, do not engage in any of the activities of the proceedings of the House this afternoon. That includes applause.

Assiniboia Downs Future Operations

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, we should be celebrating a significant birthday in Manitoba today. Assiniboia Downs is 55 years old.

Now, instead of celebrating this Manitoba icon, Assiniboia Downs finds itself in the media for a very different reason, and the reason we are not celebrating is because of this NDP government. The NDP handling of this file on Assiniboia Downs has Assiniboia Downs embroiled in controversy. As a result of the NDP, we are not sure what the future holds for Assiniboia Downs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: Why has the NDP failed to treat this Manitoba icon with the respect it deserves?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, we want horse racing to continue. In fact, we want it to thrive, but we want it to thrive on a more sustainable basis. The long-term solution cannot be public subsidies. We've always said that the Jockey Club should find a partner to help. We don't care who that partner is as long as they find somebody to help.

We understand that they're working—that they are working with Peguis, Mr. Speaker. We see this as an extremely positive development. In fact, on May 3rd, the Jockey Club CEO, Darren Dunn, told the Winnipeg Free Press that they are in the latest stages of finalizing our deal with Peguis First Nation and that to tell everyone that there will be a guaranteed 60-day live meet this year. It's a great feeling of satisfaction, according to Mr. Dunn.

The government will—

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

Ministerial Accountability Conflict of Interest

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, as a result of the NDP backroom dealings and the bullying tactics, the NDP finds themselves in the middle of a \$350-million lawsuit. But lawsuits aren't new to the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance was found guilty of breaking The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act, he was ordered to forward the funds he withheld. The Minister of Finance also faces serious conflict of interest allegations.

Now the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) finds himself facing similar charges. An affidavit in court filed last week shows the minister's involvement on the file.

Now, did the minister who represents Assiniboia realize he was in a conflict of interest?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, we were very clear with the Jockey Club. They have known since January what the intentions were of this government. We made it clear in our budget, in the budget speech itself, that we were going to make changes to The Pari-Mutuel Levy Act and we were going to make changes to the Manitoba Jockey Club's VLT site-holder agreement.

Despite the members opposite, the judge said very clearly that we were in our authority to do exactly that. That's what we in—that's what we brought forward in BITSA. It was there for everybody to read, including this member across the way.

Mr. Speaker, we've been up front with the Jockey Club. We've been telling them exactly what our intentions are. We believe that instead of putting \$5 million into horse racing and purses in Manitoba, we should put that into hospitals.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cullen: The NDP have shown a complete lack of respect towards Assiniboia Downs. True NDP bullying tactics are coming to light on this file. It's a sure sign the NDP have been in office too long.

Mr. Speaker, in reference to the court proceedings, lawyers working on behalf of Assiniboia Downs say these applications have to be taken to protect Manitobans. It's a sad state. The NDP are causing irreparable damage to this 55-year-old Manitoba icon.

The minister representing Assiniboia appears to have his fingers all over this file.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister representing Assiniboia be in court to answer the questions on the conflict of interest allegations?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, we told the Jockey Club in January exactly where things were headed on this issue. They've had lots of time to work with us or work with anyone to help them out. The Red River Exhibition came forward to try to help; the Jockey Club rejected that. Peguis First Nation has come along now to help the Jockey Club to make

sure that there is a race season this year and to put this industry on solid footing for the years forward.

We welcome the opportunity for the Jockey Club to work with Peguis First Nation to make sure that horse racing is on stable grounds. That is a positive development. We support that—

* (14:10)

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

Keeyask Community Centre Trust Account

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): On March 31st, 2010, a cheque in the amount of \$2,423,409.30 was deposited into the Keeyask trust account.

Can the NDP member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) tell us: Is the money still there?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the member spent about half an hour when we were going through five hours of Crown corporation hearings, talking about some of these specific issues and, as I—as the president of Hydro indicated to the member at the time, Hydro has entered into an agreement with Keeyask community council to provide funding to build a community centre. And, as I understand and as the member's been told—several occasions, there's—the intention is that there's going to be construction of that community centre this construction year.

Mr. Schuler: On April 26th, 2010, a second cheque for \$2 million was written out of the Keeyask trust account.

Can the NDP member for Kildonan tell us: Where did the second \$2-million cheque—where did it go?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member last week, when he asked this question the week before, the individuals responsible for the management—those funds, like any other municipal corporation, like the City of Winnipeg, like municipalities, have the responsibility for dealing with their funding agreements.

And I had told the member quite clearly that he ought to talk to the people that are responsible for that funds, which is the council in that community, who are responsible for that, and he—I offered, in fact, last week for the member to come up to my office and together we could phone the community

and talk to them about it if he wanted a direct answer. But he has not taken me up on that. In fact, he's refused to actually talk to those members. So I don't know what the member's fishing for when he's not willing to even come up with me and talk to that community council.

Mr. Schuler: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the minister is suggesting I hold his hand so he can actually call them and find out where the money is. Stop passing the buck. It's his job. The \$2,382,900.00 deposited on April 7th, 2009, into the trust account is missing. The \$2,423,409.30 deposited on March 31st, 2010, into the trust account is also missing.

Can the NDP member for Kildonan tell us: Is that money still available for the construction of the Keeyask Centre, or is the money gone? And, Mr. Speaker—or does he need me to hold his hand so he can call them and find out where the money is?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, if the member asked a question of the City of Winnipeg and wanted to know if the City of Winnipeg was spending some Hydro money on a specific project, he could phone the mayor of Winnipeg or he could phone his city councillor. I suggest that he phone the community council in Keeyask.

I don't really want to hold the member's hand. He's grown up. He can carry his own work out. He can say all that he wants. All that I know is that there's funding available that's been provided into the community to build a community centre to benefit all those residents. I don't know why members opposite are so against First Nations communities.

PST Increase Request to Withdraw

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, we have one minister that seems to have abandoned responsibility for his portfolio. We have another minister, the one responsible for MPI, that has stepped in and instructed the board of MPI to abandon their plans to fund infrastructure.

Now, while I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is listening to Manitobans, I do question that is this his role. He said the board was going to look at the business plan and they were going to make the decision. But he's listening to Manitobans and I think that's a great thing.

Will he listen to Manitobans—will the Premier listen to Manitobans and abandon the PST increase?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I can say, Mr. Speaker, in Brandon, when I visited this spring during the middle of the flood threat, I was very pleased to see that the City of Brandon had provided one-in-300-year protection to the residents of that community. They had further work to do to protect the commercial sector, but they were well ahead on their planning. We committed at least \$20 million to them to do that. That's the kind of investments we need to protect people in the Assiniboine valley, the good people of Brandon, all the people along the Assiniboine valley up to Portage la Prairie, through Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin, further downstream into communities like Cartier, St. François Xavier.

Those citizens deserve the same protection as we provided the citizens in the Red River Valley and the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. Why do they want to treat some Manitobans differently than others? We think they all deserve protection.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure which part of my question was answered there, but Brandon had to step in because this government abandoned the promise made by Premier Doer to protect Brandon.

Mr. Speaker, the board of MPI was to review the business case that would outline MPI paying for infrastructure. This minister stepped in and told them: Don't go there. I'm listening to Manitobans.

Will he step in and will he listen to Manitobans and abandon the PST increase, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased to provide support to Brandon, both during the immediate flood of 2011—when I have to commend the local leadership for the tremendous job they did. The mayor, the emergency measures co-ordinator, volunteers, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) were out there literally helping people moving themselves out of their homes, and they did a terrific job.

But now we've had a report—we've had a report, Mr. Speaker—from an independent body that says we not in—not only did we spend \$1.25 billion in the 2011 flood, but we need to spend up to another billion dollars to protect the people in the Assiniboine valley in the same way we protected the people in the Red River Valley.

The members opposite want to vote against flood protection for that part of Manitoba. We think they deserve the same flood protection as

Manitobans have received in the Red River Valley and Winnipeggers have received. Why do they want to treat some Manitobans differently than others? That's what they need to explain, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for MPI is now running the day-to-day operations of MPI, so will he also ensure that any excess money that they thought they might have to put toward infrastructure will also go back to Manitobans as a rebate, or does that only happen in election years?

Mr. Speaker, this minister flip-flopped on infrastructure. Will he also flip-flop and give Manitobans the opportunity to vote on the PST increase? Take away the PST increase, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): And I'm always glad to have a question on MPI, which, of course, provides the best value for auto insurance in the entire country.

I know, Mr. Speaker, some of their star candidates last time had a very different view. We know how that worked out on the doorsteps. We know how that worked out in the polls when Gord Steeves was saying on election night, this was worse than our worst-case scenarios.

You know, I know that the member for Brandon West doesn't believe in public investments, but, you know, I've gone out to Brandon several times in the past couple of weeks. We've celebrated new police officers for the Brandon Police Service.

I had the chance just a couple of weeks ago at the articling student breakfast to meet a bright young graduate of the University of Manitoba who will be articling with the Brandon office of prosecutions. Is that one of those civil servants the member would—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mental Health Crisis Response Centre Patient Wait Times

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, just last week we learned that the just-opened mental health crisis ER in Winnipeg is under crisis.

On the second day of operation, an individual sought care and was made to wait over six hours. He observed that the centre was short-staffed. There was confusion at the intake desk. He never did see a

medical doctor. The family says they're devastated by the experience.

I ask the minister: Has she looked into the situation? Can she explain how an individual was made to wait over six hours at the same facility where she promised no patient would wait more than 15 minutes?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I'm quite delighted the member has returned to this topic. It affords me an opportunity to inform the House, contrary to the information that the member put on the record, certainly the individuals at the crisis response centre have made a strong commitment to see and assess individuals within 15 minutes of arrival.

