

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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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

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 302—Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen), that Bill 302, Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act, now be read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gaudreau: This bill amends Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Act to remove restrictions on the corporate powers of Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie and grant powers to the natural person carrying out its objectives and purposes, to appoint a board of directors and officers to manage the corporation's affairs as authorized and providing requirements—provision requiring documents signed by certain people to be repealed.

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

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

PETITIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): 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.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation and 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's signed by L. Brown, C. Cooke, B. Braden 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.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) 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.

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

(4) 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.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition is signed by L. Van Bergen, C. McInnes, B. Purdy and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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 announced on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by J. Neuhofer, M. Voelkel, G. Voelkel and many, many more Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities 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 this petition is signed by B. Smith, N. Scott, T. Scott 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 T. Williams, B. Earle, M. Williams and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): 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.

This petition is signed by B.J. Kumka, A. Milliner, P. Leclerc and many other Manitobans.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) 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.

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

* (13:40)

(4) 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.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by C. Gordon, R. Ramage, R. Homes and many other fine Manitobans.

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.

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 the provincial referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of A. Linklater, M. Monkman, S. Harris and many other fine 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 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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by G. Keller, A. Stewart, M.J. Davidge and many, many others.

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) 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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by R. Hayden, D. Muchinsky, J. Mainland and many, many others.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, 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 K. McGee, J. McCallister, D. McCallister and many, many other fine Manitobans

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 in 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 R. Timmerman, K. de Groot, F. de Groot and many, many other Manitobans.

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 C. Porter, N. Andrews, D. Andrews and many other Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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

And these—and this is the background to this petition:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list, which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting lists for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This is signed by T. Flynn, L. Klippenstein, T. Childs and many, many other 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.

(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.

* (13:50)

(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 not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by S. Gauthier, R. Balcean, J. Letkeman and many more fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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 broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes that—the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by J. Houle, M. Mousseau and A. Malcolm and many, many others.

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

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list, which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition

of their lives without receiving ABA service that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unaccessible—unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And this petition is signed by E. Hernandez, A. Victor, D. Dubbert and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Dean, Ruth and Jon and Stefan Solmundson, who are from Perth, Australia, and are the guests of the honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

Also, I believe, in the public gallery, we have with us today Doug Lockhart, manager of Able Sail Manitoba; Mike McIntyre, commodore for Able Sail Manitoba; and Kennedy MacLean, volunteer and companion sailor for Able Sail Manitoba, who are the guests of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

And also in the public gallery, we have with us Mr. Harry Schellenberg, the former member for Rossmere.

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Tax Increases Government Intent

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the Premier claims he's a builder, Mr. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is that before you'd hire a builder, you'd have a look at what they built. So let's have a look over the last 14 years at the construction that the Premier's undertaken.

Let's see, now. We had the doubling of the provincial debt—that's not great; bloated administrative systems; waste; duplication; the highest cost, least accessible health-care system of any province; the highest taxes. We have a reputation here. As a builder, this isn't a great reputation, Mr. Speaker. It's the worst government in Canada.

Now, why would this Premier propose to take tax dollars away from the real builders of our province and give them to himself, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite was in office, his debt, as a portion of the economy, was about 33 per cent; it's 27 per cent today. He was paying 13.2 cents of every dollar to debt payments; we're paying 5.9 cents. Our position is much stronger than it was then, and our net assets have increased.

The hospital that they announced in Brandon seven times and never built—we built it, Mr. Speaker. The new hospital in Gimli that they talked about, never got built—we built it. The new high school in Seven Oaks School Division—done.

And, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to building, we've also put the emergency channel in place and we've committed to making a permanent channel. We've committed to making the emergency channel permanent and putting the resources in place to do that, \$250 million, something the members opposite talk about—

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

PST Increase Request to Reverse

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, we can thank the builders of the rich uncle in Ottawa that gave him the biggest increase in transfer payments in the history of our Province.

What has the Premier built? Let's take a look at the building record here again: 192 communications staff, and they're employed to develop messages, scary messages to frighten civil servants. We have a massive increase in the advertising budgets of this government to frighten civil servants. We have embedded political hacks from the socialist party opposite put into union head offices to mislead and manipulate civil servants. And we have outdated practices, which have been sent to the garbage bin by other jurisdictions, which this government still uses to force people to become civil servants against their will in the labour market in the construction industry. Now, that means that this government has a reputation as a bottom-of-the-barrel government.