I can tell the member that on day 2 the average wait to be seen and assessed was six minutes. On day 3 the average wait time to be seen and assessed was nine minutes. The average wait on day 4 was seven minutes.

Now, in complex mental health crises, there may be a process to work through in terms of helping that individual, but if this member thinks you solve a mental health crisis in 15 minutes, he has a stunning lack of what mental health issues are all about.

*(14:20)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Morden-Winkler has the floor.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I would remind this minister, the 15-minute cap for wait time was her pledge to Manitobans, and it's deplorable that she would throw under the bus an individual who waited six hours to receive treatment there.

Mr. Speaker, even at that time, staff suggested to that individual he should have just gone to another ER, that going to that centre was a waste of time and they expect a lot of disappointed people once they realize how little that centre can actually do for them.

Mr. Speaker, this minister promised Manitobans a centre where Manitobans would come first, where people in distress facing immediate crisis would receive timely access.

Can the minister please explain: What happened to receiving timely access at this centre?

Ms. Oswald: On day 5 of the centre's operation—five days in existence, Mr. Speaker, the first of its kind in

Canada—after working five days, the average wait to be seen in and assessed was 14 minutes. On day 6—day 6—the average wait to be seen and assessed was nine minutes.

Again, these are complex mental health crises that require multi layers of interventions, different kinds of interventions, that will come from the community, Mr. Speaker.

One thing I can commit to the member is that those individuals going there to seek help for a crisis will get universal, publicly funded care, not private, like they advocate for.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, one thing's clear, this centre has been open for one week and the minister's already in crisis in this centre.

Mr. Speaker, an incident like this one is inexcusable. It's a betrayal of trust. But it raises important questions about how many other Manitobans had a similar experience at the mental health crisis centre.

We've learned that people at the crisis centre were encouraged to complete a survey about their care. I presume the minister knows about this survey. I ask her today to table that information and disclose to the members of this Chamber what's really going on at this centre.

Will she do that today?

Ms. Oswald: First of its kind in Canada, opened two days, three days, four days, and they're meeting and exceeding their aggressive target of seeing and assessing people in 15 minutes or less, Mr. Speaker.

Further, anybody in this Chamber that has a loved one or a neighbour that is going through a mental health crisis knows that the solution to that doesn't come from sprinkling pixie dust and having it finished in 15 minutes. How little does this member know?

Member for Kirkfield Park Apology Request

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, this past Friday there were youth outdoor—outside—out door knocking in Kirkfield Park. During this time, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) confronted these youth and tried to intimidate them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Kirkfield Park: Is this the member's definition of democracy, or does she wish to apologize to these youth today?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, given the number of drive-by smears we've already heard this question period, I'm not going to take anything the MLA for Lac du Bonnet has to say to heart on this issue.

Mr. Ewasko: In regards to drive-by smears, Mr. Speaker, I think that this government should stop looking in the rear-view mirror and start looking towards the future, because I'm certain that a lot of Manitobans are going to be questioning the NDP's integrity.

This government has lost the definition of respect, Mr. Speaker, whether we talk about the PST, the antireferendum that they're trying to put on Manitobans or the amalgamations of municipalities.

There is no excuse for verbal intimidation. We live in a democratic society. Is this member of Kirkfield Park—is this member for Kirkfield Park's idea of democracy at work, or does she want to apologize to the youth today, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Howard: Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's shameful that the members of the opposition continue to bring this kind of smear tactic to the floor of this Chamber against members opposite.

I have seen the piece in—the piece of literature in question that they're talking about. I don't know, perhaps the member for Kirkfield Park was correcting the grammatical error that is on the front of that, or they've misplaced the apostrophe. Perhaps in the name of public education she was helping the young people understand appropriate punctuation.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, this is beyond the pale that this member would use question period to insult the member for Kirkfield Park in this manner.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of contempt.

MATTER OF CONTEMPT

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Steinbach, on a matter of content—contempt.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House on a matter of contempt. It's rarely used in this House, I'm sure that you could attest that. Other members who've been here for a long time could attest to that as well. I don't know if in the 10 years that I've been here I've seen a matter of contempt raised in the

House. Often we see matters of privilege raised in this House, but rarely I think is a matter of contempt.

But I do want to, in light of what the member for Lac du Bonnet has raised in his questions, bring this to you in further attention, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's important, because this is a relatively new matter, for me to spend a bit of time just speaking about what a matter of contempt is. I'm sure all members will want to listen. I know they don't always like to hear rules or follow them, but in fact we do have rules that we have here. *[interjection]* I know the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) might be interested in this.

If you look at the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, 2009, Mr. Speaker, and I refer to page 82, and on that page it lays out the differences between a matter of privileges—a matter of privilege, sorry—and a matter of contempt of Parliament or the Legislature. It indicates that the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, through not—though not a breach of specific privilege, tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its function, obstructs or impedes any member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties, or if an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its members or its officers—would be a matter of contempt.

It goes on to say, on page 83, that the House of Commons, in extension of that, the Legislature, enjoys wide latitude in maintaining its dignity and its authority through the exercise of the contempt power. In other words, the House may consider any misconduct to be contempt and may deal with it accordingly. This area of parliamentary law is therefore extremely fluid and most valuable for the Commons, or the Legislature, to be able to meet novel situations.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, this is a unique situation. In fact, what O'Brien and Bosc is saying is that a matter of contempt is whatever the Legislature itself in many ways determines to be a matter of contempt. We have information raised by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) which is unique. We all, I think, have a situation where we are elected officials, and as elected officials we rely on democracy. This House, its foundation is one of democracy. We all rely on that to be here. We all rely on the democratic process for us to be in the Legislature and by

extension to have those privileges and to not be in contempt.

We had a situation that was brought forward by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) where the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) approached a group of volunteers and workers within a particular political party, our political party, who was out canvassing and meeting with Manitobans. And they were, as young people, getting involved in the democratic process. That's—we would want all young people to be involved in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker. We would encourage—in fact, we've had debates here in the Legislature about individuals, about young people not being involved enough in the democratic process. We've had debates about how do we get young people involved in political parties. So we're proud of the fact that we have young people who are interested in being involved and in visiting Manitobans in the different ridings throughout our province.

* (14:30)

We, of course, do that as individual legislators when we have the time, but all of us in different political parties, by extension, have volunteers and staff who also augment that process for us. But we have, I think, Mr. Speaker, a special responsibility as legislators to respect that democratic process because it is what brings us here. It's what allows us to be here, is that democratic process. We have to defend the democratic process more than anybody else because—not because it means more to us than anybody else, but we are on the front lines of that democracy. We are here to have—to defend that so that—not just so that we might be preserved in our positions, but for others in the future who will run for this House or for other elected bodies will also be able to feel that their democratic rights and privileges have been protected.

Now, the government dismisses this, Mr. Speaker, and doesn't think that it's particularly concerning. I would say it's exactly the opposite. A matter of contempt: not only is it serious, but we as a Legislature have the opportunity to send that clear message because we have the opportunity to determine, as described in this rule book, what forms that matter of contempt. And to have a member go to a group of youth, regardless of what the party is, and to say things to them that they felt intimidated about, to say things to them that discourage them from taking part in the democratic process—that impacts all of us. It just doesn't impact the young people who

were confronted by the member for Kirkfield Park, who were encouraged and excited to be involved in the democratic process for our political party. It impacts all of us; it impacts all of us as legislators. We need to be encouraging young people, not discouraging them, to be involved in the political process. Some of these young people—and I know the members opposite have young people in their parties. I'm sure the Liberal Party does, Mr. Speaker. They should be encouraged, because they might be the future leaders. And yet, what we had was the member for Kirkfield Park seek out these young people from a different political party, which is extremely unusual, confront them, which is also unusual, and discourage them to such a point that many of them felt intimidated and felt intimidated by the member for Kirkfield Park such that they were discouraged within the political process.

Now, I know this is a touchy subject. I know that this—the government is getting all sorts of letters and emails about the unnecessary PST increase. I know there's several members who are in court over there, Mr. Speaker. It's a touchy time, but you don't have to take it out on young people. You know, if you have your concerns, you can bring it here. And, if the member for Kirkfield Park feels so concerned about her area, maybe she should try, well, representing them here in the Legislature, not going after a bunch of young people who want to be involved in the democratic process. Now, I know last week she indicated in this House—it's on Hansard—that she doesn't represent taxpayers in her riding. That's what she said; I understand that. Those are words she's going to have to live by.

But these young people—and I'll say this—these young people are the future of our democratic system. Whether they are young people involved with other political parties or ours, we need to respect them, we need to protect them, and we need to ensure that they know that their involvement is important, it's valued and it's not going to be subject to intimidation by members of this Legislature. Of all people in the province, we should be the ones that are out there encouraging young people to be involved, not discouraging. But, Mr. Speaker, this clearly is something that's contemptuous of this House; it's contemptuous of our democracy. I'm going to conclude with a motion for this Assembly.

I move, seconded by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that this matter regarding the undemocratic actions of the member

for Kirkfield Park be referred to a committee of the Leg—of Legislative Affairs.

Mr. Speaker: Any further—the honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Well, I can talk about contempt; there's much to talk about in what the member opposites—members opposite are trying to accomplish this afternoon.

This afternoon on the agenda is—and we'll see if we get there—is debate on Bill 18, The Public Schools Amendment Act, is debate on Bill 33, and is debate on Bill 20. And I understand that they are feeling uncomfortable about their position on Bill 18. I get that, but I would say to them they will have an opportunity this afternoon to stand up if they choose to take it. They will have an opportunity this afternoon to stand up with the courage of their convictions and tell us why they oppose antibullying legislation. If we get there, they will have the opportunity to do that.