And I have to ask this Premier: Why doesn't he recognize, finally recognize, who the real builders of our province are and rescind the PST hike and let the real builders of this province have an increase in their income for a change?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this member was a senior Cabinet minister that sat around the table and decided to cancel entirely the capital program for hospitals and nursing homes and all the health facilities in Manitoba. They decided to cancel the entire single program, putting seniors at risk, putting people that needed hospital facilities at risk. That's their approach to building: to cancel entirely the program.

* (14:00)

They raised the gas tax. They cut the highways budget, Mr. Speaker. That's their approach to building: raise the revenue, cut the program. That's their approach.

They did nothing in the '90s. And now the Leader of the Opposition wants to race right back there with his 1 per cent, across-the-board, indiscriminate cuts, lay off nurses, lay off teachers, lay off civil servants. It's no wonder they're concerned, because they see back to the future with the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Pallister: And they see Joe Flaherty from SCTV with the scary horror picture show with that Premier.

You know, Mr. Speaker, for heaven's sakes, look at the record of the man who claims to be a builder. Have a look: the worst record in the country on child poverty—on child poverty; on violent crime; on fiscal management; lowest increase in average weekly wage; attractiveness to mining and exploration, bottom of the barrel; red tape, bottom of the barrel;

waiting lists, bottom of the barrel; out-migration, bottom of the barrel. No wonder this Premier (Mr. Selinger) is so fixated on the last century—no wonder—because he can't defend his record as a bottom-of-the-barrel Premier.

Why doesn't he rescind the PST tax hike and leave the money with the real builders in this province, the working people and seniors of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, when the leader was in the government as a senior minister, the Property Tax Credit was \$325 until he cut it to \$250 for every Manitoban, including senior citizens. It is now \$1,100 for senior citizens in Manitoba; \$250 when he was in office, \$1,100 now.

When he was in office, the small business tax rate was 9 per cent. Now it's zero. And the small business tax rate only applied to businesses up to \$200,000. Now it applies to \$425,000.

A family in Manitoba paid \$2,400 more a year taxes when he was in office. We've kept Manitobans' tax rates down. We've kept the affordability rate among the lowest in Canada.

We have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We're No. 2 in that, Mr. Speaker, and we've got more people working in Manitoba than ever in the history of the province.

And what does the leader want to do about that? He wants to halt hydro in its tracks. He wants to lay off people and he wants to put people—

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

Minister of Local Government Apology Request

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government can duck and weave, but he can't run. His offensive words calling presenters to Bill 20 howling coyotes were caught on record word for word.

He has the opportunity right now to do the honourable thing and apologize to them unequivocally. Will he do that?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Yesterday, I made a statement, and I thought it was quite clear that, you know, there needs to be a higher level of respect shown in this particular building. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I

mean, even as I speak right now, I can hear people making comments from their seats. It's regrettable.

And in Manitoba, we do 'respect' the fact that people have a right to make comments in a democratic society. We respect those thoughtful comments. There are many articulate individuals who came forward to present. I was there three evenings. I know it was hot and sweaty and sticky, and people came forward, spent a lot of time there and all night. And, quite frankly, we really respected that and we respect them for taking the time to be very, very thoughtful and making thoughtful comments.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, he keeps ducking and weaving. His words are caught on record word for word.

This isn't the first time that he's treated presenters with disdain. In one committee evening, during six hours, he used his BlackBerry the whole time. He was then very offended and got very huffy when our side moved a motion to ask that all members treat the presenters respectfully and sit there not on their BlackBerrys but sit and listen. He got huffy when we asked him about that. He now is calling them howling coyotes.

He has the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, right now to apologize unequivocally. Will he do that?

Mr. Lemieux: The member opposite's comments are absolutely ridiculous. I'm not sure what she's talking about with regard to a BlackBerry. We all agreed as a committee, Mr. Speaker, that we should all be more attentive because, quite frankly, there are differing views with regard to PST.

We strongly believe that the PST is well spent with regard to critical infrastructure and the needs of critical infrastructure. And, indeed, today we see press releases coming out from the opposition making negative comments about infrastructure development that's taking place in Brandon and other communities. We believe that PST is well spent, Mr. Speaker, with regard to creating more jobs in Manitoba, improve the infrastructure overall. Members opposite don't believe in that.

Some speakers feel very strongly that it's the right move to make, others don't, and we listen to them attentively and respect—

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

Mrs. Driedger: Well, that response shows the arrogance of this minister and that government, Mr. Speaker. This minister stands up in QP, he puffs himself up and then he goes on his performance, he goes on his rant.