Perhaps even the MLA for Steinbach will share that opportunity with other of his colleagues who could tell us why they oppose it. If they don't have that kind of courage to oppose it, then I guess they could take the option that they are taking and—to try to smear members of our party, members on this side of the House, in order to delay that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the—my friends opposite this: They can try this kind of tactic to pick us off one by one. They can insult us. They can spread mistruths about us, but we are going to stand and we are going to accomplish the things for Manitobans that they need. We are going to stand and we are going to make schools safer for all of our kids, and whatever tactics and tricks the members opposite want to try to play to delay that, we will be here until we have passed that bill.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Thank you. I just want to indicate to the House I thank all members for their advice on this matter.

I always take matters of privilege and especially matters of contempt as very serious matters, as all members know they are, and I want to take this matter under advisement and I want to consult with the procedural authorities to make sure that whatever ruling I make will be the appropriate one, and then I will bring back my ruling for the House at some

point in the near future. So I thank honourable members for their advice.

Mr. Speaker: And we'll now continue with question period.

Phosphorus Reduction—Lake Winnipeg Government Timeline

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, April the 16th, May the 2nd, May 29th, I asked the Premier and the Minister of Water Stewardship direct and specific questions about reducing phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg, and received only vague responses. In the meantime, phosphorus is entering Lake Winnipeg at a rate of nearly 8,000 tonnes per year with only about 2,000 tonnes per year leaving the lake.

I ask the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Mackintosh): What is his immediate plan of action to reduce the amount of phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg by 50 per cent?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we did pass the safe Lake Winnipeg act. The safe Lake Winnipeg act deals with a variety of different point sources and non-point sources of phosphorus intake to Lake Winnipeg. First of all, water sewage and treatment have to be upgraded around the province, and many investments have been made in that with more to come. Non-point sources have been dealt with, the save Lake Winnipeg—or the Lake Friendly products program. We were the first jurisdiction in Canada to ban phosphorus from detergents. That has been a very important initiative that's been now picked up across the country. We are also working on further Building Canada money to ensure that there are sewage treatment facilities in place that reduce phosphorus output. We are working with the hog sector to ensure that winter spreading, for example, is done in a safe manner, and all of these things are happening in Manitoba. So first and foremost we have put serious demands on ourselves to reduce our own phosphorus output.

Outside of Manitoba, we are working with other jurisdictions as well, whether they be to the east of us or to the west of us or to the south of us. We're working with all of them to find ways to reduce their load of nutrients into the water basin that goes into Lake Winnipeg, and all of these measures are intended to keep one of the largest freshwater lakes in the—

* (14:40)

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, articles and op-ed pieces in the Free Press have panned the government's strategy as dilly-dallying. The NDP approach to act without having well-'thort'-out plans hasn't been working. Indeed, neither the announcement last week, nor The Save Lake Winnipeg Act, provided specific plans and dates to achieve the necessary targets in phosphorus reduction. A clearer strategy and measurable outcomes are long overdue.

I ask the Premier, whose government has failed to deliver an effective water management strategy for the province in almost 14 years: By what date will the 50 per cent reduction in phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg be achieved?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the members will—the member will know that, over the years, for example, we've put in place very significant investments in sewage treatment. We've put into place a Riparian Tax Credit to reduce the impact of livestock on lakes, to keep them—to keep the lake, the edges of the lakes protected and the trees protected along the lakes.

Mr. Speaker, we have also worked with jurisdictions outside of Manitoba, to reduce nutrients coming into the province of Manitoba. And all of those investments, and all of those relationships that we have built, are intended specifically to reduce the phosphorus that's flowing into Lake Winnipeg, which is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world. The member knows that.

We've also initiated research, and this research on Lake Winnipeg has borne fruit. And we are supporting the initiative to stop the closing of the Experimental Lakes Area by the federal government because that decision will shut down some of—world-class research, which has not only stopped acid rain in the lakes in Canada and around the world, but phosphorus loading in lakes as well. All of these initiatives are intended to reduce phosphorus loading—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier knows, in 12 years, the progress in reducing phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg has actually been small.

Bartley Kives astutely pointed out in the Free Press this weekend, and I quote: The real solutions to the Lake Winnipeg conundrum involve a radical transformation of the watershed so that there be can—can be a great deal more water retention and wetlands. Researchers and conservation groups have 'profosed' effective low-tech solutions, and the government needs to act now.

I ask the Premier: How much money will the NDP government commit to action this year in this area in partnership with the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and other organizations?

Mr. Selinger: First of all, organizations like the Lake Winnipeg Foundation do make a very significant contribution, both in terms of research and public policy recommendations, and we value the work they do.

Mr. Speaker, some of the ideas that were proposed in the article cited by the member for River Heights and the Leader of the Liberal Party are to ensure that we retain more water on the land. This is an important part of an overall strategy. A Surface Water Management Strategy is an important part of what's needs to be done. Ducks Unlimited have been advocates for this for many years, protecting marshlands, protecting sloughs, protecting water on the surface, so that that water can be used, keep nutrients out of Lake Winnipeg and other lakes as well.

This is something that needs to be done. The Riparian Tax Credit was one of the first initiatives in Canada to provide that kind of incentive. Alternative land use incentives are also an important part of that, and regulation is an important part of that.

But it's also the case we have to reduce phosphorus from very specific sources, such as waste water coming into the lakes, such as sewage treatment in major cities like Winnipeg and Brandon. And, by the way, Brandon has biological nutrient removal that has been put—

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

Youth Recreation Activity Worker Program Program Update

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I spent a lot of years working with at-risk youth, and I know that the difference that the right intervention can make, if it's made by the right people at the right

time, and it's a really important issue in Burrows as well.

So I would like the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities to tell me what we're doing to make those interventions with youth as effective as possible. Thank you.

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say a very exciting program we have, the Youth Recreation Activity Worker program, 12 years in existence, in partnership with Red River College, the Boys and Girls Club, the City, a 10-month certification program that puts emphasis on leadership development, provides young people with a strong sense of belonging, builds on their skills and talents and certainly highlights some of the amazing role models we have in our community.

Program graduates often find meaningful employment in areas of recreation co-ordinators, teacher assistants, child-care workers, group-home staff, and I just want to congratulate all of the partners, Mr. Speaker, all of the students and young people who graduate from this program and all their families who support them. Thank you.

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

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Steinbach, on a point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I rise on a point of order.

I hear some people upset. I want to remind the House that, as fact, we all are obligated, when we hear a breach of the rules, to rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the rulebook clearly states that we have an obligation. Now, I know members don't want to follow the rules, but I do, and so I feel obligated to follow the rules and rise.

I'm going to refer, Mr. Speaker, in Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, the sixth edition, to page 120; it's rule 409, No. 11, a portion of rule No. 11. The rule says—and these are rules that all of us are obligated to follow—that a question asking for a general statement of government policy may be out of order in that it requires a long answer that really should be part of a ministerial statement.

Now, I clearly heard the member get up and ask a question where she used the phrase, could you

please tell us what we're doing. I don't know if you could get any more general or less specific than, please tell us what we're doing.

But, clearly, we have a rule that indicates that a question that's asking for a general statement of government policy may, in fact, be out of order in that it requires long answers that really should be made as a ministerial statement.

Now, my friend, the minister for youth and opportunities, perhaps he tried to get this up as a ministerial statement among his caucus and his caucus didn't feel it was important enough. That could be the fact, Mr. Speaker. I don't know; I'm speculating. But I know he is relatively new to the House, but he has the opportunity during ministerial statements, if there's something that he wants to say on a ministerial matter, he can gladly do it.

But what our rules clearly don't allow for, Mr. Speaker—and I know that the Government House Leader will try to read some kind of conspiracy into this, but we have an obligation to follow rules in the House, and the rule that I referenced clearly says that questions asking for a general statement of government policy may be out of order. I don't think there's ever been a question that was more general in terms of tell us what we're doing, that was asked by the member.

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, I am trying to help my friend from Steinbach out here. He is up on unlimited time to tell us why he opposed this antibullying legislation. I am trying to get the House to a point so he can regale us with more information about why he opposes us.

His friend the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) has a motion—has a hoist motion on amalgamation. I'm trying to give him the opportunity to speak to it, Mr. Speaker.

I know that we have this much-promised filibuster on Bill 20 that the member for Steinbach wants to get to. I am trying to get us there, Mr. Speaker.

So I appreciate—I am not looking for a conspiracy, Mr. Speaker, I—but I—you know, I think there was a former president of the United States who said something like, fool me once, shame on me; fool me twice, I won't get fooled again.

And I do see a pattern emerging that, really, the members opposite are not interested in doing any of the business of Manitobans in this House, and that's their prerogative. But we are, and we will be here to do that business whenever the members opposite decide they're ready to get around to it.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Official Opposition House Leader—and I'd like to thank honourable Government House Leader for advice on this matter as well—I've given cautions to the House in past that, according to O'Brien and Bosc, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, page 510—and I refer members to that particular page—the Speaker is not to—it's not the responsibility of the Speaker to judge the quality or the content of both the questions and the answers that are posed in this House here. I leave that to the honourable members of this House to decide that. And so I would refer honourable members, with respect, to this particular point of order, to page 510 in O'Brien and Bosc that gives support to that position.

And so, therefore, I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order that has been raised here, based on the practices that this House has, and, of course, the House of Commons Procedure and Practice has indicated in O'Brien and Bosc, second edition, 2009.

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

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Order, please.

* (14:50)

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: To allow for an opportunity for all members to be here, I ask that you call for a recorded vote.

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

Order, please. Order, please. The one-hour allocation for the ringing of the division bells has expired and I'm instructing that they be turned off, and we'll now proceed to the vote.

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, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Briese, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Cullen, Dewar, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maguire, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Mitchelson, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pallister, Pedersen, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Schuler, Selby, Selinger, Smook, Stefanson, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight, Wishart.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Fifty-two Yeas, no Nays.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has accordingly been sustained.

Mr. Speaker: And I believe we'll now return to question period.

Agricultural Office (Boissevain) Closure

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, on May 30th a rally was held by local farmers and Boissevain citizens to show their support to keep their agricultural office open. A petition was presented to me at the 79th annual 4-H Rally in Boissevain on Friday. It states: We the undersigned would like you and your government to reconsider the closure of the Ag office in Boissevain. Not only does this mean—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

I think our rules are pretty clear, and I think all honourable members know the rules, that we're not allowed to have displays of any kind in the Chamber at any time. So I'm asking for the honourable—co-operation of the honourable member for

Arthur-Virden, please do not have the displays that he's just had shown here, and to have them, in fact, removed from the House, if you will, please, if you can arrange that.

The honourable member for Arthur-Virden, to continue his question.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, the petition states: We the undersigned would like you and your government to reconsider the closure of the Ag office in Boissevain. Not only does this mean loss of services, including the 4-H program, youth and our future, it is also two jobs, which is equivalent to a thousand jobs in the city of Winnipeg, lost to our community. End quote.

Will the Agriculture Minister reconsider the closure of this two-person Ag office in Boissevain?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, and as we know, economic uncertainty is always a reality of economics, and I know the members opposite often talk about the fact that we have too many jobs—people employed. And we're—what we're doing in the present point is looking at all the offices that are presently available in the province of Manitoba. We are refocusing and bringing out the true value of the professionalism that our GO centres have provided over the years, and we want to continue moving forward in that 'plath.' Thank you.

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, it'd be different if these people had been laid off, but they're not. On behalf of the concerned citizens of Boissevain and area, I'd like to present this petition with its hundreds of names, signatures, to the minister on their behalf.

As there was no consultation with local citizens, I ask the minister on their behalf: Before announcing this off-loading onto local citizens, why did the NDP government not consider moving these two Ag employees, because they're not being laid off, into spaces already available in other provincial offices presently in Boissevain?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Mr. Speaker, and I guess a point of clarification: There are no job layoffs in office closures in the province of Manitoba.

Unlike the Tories, as we will recall when they were in power, we did have a demise of office closures. We had a cut in the Agriculture portfolio to the tune of \$25 million, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker. And yet they're saying to us that we're doing something. I want to ensure, not like the Canadian

Wheat Board individuals who got laid off and we're sitting at 400 people still unemployed, and that—well, we did not hear any wording from the members opposite that got support—the job layoffs that took part when the Canadian Wheat Board was 'dismized' in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Maguire: Maybe the minister could call a referendum on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I will present this to the minister privately after the question is over, if that's allowable. Front-line services are dramatically affected by these closures in a rural municipality. The distances travelled by staff and users is a crucial point missed by this NDP centralizing government. David Hicks, local farmer, 4-H leader and respected agriculture society leader, along with local councils, the Chamber of Commerce Chair Bill Douglas—Dougall, rather—are greatly concerned that this may be the tip of the iceberg with other closures.

Will the government today alleviate these concerns by relocating the Boissevain Ag office with other offices still in the community, thereby assuring future services to these local citizens and their region?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Mr. Speaker, let me be repetitious: There are no job layoffs, and I want to ensure that members opposite know that very well. We are—agriculture is changing on a daily basis. The days where the people have to go to the office is no longer the situation. We are dealing with high-speed communication systems; we have people available from our local GO offices to meet with producers on the farm if they need to. But I want to ensure you that we are increasing our specialty of services through the GO offices and as agriculture changes on a daily basis.

* (16:00)

And I've talked to many producers and they felt the same way—that we need to improve service. We are there for the producers of the province of Manitoba, and I'm sure the members opposite are quite familiar how agriculture has changed and I'm asking for their understanding as we move forward.

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

Provincial Gravel Roads Dust Control

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): The safety of Manitobans may be put at risk. Dust control, in most

part, has been cut from this government's budget on provincial gravel roads.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister responsible: What is this government's safety plan for school bus students, fire and ambulance services, to deal with dust control throughout the province?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I've been trying to figure out what the strategy of members opposite is to go with their tactics. And I finally figured it out, because, you know, they get up in the early parts of question period and they criticize us for spending, and now, when they clear the media out an hour later, they get up and they're demanding expenditures.

Well, I want to assure members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that if we—if the members opposite were to spend the last hour actually doing the government's business then perhaps we got in Estimates, I'd be more than prepared to ask questions on dust control, because we are going to be continuing dust control and, in fact, we're going to have a record investment in the highway system. That's the difference between us and them. We're putting money where our mouth is; we're delivering on highways. They can get up and talk all they want, but they have no credibility because they voted against that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

Time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Breast Cancer Pledge Ride

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, fighting cancer is one of the most important causes. Any time I can turn my hobbies into activism, I am doubly eager to help. The Breast Cancer Pledge Ride provides motorcycle enthusiasts like me with this ideal opportunity. I rode over 220 kilometres and my team raised a few hundred dollars.

This year, the pledge ride celebrated its 12th anniversary on June 2nd. On an annual basis, motorcyclists come from all over Manitoba to show their support and submit their pledges. This year, riders hit a milestone—a million kilometres travelled. The 743 registrants raised more than \$115,000, reaching a grand total of \$650,000 since 2002. All funds go—raised go to CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, directly impacting health in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the groups choose the projects they fund. Examples include clinic trials to enhance patient care, early access to new cancer therapies, the expedited release of new drugs not commercially available, expanded coverage to new commercially available drugs and the purchases of numerous assistive technologies. As most donations are between \$5 and \$20, every dollar really does count.

The Manitoba Government knows that screening and early detection saves lives and that's why we continue the screening initiatives. The breast cancer survival rate in Manitoba is 85 per cent, up from 79 per cent a decade ago. And that's why we're intent on leading the nation and ensuring that patients get results within their targeted time and often much time sooner. We have introduced a wait time guarantee for radiation therapy for breast cancer, making certain that no one will wait beyond the medically recommended benchmark of four weeks. This impressive \$40-million, first-in-Canada cancer strategy reduces the entire patient journey to two months or less. The pledge ride has been active in these successes.

Thank you to everyone who participates in the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride as riders, donors and volunteers. This community event brings out the best in us, making our efforts both noteworthy and fun. We are making progress to eliminate this devastating disease and I couldn't be more proud to be part of such a significant cause.

Special Olympics Manitoba

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and pay tribute to all the athletes, volunteers, event co-ordinators and coaches for Special Olympics Manitoba. This year marks the 25th anniversary of a law-enforcement torch run. Today athletes join law enforcement officers and MLAs in the kickoff to the Special Olympics games here at the Manitoba Legislature in preparation for the games to be held June 21st through 23rd.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to introduce a private member's bill here in the Manitoba Legislature today, proclaiming the second week of June each year as Special Olympics awareness week in Manitoba. Special Olympics Manitoba provides year-round sports programs and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-style sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Promoting awareness about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities is an important part of the work of Special Olympics.

Special Olympics also enriches the lives, fosters respect and promotes dignity in communities across Manitoba for people with intellectual disabilities. It's an honour—it is an absolute honour to recognize the important work of the Special Olympics organization and Special Olympics athletes who are an inspiration to us all. Special Olympics Manitoba has embraced the call to work with bigger zeal and purpose to support Special Olympics athletes and Manitobans with intellectual disabilities.

Many of the people I'm referring to, both the athletes and the builders of Special Olympics Manitoba, are in the gallery with us today. Thank you for the work that you do for all Special Olympians and Manitobans. This is important work with results beyond measure.

Special Olympics Manitoba has achieved the epitome of service to others. They are participants and not spectators, active and not idle. Special Olympians believe in their capacity to contribute in service of others. To those in the gallery and all Special Olympians, supporters and friends of Special Olympics Manitoba, thank you and congratulations. You are a true inspiration to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering if it would be possible to submit the list of the names of those who are in the—

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to include the names of—the members referencing in today's proceedings? *[Agreed]*

Michelle Augert, Lesley Camaso-Catalan, Jennifer Campbell, David Cheyne, Katherine Cheyne, Special Olympics Manitoba Board Vice-Chair Larry Chornoboy, Steven Dreger, Joan Ducharme, Brita Hall, Birgit Hall, Roger Hall, Terry Hopkinson, Emily Hughes, David Ingram, Yvonne Ingram, Rose Jemson, Tom Kirkup, Sabrina Klassen, Susan Lamboo, Carolyn Langtry, Colleen Lowdon-Bula, Past Chair (honourary) Murdoch MacKay, Kari Macklem, Kathleen Mason, Ian McArton, Ashlee McLeod, Kim Morphy, Special Olympics Manitoba President and Chief Executive Officer Simon Munday, Tony Rodrigues, Ken Stevens, Christine Vandale, Karina Walker, Barret Wallis, Kevin Wallis, Monica Wallis, Ashley-Marie Wilwand.

Pierre Bernier

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, Canadian Ranger Master Corporal Pierre Bernier was invested into the Order of Military Merit by Governor General David Johnston

in a ceremony at Rideau Hall. Today I rise to congratulate and thank Pierre Bernier for his dedication and service as a young—as a Junior Canadian Ranger Patrol Leader.