This is not a time for a rant. This is the time for an unequivocal apology for calling presenters to Bill 20 howling coyotes.

Will he provide to them an unequivocal apology? Will he do that today?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned yesterday when I reviewed Hansard, the Hansard, you know, pointed out that those comments could appear that they were directed at presenters. Regrettably, I was making my comments at the members of the opposition.

Now, having said that, I should've never done that in the first place. We are trying to treat this as a respectful workplace. I should've never geared my comments to the members opposite and the opposition.

They certainly were not geared to the public that came to present, spent hot evenings presenting thoughtful presentations on both sides of the issue. I mentioned yesterday, I said if those individuals that came to present felt somehow that they were slighted by my comments, I—you know, I regret that very, very much.

My comments were directed at the members opposite, not to the presenters, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite know fair well—then—know well that I've made comments throughout the years—

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

PST Increase Referendum Request

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I don't quite understand what's so funny coming from this minister and why it's so hard for him to just stand up in this House and give a proper heartfelt apology.

Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday at committee on Bill 20, Mr. Kevin Shumilak and other concerned Point Douglas residents spoke about how the illegal PST hike was going to hurt the most vulnerable people in his area. Mr. Shumilak was disgusted that the NDP government could not own up to their promise not to raise the PST. The NDP's runaway

spending is going to hurt the poor even more in Mr. Shumilak's area.

Will the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) listen to the concerns of Mr. Shumilak and thousands of other Manitobans, obey the law and call a referendum, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Acting Minister of Finance): Certainly, we appreciated the words and advice that we heard from the presenters at the committee hearings for Bill 20.

But members opposite didn't take any advice on how to invest in education, which is a great equalizer. In fact, they kept cutting education, Mr. Speaker. We believe it's a great equalizer and that's a big part of our poverty strategy.

Members opposite clawed back the child benefit and they made a one-year cut of 18 per cent in benefits for employment income assistance recipients. We have not done that; in fact, we've done more to enhance rates and provide income supports for people on employment income assistance.

We're building 1,500 social housing units, Mr. Speaker. We've heard from poverty advocates that housing is a very important—safe affordable housing is a very important part of our—that strategy and we're committed to doing that.

The minimum wage increase, they opposed—

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

Mr. Ewasko: The member across the way is saying that they're listening, but they're not showing it, Mr. Speaker. They're talking a good game, but they're not proving it by any actions.

Mr. Shumilak also told this government that they should be transparent and accountable to Manitobans. Instead, they impose an illegal 14 per cent increase in the PST, taking an additional \$5 million a week from hard-working Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

All Mr. Kevin Shumilak is asking for this—from this NDP government is to be transparent and accountable, pull the bill, hold a referendum.

Mr. Bjornson: Well, I know that members opposite have opposed every budget that we've introduced into this Chamber, but we've seen results from those budgets that we've introduced.

I know they've opposed every single increase in minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, which has gone up 71 per cent in our tenure in office. I know that they raised the minimum wage every four years, coincidentally, for some reason, and not a very large increase at that. But we know that increasing the minimum wage has put more than \$6,800 in Manitobans' pockets, net, over the—over time after having increased the minimum wage as we have.

*(14:10)

We also know that child care is very important to those who want to get back into the workforce, Mr. Speaker, and we've committed to opening a thousand more spaces this year, and once we do that, we will have achieved our goal of 6,500 more spaces for child care. And we plan to add—

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

Mr. Ewasko: And I'd appreciate it if the member would answer some of the questions instead of reading off the news releases.

This all coming from a government who disrespects Manitobans on a daily basis. The member of Dawson Trail has not apologized for calling Manitobans at the PST hearings as howling coyotes, instead resorting to reading official statements by his government's partisan campaign strategy. Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve better from their government.

Will the member from Dawson Trail do the right thing, apologize to Manitobans, hold Bill 20 and hold a referendum?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for the Bureau of Statistics, I know the members opposite don't like statistics, but our poverty strategy is working.

More people are working in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, than ever before, quite frankly. Our unemployment rate in 2012 was 5.2 per cent, compared to 7.1 per cent nationally. Fewer Manitobans are living in poverty, a decrease of 16,000 people between 2000 and 2010, and the poverty rate for Manitobans has decreased by 19.4 per cent, using the market basket rate. Child poverty has decreased by 28 per cent since 2000, and poverty for persons in single-parent families decreased by 24 per cent, using the market basket rate.

But I know members opposite, past behaviours of—will indicate future—

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

Can I interrupt question period for a moment?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: We just had folks with us here from the Islamic Social Services Association, 15 students under the direction of Anas Moutarzak. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome folks here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Now, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

PST Increase Impact on Small Business

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Allison Campbell is a small business woman in Winnipeg who came Thursday night to express her opinion on Bill 20. As both a spa owner and an accountant for other small businesses, she both feels the impact and sees the impact on the other businesses. Her own spa business felt the impact of the PST inclusion in 2012 with a 20 per cent reduction in business. She expects further impact with the 14 per cent increase in the PST.

Why is this government hurting small businesses with the PST increase?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, Mr. Speaker, the champions of industry had a 9 per cent, I believe, or 8 per cent small business tax when we came into office in 1999. Need I remind the members opposite that the small business tax in Manitoba today is zero?

Now, zero's an important number, and that, of course, is dealing with small businesses with net income of \$400,000, Mr. Speaker. We're going to raise that to \$425,000 for taxable income. And what that amounts to each and every year in tax savings for small businesses in Manitoba is \$55,250. That's what small businesses benefit from our elimination of the small business tax.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, we also have the only employment tax in Canada.

Allison also recognizes the trickle-down effect of consumptive tax increases. The effect of every tax increase is multiplied many times in terms of its impact on the economy.

Is the government truly aware of the negative impact of the tax increases they have imposed on small businesses in the community?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker, today in Manitoba we have 106,000 businesses in Manitoba. And one thing that those 106,000 businesses have in Manitoba is over 135,000 more paying customers. When members opposite were in power and they had a 8 per cent small business tax, they had a 17 per cent corporate income tax, we lost over 33,000 people to other provinces.

We're growing the economy. We're creating a competitive environment. We've had magazine articles supporting—from Businessweek and other 'juris'—other notable magazines that have said that Manitoba and Winnipeg is one of the most affordable places to do business.

So we'll continue to do what we do best; that's build the economy. They'll continue to do what they do best, and that's complain and propose cuts where cuts would be very hurtful for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wishart: Well, under this administration, we've lost over 60,000 Manitobans in the last few years.

Allison Campbell sees the impact of the 14 per cent PST increase up close and personal as it impacts her spa business and also the businesses she does accounting for. Based on what she feels—based on what she sees, she feels certain that the trickle-down effect will be felt for some time and predicts bad Christmas season sales as well.

Does the government realize the impact of the tax increases, or are they so desperate for money that they really don't care about the long term?

Mr. Bjornson: It's tempting to talk about Bill Maher's living in the bubble here, Mr. Speaker, but I won't go there.

I know that members opposite actually sent out a press release that said that they're getting them here but they can't keep them here. I thought they were talking about Tory MLAs or Conservative Party leaders.

But we get them here. We keep them here. We get them employed. In fact, 7,300 jobs in June alone

with the unemployment rate down to 5 per cent. Strongest monthly gain in employment. Second lowest unemployment rate in the country. Private sector job growth is the second best in the country as well.

So I don't know where members opposite are getting their statistics. We have 1,277,000 people living in the province of Manitoba, 135,000 more than when we first came into office.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order.

Mr. Pallister: Yes. In respect of the member's comment in regard to statistics, I suggest he talk to Mr. Falk at the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, and he may find that it's the government's own statistics that have been cited by the member from Portage la Prairie. In fact, the departure, the out-migration of over 60,000 people that was cited in his remarks is in fact based on the numbers provided by the government's own head of statistics for the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics.

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you will rule this is not a point of order, but I'll engage the member.

I think he needs to remember that when he is citing statistics that we also have to count the over a hundred thousand new Canadians that have come to Manitoba. And I am glad they are applauding.

They certainly weren't applauding this morning when they had a chance to stand up against the federal cuts to refugee health care, and they missed that opportunity this morning. They refused to stand with refugees this morning.

They certainly weren't standing with us when we said to the federal government, we think the Provincial Nominee Program is a good program and should be able to continue to grow because it contributes to our economy. They didn't stand with us then either.

So you know what we do? We count all Manitobans, no matter where they come from, Mr.

Speaker, unlike members opposite who continue to leave immigrants and refugees out in the cold.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

On the point of order raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), I did not hear any particular rule that was breached that would allow me to pass judgment with respect to the points that were raised here, and I want—so I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order.

But I also want to offer a caution to the House. We're starting to see more times that members of the House are starting to stand up and raise points of order without citing a particular rule that may have been breached here to allow me to make a ruling on that, and they're using that opportunity to debate matters that are currently before the House. So I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members, please don't engage in that practice any further. I think it degrades from the process that we're engaged in here, and I think it also detracts from the question period time that we have here.