Founded in Canada in 1972, the Order of Military Merit is the second highest order administered by the Governor General on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The military honour is presented to those who have demonstrated outstanding service and devotion beyond the call of duty. Lac Brochet's Pierre Bernier is one of those exceptional members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

For 11 years Pierre Bernier has been a patrol leader with the 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group of the Junior Canadian Rangers Program. The 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group includes 28 patrols from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These 28 patrols are made up of 838 youths between the ages of 12 and 18 who live in remote and sometimes isolated communities. The Junior Canadian Rangers Program seeks to provide opportunities that strengthen and build communities, including hunting, fishing and living off the land while also learning about spirituality and culture. As leader, Pierre Bernier organizes and leads activities for more than 30 youth. Under his direction, the Lac Brochet Junior Canadian Ranger Patrol has become a successful and noteworthy patrol group.

In addition to his leadership with the Junior Canadian Rangers, Pierre is also vice-principal of Lac Brochet's Petit Casimir Memorial School. The school, governed by the Northlands Dene Education Authority, instructs approximately 250 students from kindergarten to grade 12. As vice-principal and instructor of the physical education, Pierre sets a great example for the students in the school and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, Pierre Bernier's involvement in and commitment to his community is commendable. Congratulations on being invested into the Order of Military Merit and thank you for working to engage and teach the future leaders of our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Blue Crew

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba is dedicated to providing Manitobans with a healthy democracy. We also believe that instilling respect and political engagement into our youth and

the general population is a virtue worth pursuing. This is evident with the establishment of our summer program called the Blue Crew.

The Blue Crew is a group of PC youth focused on constituency outreach, letting the people of Manitoba know that the PC Party is always there for their concerns and to hold this spend government in check. Effectively, it is our effort to connect with all voters and constituencies all over our province.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that this government continuously impedes and interferes with democratic engagement and consultation. On June 7th, last Friday evening, our Blue Crew was set to do some door-knocking in Kirkfield Park, and apparently they had gotten the attention of the area's MLA. As the crew was gathering and organizing themselves, the member for Kirkfield Park approached them. Initially, the Blue Crew thought the MLA was approaching them to welcome them to the area—

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

I have to draw to the attention of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet that I have taken this matter under advisement as there was a matter that was raised during question period. And I'm asking the honourable member, while I regret to interrupt his member's statement, he's not to make any reference to that matter I've taken under advisement, and he's clearly crossed a line in the comments that he's made to this point in time.

So, if he has other comments that perhaps might not pertain to the matter that I have under consideration, I'll allow him that opportunity, to complete his statement. Otherwise, we'll have to move on to another member.

* (16:10)

Mr. Ewasko: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just to continue adding on what the Blue Crew is doing; they are going out there, door knocking amongst the various constituencies in the province of Manitoba, and they are asking people, Manitobans, consulting with Manitobans, what are their concerns, what are some of their opportunities that they look for other Manitobans.

And, Mr. Speaker, Elections Manitoba, here's another note, Elections Manitoba is noticing more and more young people are becoming disengaged with the political system. This comes as no surprise

when elected officials, those who are supposed to be leaders and advocates of political participation, should be helping out with the various youth organizations to strongly encourage them to continue with the political process.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I applaud the efforts of the Blue Crew. I wish them all the luck in the upcoming months as they embark onto our various constituencies across Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pembina Trails Walk 4 Water

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is blessed to have many politically active young people who are dedicated to affecting positive change in our province. Today, students from Vincent Massey Collegiate, Shaftesbury High School, Oak Park High School and Fort Richmond Collegiate came to the Legislative Building to present a petition to the House of Commons. They are urging the federal government to make every effort to partner with the government of Manitoba and First Nations, to develop and install clean water technologies in isolated communities.

Mr. Speaker, our young people are a credit to us. We live in a world where social media provides us with an unprecedented access to information outside of our immediate community, and I am proud that our young people are taking advantage of these opportunities to promote social justice in northern Manitoba. I'm also proud of the many dedicated teachers who help our students develop an awareness of global issues and who guide them in their efforts to make a difference.

I want to let these students know that their calls for change are not falling on deaf ears. Indeed, the provincial government is partnering with First Nations of the Island Lake region and the federal government to retrofit homes in the Island Lakes' communities. Last year, 100 homes were retrofitted and this year the target is 218.

Additional federal funding would go a long way to hooking up more families to running water and reducing health and social costs. It would allow them, more families in those communities, the access to running water that they need and it would also provide additional training and employment for young people living in each First Nation.

Mr. Tommy—Mr. Speaker, Tommy Douglas once said, courage, my friends, 'tis not too late to build a better world.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend some motivated Manitoba students for their courage and their drive to change our world and make a better society for all of us.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances. Seeing no grievances, we'll move on to—

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. On House business, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Wednesday, June 12th, 2013, at 6 p.m., to consider the Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Wednesday, June 12th, 2013, at 6 p.m. to consider the Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Ms. Howard: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would you please resume debate on Bill 18, followed by Bill 33 and Bill 20?

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: So be calling bills in the following orders: Bills 18, 33 and 20, starting with Bill 18 on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), titled The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools), standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach, who has unlimited time.

Bill 18—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I—it's a pleasure to be able to speak to Bill 18 again. I've been very disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that it's taken months and months, or weeks—it seems like months—but it's taken weeks for the government to recall Bill 18. Day after day we would wait for them to call Bill 18, so we could discuss the weakest antibullying bill in North America and they wouldn't call it. You know, all they were fixated on is Bill 20. Day after day they wanted a tax increase, a tax increase, a tax increase. They refused to call this bill. I don't know what

they're afraid of. I have absolutely no idea why they're scared to talk about this bill.

Now, I understand it is the weakest antibullying bill in North America. So that might concern them, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, they've seen other jurisdictions do very good things in terms of bullying. I've talked to some of my friends on the east coast and the Maritimes, and some of the work that's being done in those provinces, good work I'd say. I've talked to my friends in the federal government who've taken some initiatives since this bill was last before the Legislature. It's been a month, you know. It's been a month. There's a lot of things that have happened.

I'm not sure why the government doesn't consider this bill a priority, why they refused to call it for so long, why they're fixated on a tax increase, Mr. Speaker. Why they—no, I suspect that they probably are a little ashamed, know that this is a weak bill in comparison to other jurisdictions. They know, they've talked to people who've said, well, we thought you were going to take real action on bullying, and this is all they got. So no doubt in the brain trust of the NDP, they got together and they said, well, let's not bring this bill forward. Let's not have it come for debate because we're so embarrassed about the fact that we've got such a weak antibullying bill before the Legislature. Maybe it gave them time to reconsider; it gave them some pause.

I would've hoped that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), for example, who was, I think, also equally ashamed that the government wouldn't call this bill for debate, I heard him speaking last week, Mr. Speaker, and how disappointed he was that the government, his own government, wouldn't call Bill 18 for debate. He absolutely—now, I heard him today. It's actually, it's ironic because I heard the member for Thompson today say he wished we could go back into Estimates. He was scared even today to call Bill 18 or demanding that Estimates be called. Now, you know, maybe there needs to be some sort of a meeting between the Government House Leader and the member for Thompson about, you know, what it is that they consider a priority. It's been obvious, I think, that their priority has been a tax increase. Day after day after day they've been crying for a tax increase, and, you know, I think sometimes that actions are a lot louder than words.

We know that the government has been squawking at different times about how they care

about issues of bullying, even though they've brought in the weakest antibullying bill in North America, and yet they wouldn't debate it. They wouldn't bring it forward. We waited with anticipation and wondering, when are they going to call it? When are they going to call Bill 18 for debate? But they wanted to have the tax increase through. They wanted to have the PST. They wanted to reach into Manitobans' pockets, and so for the last 35, 40 days it's the only thing they called. It's the only thing they called, Mr. Speaker, was the PST bill. Nothing else meant anything to them. Nothing else was important enough for them to debate other than how to raise the taxes on Manitobans.

So here we are on this red-letter day when they finally decide to call Bill 18 for debate, and after all the huff and puff from the members opposite and, of course, all they really cared about was the money and all they really cared about was, how do we get more taxpayers' money? But the one thing that this 30-day or 40-day delay in—and then recalling Bill 18 is done, Mr. Speaker, is that it's given us a lot of time to see what this government actually feels about bullying.

Now, I don't just mean in the schools, and I intend—when I left off six or seven weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I was methodically going through the different states in the US and their legislation on bullying—and I intend to resume that at some point. But what I've been given is an opportunity now over the last month to see this government in action, to see how they really feel about bullying because it's difficult to stand up and say you're against bullying when you act in a bullying manner yourself. And what we've clearly seen in the last month is a government that is determined, themselves, to be bullies. And you wonder how much confidence or how much faith we should have in a government's ability to craft antibullying legislation when they themselves are acting as bullies within the context of their ability within government.

*(16:20)

Now, perhaps that is why this is the weakest antibullying bill in North America, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps that's why they've done such a shoddy job of crafting legislation. And I said it six or seven weeks ago, whenever this bill was last before the Legislature, that if this bill passes as it is currently crafted, that any children who are unfortunately being bullied today, won't be in any better position in a year from now; that the same kids who are

vulnerable to being bullied today, will still be being vulnerable to be bullied a year from now. And that is not what people would expect from us.