* * *

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

ER Closures Rural Manitoba

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, the situation with doctor shortages in Manitoba continues to get worse.

Last week, a notice was sent to Boissevain, Killarney and area residents indicating that, effective July 2nd, both Boissevain and Killarney health centres will begin sharing emergency room and acute care on-call coverage.

*(14:20)

In English, that means doctor shortages in this part of southern Manitoba have become so severe that ER services can't be maintained, and the minister is cutting services and arranging for remaining doctors to rotate between emergency rooms. That makes Killarney and Boissevain the latest casualty in the long line of ER closures.

Mr. Speaker, again we find ourselves asking the same minister the same questions about the same situation: What has gone wrong in Killarney and Boissevain? What is the minister going to do to fix it? And will she commit to a date when full services will be restored?

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

I can let the member know, certainly, that the Prairie Mountain Health region has developed a plan to ensure as many emergency and acute hospital shortages—or hospitals remain open so that individuals can get care as close to home as possible. They have, indeed, communicated this plan, Mr. Speaker, to the residents of both communities and to the town councils. The Boissevain and Killarney ambulance services continue to provide emergency response.

Of course, the regional health authority continues to work on recruitment and retention, Mr. Speaker. They're going to be very aggressive in their pursuit, but their plan to have rotating ERs open is one that will be effective in the short term. We know more doctors need to be recruited in the long term.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, 13 years and the situation just keeps getting worse in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Tri-Lake Health centre in Killarney just suffered through a nurse shortage crisis as well. In fact, only 10 in—of 22 beds were open for many months. This clearly puts pressure on other health-care facilities in the region. Patients find themselves travelling the highways to find a hospital bed or to find an open emergency room. This clearly shows how fragile health care has become.

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister provide a concrete plan for the effective delivery of health care in rural Manitoba?

Ms. Oswald: I thank the member for the question to cite the fact that, indeed, there was a temporary nursing shortage calling for the reduction from 22 to 14 beds, Mr. Speaker, but he's making my point in saying that the region worked very hard on recruitment of individuals. I can inform the member that those nurse recruitment efforts have been successful. These—all of these beds will be reopened this summer.

I was almost certain he was going to stand today to ask about the good news that came forward this morning about nurse practitioner tuition being funded to develop more nurse practitioners in rural Manitoba.

The region said they would recruit more nurses; they have recruited the nurses. The beds will open. The same will happen for—

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

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we hear the minister's rhetoric. The fact remains there's 17 ERs closed in rural Manitoba under their watch.

Mr. Speaker, ER on call is not new to the region. The problem becomes the geographical area that the remaining open ER has to cover. It then becomes a logistical problem of getting patients to the ER in a timely fashion. Patients can easily be 60 or 80 kilometres from an open ER. Complicating the problem is the fact that EMS stations are—may be closed at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: When will the minister restore ER services, or is this just a new standard under the NDP watch?

Ms. Oswald: I will repeat for the member that there was an issue earlier in Killarney with nurses. They reduced the number of beds from 22 to 14 and aggressively recruited. Consequently, later this summer, all of those beds will reopen. Work is being done to have a rotating scenario with ERs with Deloraine and Killarney.

Indeed, I want to assure this House and all members that EMS is working in co-ordination with the region, of course, through the Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre. I don't want to have the member suggest that EMS services will not be there. That is, indeed, not the fact, Mr. Speaker, and we wouldn't want him to spread fear in that regard.

The RHA is going to recruit more doctors, and they will reopen that ER.

ER Services Rural Manitoba

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. When this minister says that ER services are rotating, what she means is that in Boissevain and Killarney, ER services are being cut because doctor shortages in this part of Manitoba have become so severe, putting communities at risk. These two communities are the latest casualties in that long line of ER closures. In fact, in February, there were 17 closures or reductions of services, and we know that that list is now much, much longer.

Mr. Speaker, communities there want to know: What has gone wrong? What is the minister doing to fix it? And when will ER services be restored in Killarney and in Boissevain?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Well, Mr. Speaker, I can be very clear with the member about what we're not going to do. We are not, in a time of economic uncertainty, going to cut the spaces in medical school.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I was very impressed. We were doing very good for the first part of question period and were keeping the level at a reasonable point. But I'm starting to sense that it's starting to creep up now and I'm having more difficulty hearing the answer from the Minister of Health and, in fact, some of the questions. So I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members, please go back to where—that we were at the beginning of question period and we'll be just fine. So I'm asking for that co-operation, please.