People would expect us, to the extent that legislation can reduce bullying in schools at all, and I know there's active debate about that among academics and other people, but to the extent that bullying can be reduced at all by legislation, I think people would expect us to put forward a real effort—put forward a real effort in trying to reduce bullying. But what do we get? We get from the government the weakest antibullying bill in North America, and I'll continue to show that, probably, well, maybe later in the day, Mr. Speaker, as we go through the different pieces of legislation from other jurisdictions. But I think the key point is you have to look at the government themselves. Can you trust a government who themselves act like bullies, to bring forward antibullying legislation?

I see the member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson)—he laughs. You know, he laughs, Mr. Speaker, and I would think instead of laughing at this that he might go to his caucus, that he might go to his Cabinet and say, you know, maybe we should internally look at our own actions, because, really, we're here to lead by example, aren't we? We're all elected here as leaders within our various regions and communities to lead by example, to show the way, as you'd say. To show individuals that—through our own actions, that we're going to lead the way in terms of—not only legislation, but how we act. And yet we have the member for Gimli—he laughs. He thinks of it as funny.

But let's look at some of the actions of the government just over the last little while. Since we last had the opportunity to fully debate this, we've seen how far the government is willing to go to bully Manitobans to try to get a PST tax increase through.

Now, some of that, Mr. Speaker, has been demonstrated on what they've set as a priority in this Legislature. Didn't want to call Bill 18, didn't want to call other bills.

In fact, you know, there are some bills—there's a bill on disability and access. I think that that's probably something that's worth debating. I think that's a bill that probably, certainly the concept of it, has good merit. We'd like to talk, probably, a little bit about the details. But I know there are people in the community, those in the disabled community, who would say, you know, we'd like to see that bill

moved to committee. Have they called it even once? Have they called that bill even once? No.

And yet they go out, I hear, sometimes, in the community, about how they say the government makes this bill a priority, that they feel that this bill is something that's very important to them—the access bill. It's taken an awful long time, Mr. Speaker, for them to actually bring that bill forward in the Chamber—or in the—it's in the legislative debate. It's taken years—it's been called upon for years. And so, when they finally introduced it, you'd think that they would bring it forward for a debate. Not at all. Day after day, all they talked about is how do we bully people with the PST increase. How do we get that bill through? And the bill on disabilities? Nothing. To use the words for the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux): nada, zip, zero. They never mention it; it doesn't come forward.

You know, we ask them, if this is such a priority to you, why don't you call the bill for the debate? Mr. Speaker, we'd be happy to debate it. There are other bills, you know, I see the press releases. The government talks about how bills are supposed to make Manitoba safer. They're supposed to be—safety, or whether it's road bills or law enforcement bills. Well, where are they?

You know, we don't—there's sometimes a misconception about this, Mr. Speaker. We, as an opposition, don't set the agenda of the government every day. The government determines which bills are going to come forward for debate. It's up to them; it's not up to us. They determine which bills they're going to call and then we debate them.

And so for the last six weeks, all they were interested in is ramming through a PST increase on Manitobans, bullying it through the Legislature, Mr. Speaker. Well, we stood up as 'constervatives' and said, no, we're not going to let you bully that through. But they didn't call this bill—they didn't call the bill regarding access for those who are living with disabilities. They haven't called those bills that they say are going to make Manitobans safer.

Mr. Speaker, you know, and I've heard, sometimes, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) say that the clearest way to determine somebody's priorities is through their actions, Mr. Speaker. Well, what about the actions of the government? What have they made a priority? They've made a priority of reaching into Manitobans' pockets, and to do it in a bullying way. And I don't use the term lightly, but I think it's important that we use it, because instead of

following the legislation, as it currently exists in Manitoba to allow Manitobans a voice before increasing the retail sales tax, the PST, from 7 to 8 per cent, they've taken away that right. They've acted as a bully, as a government, to take away the right for individuals to be able to have that referendum vote, to be able to speak as the law says that they should. And so it's ironic that a government who wants to talk about bullying, who wants to believe that they are doing something positive on a particular bill is trying to bully through the PST tax increase without that legislated referendum.

And so we say to the government: Will you consider your own actions? Will you look at how you're managing your own affairs? Will you consider not going and taking away the referendum right for individuals to vote on a PST, because from a government perspective that is the act of somebody who's not respecting others' rights? That is the act of somebody—a government—that's acting as a bully, Mr. Speaker. And so, perhaps, because of the government's own actions, it's a reason why, it's a rationale why the government has brought forward such a weak bill on antibullying.

And so I would hope that they would reconsider not only what they consider to be their priorities, because they've only one priority in this Legislative session and that's getting more money from Manitobans. I had asked them to reconsider their priorities and how they're going about demonstrating those priorities. I'd ask them to meet as a group to meet with Manitobans and to ask them whether or not they feel that stripping away the right for people to have a referendum vote, whether or not that is, in fact, the act of a bully, whether or not that's the act of a government that's simply trying to mandate its will on people in a way that is disrespectful and that should be considered wrong, Mr. Speaker. I would ask them to reconsider how it is that they are treating Manitobans, how it is that they're speaking to Manitobans, either directly or indirectly through their actions.

Now, just as we would try to say to our kids when it deals with an antibullying bill, Mr. Speaker, that you should be respectful, that you should be kind to others, that you should obey the law, that you should ensure that others feel respected—and I think that's a universal principle that all of us in the House would agree to and that Manitobans would generally aspire to. We would also expect that government would treat its own citizens that way, that that would be the true example of how to treat citizens, and then

this government might have a degree of credibility when it comes to bringing forward an antibullying bill.

Now, we would still look at this bill and recognize how weak it is, that it lacks so many provisions that you would expect to see in an antibullying bill, like consequences, for example, Mr. Speaker. Now, why would you put forward an antibullying bill that is devoid of any discussion about consequences? Now, maybe not the exact or specific consequences that have to be meted out when there are cases of bullying, but even in general, a general principle about how punishment should be determined or used in cases of bullying.

Well, maybe when you look at how the government has reacted to the PST increase, you might understand. You might understand why they would leave out of an antibullying bill any consequences, because they are trying to act, as a government on the PST side, as a government that doesn't want to bear any consequences. They know that if they would bring forward the PST increase through a referendum what the response would be. They know, Mr. Speaker—they knew if they'd of brought forward the issue of the PST increase to the prebudget consultation meetings that people wouldn't have liked it. They know that if they'd of brought it forward at any other sort of public forum prior to the budget that people would've reacted very strongly to it. One would say, there'd be consequences. There would've been public consequences. People would've turned around and said, we don't appreciate this or we—they would've spoken out to their MLAs and said, this is wrong. They may have made calls or emails to them prior to the budget, and the government wanted to avoid those consequences, so they didn't speak to anyone about it prior. They didn't bring it forward to the prebudget consultation meetings and they didn't raise it publicly. In fact, they denied it, in fact. And so there was an absence of consequences prior to the budget because of how this government acted.

* (16:30)

So perhaps it's no surprise that they didn't include consequences within the context of an antibullying bill because they themselves are trying to absolve themselves of consequences. They themselves don't want to feel the consequences of their actions, Mr. Speaker. And yet their actions speak of a government that is willing to bully the public, that isn't willing to listen to the public. Their

actions speak of a government who don't want to live within the rules, something that is the hallmark of bullying.

I've spoken, Mr. Speaker, about this government's decision to only recall the Legislature in the middle of April. And, as I've discussed, the timelines with the media and my friends and colleagues, when you look at recalling the Legislature on—in the middle of April, with two weeks to debate a budget, and three and a half to four weeks to debate Estimates, three opposition days, it only leaves a couple of weeks to have debated 45 bills. But that's what this government wanted to do. The government wanted to have a very short period of time because they wanted to bully—they wanted to bully this Legislature.

Now we talked about how they wanted to bully Manitobans on the PST increase, by taking away their right for a referendum, Mr. Speaker, but very clearly what the government has done is try to bully the Legislature. Their plan was, of course, to bring the Legislature back in the middle of April, have eight to 10 days' debate on the budget, have Estimates for three and a half—maybe four—weeks, bring us to close to the end of May, have three opposition days and two weeks to debate 45 bills.

Now, I don't know, I've talked to a number of people, a lot of people who are interested in politics and a lot of people who don't have the same kind of interest in politics, Mr. Speaker, but they're unanimous in one thing. They're unanimous in the idea that 14 days, two weeks, is not an appropriate time to debate 45 pieces of legislation. Even if those 45 bills weren't contentious and weren't a matter of debate, internally or externally, it would be, I think, irresponsible for us, as legislators, to pass 45 bills in two weeks. It simply wouldn't be the right thing to do.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask my friends opposite to reconsider how they operate in this House, and to ask themselves whether or not they, themselves, are acting like bullies; bullies in the Legislature, trying to demand that bills be passed in such a short period of time. It is certainly something that's inappropriate. It's something that isn't worth the dignity of this House.

I—but it speaks to their actions. It speaks to how a government wants to respond to Manitobans, and they want to respond in a bullying fashion, Mr. Speaker. They want to respond in a way that puts people in a difficult position, that puts them in an

uncomfortable position. And that is something that relates to this discussion, because when you craft antibullying legislation, you would like to know that the people who are crafting that legislation actually care about the issue of bullying, that they aren't bullies themselves.

And yet we've seen from the government, in their actions on this particular front, whether it comes to how they operate the Legislature or how they've been dealing with the issue of the PST increase, that they're acting in a fashion that many would call bullying, and the people would like to see changes in terms of their actions.

I need only look at my friend, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), who has got himself in a bit of hot water these days, Mr. Speaker. The member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), who's also got himself in a bit of a legal predicament, and that is unfortunate that any members of the Legislature would find themselves in that kind of a predicament. But they find themselves in that predicament, not because of anything the opposition has done, not because of anything that members of the public have done, but because of what they themselves have done—done to themselves.

Early in this year, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, it's reported, and it's been reported in affidavits and in legal documents, that they—it's been reported in those legal documents that the Minister of Finance said to the Jockey Club, the Assiniboia Downs folks, that he was going to be taking away their funding, both through VLT proceeds and a parimutuel fund without any consultation. And, in fact, not only was it going to be done without any consultation, but it was revealed, or at least it's been alleged, that the Minister of Finance went to the Red River Ex to find folks at the Red River Ex and said to them that we would like you to be involved in taking over Assiniboia Downs.

Now, there's other allegations that are now part of a civil lawsuit about whether or not there was financial information about the Assiniboia Downs shared with folks who shouldn't have been privy to that financial information, and we'll let the court proceedings play out, as court proceedings do play out, but I would say that those actions, the actions of a minister who marches into a meeting and threatens to take away funding to an organization, who marches into a meeting and says that he's been dealing with another organization to help take over that group, that's the actions of somebody who, in

common terms, you might consider a bully, because those are bullying behaviours, something that people certainly wouldn't approve of.

And so it's difficult for a government, a member of the Cabinet, who has brought forward this legislation, to not look at it without the colouring of his own actions, not looking at it without suggesting that maybe he himself has things to learn about, that maybe he himself should look at his own actions first, before he looks at the actions of others.

Now that doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that it's not worth trying antibullying legislation in some form, but it should be well thought out. It should be done with more consensus. And I think that's really the crux of the problem. The crux of the problem is that this is a government that didn't consult on this particular piece of legislation. And, really, that would have been probably the smart thing to do. It would have been the smart thing to do to go out into the public, to the different areas of Manitoba to meet with parents, to meet with groups and organizations and say to them: We are concerned about bullying in the schools. And I think that most Manitobans would have said, right, we agree. There is an issue of bullying in the schools, and that all kids—all kids need to be protected.

Now, there might have been some debate about whether or not legislation could actually provide that protection, Mr. Speaker, whether or not it's the right way to find protection, but I think, ultimately, most Manitobans would have said, well, it's worth a shot. It's worth a try. Maybe it's not perfect; maybe it's not the easiest thing to do, but it certainly is worth a try to try to find a solution to bullying, or at least to try to find a way to reduce it. But the appropriate way to have done that would have been to have consultations, to meet with those Manitobans who have an interest in this issue, who have a concern about the issue, and to say to them: Why don't you bring forward your ideas? Why don't you bring forward your ideas and we can have that discussion and we can have that talk about the kind of legislation that might actually make a difference when it comes to bullying.

* (16:40)

And I suspect that the government would have got lots of good ideas—I've got a lot of confidence in Manitobans. I've always said, Mr. Speaker—I've said it in this House in the past and I think I've said it in other jurisdictions that the best ideas don't come from us in the Assembly, they come from

Manitobans. Whether it's at Tim Hortons or down at The Forks or you're chatting at a Bomber game—and I hope to be doing that in the next couple of days—and you get good ideas from Manitobans. You get good ideas from them; they have a lot of positive things in terms of how they feel the Province could move forward. But it requires that you have to have people who are willing to listen, and then actually willing to engage in the process.

And I think that's part of the problem with Bill 18, is that there was never actually that process, that there was never really an outreach to say, you know, what are our ideas and how can we make this an effective bill? And that's probably why we ended up with the weakest antibullying bill in North America, Mr. Speaker. It's probably why, if this bill passes as written, that kids who are being bullied today are going to be the kids who are being bullied in a year from now. And that's unfortunate and that will reflect poorly on all of us, because we all have a responsibility to the people who come to us for help or they think their government can help.

And all of us, I think, have had parents who've come to us and told us heartbreaking stories of kids who are being bullied in the schools, and many of them probably are under—now, under the false impression that their kids might actually somehow benefit by what's going to be happening in this legislation. And if this bill passes as written, without amendment, Mr. Speaker, in a year from now we're going to hear from those parents again because, unless something changes in the lives of those kids or something changes in the environment within the schools that they're in, they're going to come to us and say, nothing has changed. That the challenge that my kids were dealing with last year are still the same challenges they're dealing with this year.

And add it on to their concern for their kids—the very legitimate concern that all of us as parents have—is going to be the frustration because of the false promise that they were given by this government. The false hope that something might change, Mr. Speaker, and that is a shame on us. That would be a shame on this Legislature because, I don't know, the only thing worse, perhaps, than passing a bill that has no effectiveness—and I think this bill will fall into that category—is passing something that gives false hope to those families, to those parents and to those kids, who are going to come back to us, who will come back to us and say: I thought something was going to change. I thought that there would be something in this legislation. I'm looking

about—I'm looking for the consequences. I'm looking for what happens if I need to take my kid to a different school. I'm looking for different kinds of protection. And we're going to have to say to them, well, none of that was contained in the bill.

And I'm sure they'll bring forward examples of other pieces of legislation and they'll say, well, look over here; look at this bill. Look at the Maritimes bill, where there is that kind of protection. Look at this bill where there is protection. Why wouldn't you have passed something that would actually have had the kind of effect that would have protected my kids?

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I don't know, I'm—I mean, I'm already thinking, you know, what do you say to a parent? You know, I guess I could say, well, we tried to convince the government. I spent days trying to convince the government to bring forward legislation that would actually have some merit, some teeth, and they said no. And, in fact, not only did they say no, but they mocked us for trying to bring forward things that would actually be better, that would actually change it.

Not only did legislation pass, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't help kids, but the government actually made fun of the fact that they are passing legislation that didn't help kids and they trumpeted it, that they were going to pass legislation that didn't help kids. Now we're going to tell—we're going to have that ability in a year from now, and we're all going to find out whether or not those—the same heartbreaking stories that we hear now about kids who are being bullied because of their body size; kids who are being bullied because of academic performance; kids who are being bullied because, you know, they speak a different language or they don't speak the English language as well as they'd like to at this stage of the game. We're going to see if those kids that—who are being bullied now for those reasons, whether or not they actually find any kind of protection.

And when they don't, because I don't think they will under this particular bill if it's not amended, we'll have to go back to the government and say, what happened. What happened?

You know, you trumpeted this as being a cure-all, something that was going to protect all these kids. You know, you demanded that it be debated. You know, we tried to talk some reason, tried to get some changes within the bill, and already the minister has said that she's not going to change anything. She's not even open to change.

You know, I listened to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) last Thursday, Mr. Speaker, here. We had Executive Council Estimates, and I listened to the Premier praise the consultation process we have between second reading and third reading, the committee stage. I heard him say what a great process it was. He talked about how it was unique in Canada. He talked about how it was one of the best things that exists within our Manitoba legislative system. He talked about how instructive it was to hear Manitobans come forward and bring their ideas. He's talked in this House and outside this House, and said that people should come from everywhere and speak at committee. He's put out the invitation. He's almost begged them to come here to the Legislature.

And yet, what does his Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) say about this bill, Mr. Speaker? She says, months ago, before the 203 or 210 people who are signed up to speak as of this afternoon, I understand, she said to those 200-and-some people, we're not making any changes. We're not going to listen to you. So what a contradiction.

Some might say it's an act. It's a bullying act, Mr. Speaker. It's an act of bullying. To say to the 200-and-some people—and who knows what the final number will be by the time we get to committee. I'm sure it'll be higher than 205 or whatever it was this afternoon. But it says to those people that we're not going to listen to you. Well, I know he hasn't said that. I mean, the minister said it in those exact words. She said we're not going to listen to you. We're not going to make any changes. We're not open. We're not even open-minded enough about this issue to listen to any changes. I don't know from a legislative perspective if there could be more of a bullying act than that.

And yet her Premier sat in his chair on Thursday and talked about what a great process the committee process is, about how he wanted people to come and speak at committee because they learnt so much from these Manitobans. And yet his very Education Minister said to Manitobans, we don't care what you say. We're not going to listen to you. We're close-minded on this issue. We're not going to make any changes. It's an act of a bully, I'd say, Mr. Speaker, and I hope—I hope—that there are some changes yet in the minds of the government because I know that there are going to be Manitobans who have varying views on this issue, and I understand that.

And there'll be Manitobans who will come on this bill who will talk to all sections of the bill.

There'll be Manitobans who are concerned about the definition of bullying. There'll be Manitobans who have ideas about cyberbullying. There'll be Manitobans who have a—questions about constitutionality. I heard those questions will come up at committee. I'm sure of that, Mr. Speaker. You'll have Manitobans who are going to raise questions about consequences or the lack of consequences in the bill. It's not going to be a narrow discussion. I know the government tries to portray it that way, that it's going to be a very—a single-minded discussion, but it won't be. I know that.

I know that because I've seen the letters from people, from Manitobans on both sides of this issue, thousands, over 10,000 pieces of correspondence on this issue, and they're not uniform. They are different views of it. Now, I would say that the vast majority of correspondence that I've received on the bill have suggestions in terms of how the bill can be improved in different areas, and I'm going to have the opportunity to read some letters that I received from students, Mr. Speaker, about this bill. And, if I don't have time today, I'm sure the minister will be happy to grant me time on this in the future.

But I do want to ensure that the voice of kids are heard in this debate, and I started off the debate several weeks ago when the government last called this bill talking about a young man by the name of Joshua [*phonetic*], I believe. I don't have his letter with me today, Mr. Speaker, but who talked about how difficult it was to be bullied. And I'm going to read more letters from kids who have ideas for the minister and I would say that those kids would want the government to be open-minded, would want them to listen to their suggestions. And if I said to those kids, you've got a minister who has said that she won't listen to any of your ideas, and if I asked those kids, you'd think that that's an act of a bully. My guess is they would say, maybe, probably, yes, because legislatively it really is. I mean, we're here to listen. That's what those committees are intended for.