The honourable Minister of Health, to continue with her response.

Ms. Oswald: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate, what we will not do in a time of economic uncertainty is cut the spaces in medical school, which has a long-term effect across Manitoba, indeed, all across Canada.

Another thing that we will not do during a time of economic uncertainty is to freeze all health capital spending, to just cancel projects outright.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we will not do with deep, indiscriminate cuts is fire a thousand nurses, make the situation so bad that another 573 nurses leave the system outright.

We're going to invest. We're going to recruit—

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

Physician Shortage Rural Manitoba

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, we would all agree on this side that it's high time this minister starts indicating what she will do to help Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, in a May 22nd memo to stakeholders, prairie health reveals extensive physician shortages throughout the region. The memo lists at least 14 GP vacancies from Baldur to Boissevain, from Ste. Rose and Swan River to Melita, Minnedosa, Neepawa, Rivers and Roblin. The memo goes on to state that there is significant concern regarding the sustainability of services along Highway 3 with physician vacancies.

Mr. Speaker, people want to know: How many doctors need to leave before she starts doing something about this work?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): The member opposite asked for a plan about what we will do. We will restore the seats in medical school from 70 to 85 to 100 to 110. We will bring back three nurses and a half for every one that they fired during the 1990s. We will, Mr. Speaker, rebuild or renovate over a hundred facilities across Manitoba like we have done since 1999. We will, as we announced today, offer free tuition to nurse practitioners willing to practice in rural and northern Manitoba.

We won't fire them and cut their training seats like the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker: Again, I'm going to caution the House. I'm hearing voices and I'm at the point where I'd—I'm going to have to indicate and ask for the co-operation of individual members. I'd prefer not to get to that point, so I'm asking all honourable members to keep the level down a little bit to allow me to hear both the questions and the answers.

Now, the honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, it's clear what this minister will do. She'll put a happy face on something and she will call doctor shortages rotating ERs. That gives no level of confidence to communities in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, these communities are expressing significant concern. The RHA is now expressing significant concern about the sustainability of rural health care because of doctor shortages. The minister has said she's committed to giving Manitobans accessible health care, except that in communities like Boissevain and Killarney now accessible health care is becoming more and more of a problem. This is unacceptable and the minister knows it.

I'm asking this minister: Where is the plan of action and where are the immediate emergency interim measures that she will put in place in Killarney and Boissevain to provide ER services and avoid this crisis getting any worse?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, and, again, I think I answered that in my first answer to the last question in that the regional health authority has met with the communities. They put a plan in place to ensure that as many emergency and acute hospitals can remain

open on a rotating basement-basis with on-call doctor service.

* (14:30)

I can say to the member also that the work is continuing through our rural and northern recruitment efforts. I can tell the member that the Prairie Mountain region continues to focus on this recruitment. Over the last year, there have been six graduates from medical schools in Manitoba and Canada recruited to the region. These recruitment efforts will continue.

The member opposite can stand up and complain about a lack of doctors, but how can he possibly do that in good conscience when his party cut the spaces in medical school?

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

Children in Care Education Responsibility

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yesterday, I established that there are children for whom the NDP government is the guardian who are not going to school even though the law requires the government as guardian to ensure they are in school. Indeed, according to the law, the guardian of these children, the NDP government, should be given a fine for every child who's not in school for whom the government is guardian.

I ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan): How many fines were given out last year to the government as a result of children who are not attending school for whom the government is guardian?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member for River Heights, the Leader of the Liberals, raises the important question of what happens to children when they reach the age of majority, the age of 18 in Manitoba, and they're in the child welfare system. And what we have done is we've provided extensions of care from what was 75 young people, young adults, to over 500 young adults. And those young adults are given transitional support, such as the program announced just two weeks ago where they get assistance with financial counselling, they get assistance for further education and training, they get assistance for entering the labour market, finding housing, all those things that help them stabilize their lives.

So we're making a very significant investment in the transition period when young people reach the age of majority and have to be on their own. They now have supports to do that and the system continues to provide those supports, including completing high school in Manitoba and going on to other training opportunities that will help them become independent and self-sufficient.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I was talking about children who are school age, age 7 to 18, who are in CFS care, for whom the government is a guardian.

I'd asked about the strategy that the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Howard) has to make sure they were all in school. Now, the Premier rose and he implied it wasn't his government's responsibility but said, and I quote, it "is the role of social workers working in the child welfare system." Surely, Mr. Speaker, the government is not trying to avoid its responsibility and try to make social workers the government's scapegoats.