* (16:50)

Now, I've heard the minister—House leader, and different members of the government, even though they refused to call this bill for several weeks, talk about how we should rush this bill to committee. Well, rush it for what? Until the Minister of Education indicates that she's actually willing to listen to those people who are coming to committee, what are we rushing it for? Rush it through so she can close her ears to them?

We're doing those Manitobans a favour by trying to get the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) to reverse her position that she's not going to listen to anybody at committee. Why would we rush to send a bill to committee when the government has said, we don't care how many people come; we don't care what you have to say; we don't care if your suggestions are good or bad suggestions; we're not going to listen? Well, what is the rush from the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) to move into that kind of a process? Why do we have that process at all, Mr. Speaker?

Now, I don't disagree with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) that there's good value at having a committee debate. We in this Chamber have all seen suggestions that have come from Manitobans on different pieces of legislation on different bills that have been good suggestions. And sometimes we've made those amendments at committee right there, if we had the proper legal advice. Sometimes we've waited till the report stage at third reading. But, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, there's been lots of times where we've actually agreed to the changes that have come from committee. So it is a valuable process. I agree with that.

Now, it's a diminished process, Mr. Speaker, when the government tries to ram a bill through the night, ram committee members through the night. That's a diminished process. You don't get the same kind of advice. You don't necessarily do much for democracy when you have presentations at 5 a.m. as opposed to at 6 p.m. And that's understandable. And we don't do ourselves any favours, as legislators, when that happens. But I have no intention of rushing a bill to committee when the government has said they're not going to listen to anybody at committee.

Why would we, as an opposition, want to fast-track something to committee that (a) is one of the weakest antibullying bills in North America? So, we're not going to see kids protected, Mr. Speaker, because this bill is so weak in its drafting. *[interjection]* But then (b)—ineffective, as the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) says—but then, (b) there aren't actually going to be amendments listened to because the government has said we're not going to agree to any amendments. Well, what's the rush? I mean, if there isn't an act of a bully in there, I'm not sure what would be.

And, you know, we've asked the government, on this bill and on Bill 20, whether or not they'll agree

to have committees held in a respectful fashion, a reasonable fashion. We're not asking, you know, a revolutionary thing to happen here in the Legislature. It's not like the creation of the Internet, Mr. Speaker. It's not that complicated. All we're asking for is the government to say, we're going to schedule—pick a number—25 presenters a night.

We'll schedule 25 presenters a night. Committee clerks, I know they're busy folks over in the Clerk's office, and I am always hesitant to suggest more work on them because they're hard-working folks as it is, and it's difficult for them to take on more. But I suspect, in the good of democracy, they might be open to this, to phone 25 people and say, okay, you're on Tuesday. And then they phone the next 25 people and say, you're on Wednesday; and the next 25, you're on Thursday.

You know, that seems like reasonable thing. Now, you know, I've heard arguments from members opposite who say, oh, well; well, people might not show up. Well, they might not. I mean, and so, maybe you end up hearing from 21 people instead of 25. But at least for those 21 people, they'll have known, democratically, that's their day. For the four who didn't come, well, that was their opportunity. You could call their name again at the end of the process, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, it makes a lot of sense to me.

And I don't know what the government is so concerned about. That kind of a process, yes, you might add a few days. So, instead of going, you know, three days, you end up going end up going six days. Well, so what? I mean, you know, I mean, we're going to have a bit of time here, anyway. Mr. Speaker, we're going to have a little bit of time, here, in the—in this session. It's a reasonable suggestion to have that kind of a process, to allow people to present at a reasonable time.

I mean, I wonder about the—you know, just a scenario, Mr. Speaker—I wonder about the parent who wants to come and speak about their son or daughter who is maybe being bullied in a class.

And I suspect we're going to hear very personal stories on all sides of this issue. And we're going to have, you know, a parent come to speak about their son or daughter who is being bullied in school. And then we're going to tell them that they have to—we're going to tell them at 11 o'clock, oh, you know, you're No. 85 on the list, and you're not likely to be called until 4:30 in the morning. You know, what are they

going to think of us? What are they going to think about this place and how this process works?

You know, are they going to feel, themselves, that they've been bullied by the Legislature? You know, if nothing else would give them question about this bill, the process of how this government wants to operate, wants to operate as a undemocratic bully is disgraceful.

And so the suggestion that we've put forward and I suspect if I had a chance to talk to different members of the NDP caucus more privately in times that weren't as political as they are—they might be right now, Mr. Speaker, in this House; that they would say to me, makes sense, really what are we going to lose? So you end up having an extra two or three nights of committee, that people can come and present at a reasonable time. Legislators can come and listen at a reasonable time because it's obviously mostly about Manitobans who would come to the committee.

But I don't think that, no disrespect to my friends on either side of this House, that anybody is in fine form at 5 a.m., Mr. Speaker, to listen to committees, to listen to people's presentation. Are we giving it—are we giving all that we can in terms of listening to the ideas of Manitobans at 5 a.m., at 5 in the morning? It doesn't make sense; it doesn't make sense for anybody.

And, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we as a caucus are going to do everything we can to prevent that from happening anyway. There are things that can be done to try to prevent that from happening, they are not easy things to do but they're worth doing. Members opposite have seen how committees sometimes work in the past, but I have no intention of forcing a mother who already might have a difficult time with their son or daughter, they're struggling what's going on within the schools and what's happening perhaps to their son or daughter, I have no intention of making that mother be here to present at 5:30 in the morning to a bunch of legislators who are half asleep. It's ridiculous. It's a ridiculous process, Mr. Speaker, and why this government wants to ram that through on any bill, let alone an antibullying bill, I don't understand it. None of that makes sense to me.

And it bothers me because these people are going to come here with all the right intentions, they're going to come here because they are passionate about the issue—which others—whichever side they're on, Mr. Speaker, and this isn't a political statement, because there will be members on both

sides who are in favour of the bill as written, those who are opposed to the bill as written and those who have ideas. There'll be three sides to this issue. And all of them deserve to be heard in a respectful way; all of them, each one of them deserve to be heard in respectful way.

An Honourable Member: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, thank you. I'm not sure, you know, what the member's intention is. I do want to offer him extra time to complete his remarks. I know we've spent a bit of time today waiting to vote on what ended up being a unanimous vote, so I'm certainly willing to offer him as much time as he would like to complete his remarks.

And I'd ask that you ask the House for leave to do that.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, I'm not sure if I heard an offer from the minister about changing how committees are run. If that is what she's intending, I think we might have some ability to do that.

In the absence of that, I think that that's going to be a no, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock at 5 o'clock to allow members of the House to continue the debate?

Some Honourable Members: No.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader—the honourable member for Steinbach.

Mr. Goertzen: And, Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader makes my point. They make my point. They want to be a bully; they want to ram a bill into committee—they want to ram a bill into committee that their own minister has said that they're not going to listen to anybody at committee. Their own minister has said they're not going to listen to

anybody at committee. I want to give them every opportunity to go to the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) and say, will you listen to the people at committee? Will you listen to them?

Why would I rush a bill to committee with a minister who's already said she is not listening to anybody, Mr. Speaker? That's disgraceful. It's disgraceful to people on both sides of the issue, and I want to ask this government to put aside their own bullying ways—their own bullying ways—and then look for a process that'll be respectful, that'll be

democratic for everybody who comes to this committee, because no Manitoban should be bullied by the government, no Manitoban should have to put up with the kind of bullying that we have seen from—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach will have unlimited time.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 10, 2013

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Assiniboia Downs Cullen; Struthers	2181
Bill 209—The Special Olympics Awareness Week Act Stefanson	2173	Ministerial Accountability Cullen; Struthers	2181
Petitions		Keeyask Community Centre Schuler; Chomiak	2182
Highway 217 Bridge Repair Graydon	2173	Mental Health Crisis Response Centre Friesen; Oswald	2183
Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum Eichler	2173	Member for Kirkfield Park Ewasko; Howard	2184
Wishart	2174	Phosphorus Reduction—Lake Winnipeg Gerrard; Selinger	2187
Ewasko	2174	Youth Recreation Activity Worker Program Wight; Chief	2188
Driedger	2175	Agricultural Office (Boissevain) Maguire; Kostyshyn	2190
Mitchelson	2175	Provincial Gravel Roads Eichler; Ashton	2191
Smook	2175	Matter of Contempt	
Schuler	2176	Goertzen	2185
Stefanson	2176	Howard	2187
Briese	2177	Members' Statements	
Friesen	2177	Breast Cancer Pledge Ride Gaudreau	2192
Helwer	2177	Special Olympics Manitoba Stefanson	2192
Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal Pedersen	2174	Pierre Bernier Pettersen	2193
Goertzen	2177	The Blue Crew Ewasko	2193
Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review Cullen	2175	Pembina Trails Walk 4 Water Allum	2194
Maguire	2176		
Tabling of Reports		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Elections Manitoba—Permanent Voters List Study, June 2013 Reid	2178	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Ministerial Statements		Debate on Second Readings	
Forest Fire Update Mackintosh	2178	Bill 18—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)	
Maguire	2178	Goertzen	2195
Gerrard	2179		
Oral Questions			
PST Increase Pallister; Selinger	2179		
Helwer; Selinger	2182		
Helwer; Swan	2183		

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>