I ask the Premier: Does he agree it would be wrong and inappropriate if his government were to start fining social workers instead of Cabinet ministers?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, what I was simply putting on the record was, unlike the member opposite, we're willing to put a budget in front of this House that employs social workers so that they can look after children in the child welfare system. The member from River Heights always joins hands with the Progressive Conservative opposition and votes against budgets which puts more money into the hands of child welfare system, foster parents, group homes, people that support children, children themselves as they go through the system. And we need those supports in this system so that they can function so that we ensure that they are attending school.

The difference here is that we're willing to put the resources into the system. The member opposite wants to levy fines but at the same time cut the very people that are doing the job. That's not consistent nor credible.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it was his government which put in place the law which made sure there were fines for people where there's children, sometimes, or parents or guardians when the child was not in school up until the age of 18. We had that law not long ago.

On the report which this government brought forward, Manitoba's children and youth, under this NDP government, the proportion of Manitoba children under 6 years of age in families with low social supports has increased and, not surprisingly, the families with high family dysfunction scores has also increased. While the NDP talks, they've demonstrated poor support for families, and a good place to start would be ensuring that every child in CFS care is in school.

I ask the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan): What is she going to do to make sure that every school-age child in CFS, in child—

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

Mr. Selinger: First of all, we're going to continue to make sure that there is proper funding for those agencies and that people that work within [*inaudible*] to do their jobs, Mr. Speaker.

And as the member knows, we have an early childhood development program in this province which starts as early as a prenatal benefit and then home visits from nurses and home visitors to ensure families get off to a healthy start. And as those preschool children are growing up, they have the opportunity to go to daycare when a parent wants to work, and the daycares have now become early childhood learning centres. If they wish to stay as a parent looking after those children, there are parent—there are child and parent centres available in schools and in new centres that we built around Winnipeg where they can come together and have support for each other. We provide them with assistance to have access to the health-care system. We provide opportunities for the young children to get the knowledge and the experiences necessary so they will do well in school.

All of those things we've done with our own resources. The member opposite was a member of the federal government that cut the legislation requiring families to have the necessities of life. Provinces have picked up the tab ever since that day.

Nurse Practitioner Education Tuition Coverage

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I hear about time and time again from my constituents is the difference that a nurse or a nurse practitioner's made in their life, providing care for their loved ones. In fact, my fiancée, Michelle, uses a nurse practitioner as her primary

care provider. Nurses truly are the backbone of our society and health care.

It's hard to imagine a government that would think that fewer nurses is a good thing, but the last time the Leader of the Opposition was in power at the Cabinet table, that's exactly what happened. And you don't have to go back that far, Mr. Speaker. Just a few weeks ago, he said he would cut health care to the core.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy about our government's plan to help all Manitobans, including my constituents, to find—to have access to more highly trained nurses and nurse practitioners.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): And I thank the member for the question. I was pleased to be along with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) today to announce an education grant or free tuition for nurse practitioner students who agree to work in rural and northern communities upon graduation.

Mr. Speaker, we created the first nurse practitioner position only 10 years ago. We now have 115 nurse practitioners working in the province. That's a total of over 17,650 nurses and nurse practitioners working in Manitoba, an all-time high for this province.

And, I should add, that's 3,560 more nurses than were working in this province in 1999, because when it comes to health care, when it comes to nurses, we train and we hire. They fire.

Lake Manitoba Outlet Construction

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, Lake Manitoba levels remain alarmingly high and are rising. The operation range is supposed to be 810.5 to 812.5. Lake Manitoba today is above 813, the same level as the spring of the 2011 prior to the flood.

Why is this Premier stating that First Nations, farmers, ranchers and property owners must wait seven years for a new outlet out of Lake Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for raising the question.

We brought the lake down an additional 3 feet when we built the emergency channel, and the members opposite—members opposite said there was no—not going to be a flood, that we were

over-preparing for it. And they opposed building the channel.

The lake—the current level of the lake is 813. It's predicted to peak at 813.1 inches, Mr. Speaker. We have the emergency channel in place; it's necessary. We positioned equipment there. If it were required, we could take the measures necessary to protect people around the lake.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, we are one wind event away from another disaster around Lake Manitoba, yet this government sits on its hands and refuses to take needed action.

Mr. Speaker, the spend have already begun collecting the 14 per cent increase in PST, supposedly to spend on flood mitigation. Yet the Premier says the Lake Manitoba flood victims must wait another seven years for flood protection.

Is this not just another empty promise that he has no intention of keeping, be it seven years, 10 years or 20 years?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the difference is we've committed the resources. The engineering work is starting. We've made a full commitment, \$250 million, a quarter of a billion dollars to build an additional channel outside of Lake Manitoba and to make the emergency channel a permanent channel. We will do it.

* (14:40)

Members opposite voted against that. Members opposite made no commitment to building those additional channels. Members opposite actually said there was no flood risk to the people of Lake Manitoba. They live in the clouds; we live on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to proceed with protecting Manitobans around Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin, in the Assiniboine valley and in Brandon, like we protected the people in Winnipeg to a one-in-700-year level. We did it in Winnipeg.

The Leader of the Opposition, what did he say? He said halt the project. Members opposite voted against the project. We will build the project, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The time for oral questions has expired. I want to thank the House for their co-operation.

Now we'll move on to—

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Able Sail Manitoba**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I am proud to say that Able Sail Manitoba is one of the best and most accessible sailing organizations in Canada. This organization does tremendous work in making this sport accessible for all Manitobans. Through the use of innovative technology, Canada and Able Sail Manitoba have become a leader in making sailing accessible to people with all forms of disability.

Able Sail Manitoba, ASM, is funded under the umbrella of the Independent Living Resource Centre as a community-based non-profit supporting people with disabilities throughout Manitoba.

ASM's programs offer facilities, equipment and support services to make sailing accessible for people of all physical and mental abilities. Their programs aim to allow all Manitobans to develop the skills and experience to sail as independently as possible, while minimizing the impact of their disability. ASM's Learn-to-Sail Program is one example of their many courses that teach students sail theory and the technical skills they need to become a competent sailor.

Regardless of age, ability, financial situation or experience, ASM strongly believes that the freedom of sailing is for everyone. As such, the first session is offered free of charge, and every other session after that is \$10.

At the end of August, Able Sail Manitoba will be participating in the Mobility Cup in Nova Scotia. Vancouver's Sam Sullivan founded the Mobility Cup in 1991 by inviting key individuals from other cities to take part in a sailing regatta, whether they had ever sailed before or not, in an effort to promote and grow the sport of disabled sailing. Since then, the Mobility Cup is recognized as Canada's national regatta for sailors with disabilities.

The sport is now worldwide and has been a key part of each Paralympic Summer Games since 2000, after being a demonstration sport in 1996.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the members of this House to wish the ASM the best of luck on their upcoming race, and I hope they will sail to success showing Manitobans that if you work hard enough, anything can be possible.

Start of Ramadan

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): It is important to be reminded of the many profound religious and cultural traditions that are observed here in Manitoba.

Tonight, Muslims will attend the first evening prayer of Ramadan, the holy month of the Muslim calendar. Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam, which are the basis of the Muslim faith.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims across the globe abstain from food and drink from dawn to sunset. Fasting is an act of devotion and self-restraint. It is a way of giving the body a rest and cleansing both physically and spiritually. Going without food also helps participants to feel empathy for those in our society who regularly go hungry, and contributions to charities spike during the Ramadan season. In the evenings, the fast is broken with a communal meal. Friends, relatives and communities get together to share food and enjoy each other's company.

Following the breaking of the fast, Muslims gather in the mosque for a special nightly prayer called the Taraweeh. In St. Vital, prayers will be held at the Hazelwood Mosque. Hazelwood Mosque is the oldest mosque in Winnipeg, and it is an important asset to social and spiritual life in our community.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's Muslim community has more than doubled in the last decade. The more than 12,000 Muslims in the province have brought their faith and their beliefs to Manitoba while making up an integral part of our cultural mosaic. Manitoba is made up of many cultures and beliefs. However, we are all united in several fundamental values: in generosity, in diversity and in equality for all.

I wish all Muslims in Manitoba a peaceful and happy Ramadan. Ramadan Kareem.

And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

David and Linda McDowell

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to recognize the incredible contributions of David and Linda McDowell to our province as educators, advocates and the—of the social sciences and supporters of Winnipeg heritage.

Over many decades, the McDowells imparted a wealth of experience in the social sciences to the students of numerous Manitoba schools and the

universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba. These endeavours are equalled by their contributions to various consultation boards and associations, including the Winnipeg School Division, the teachers' institute for democracy, the Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association, the Manitoba Historical Society, to Heritage Canada and Heritage Winnipeg.

As the member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba serving Tuxedo, where Mr. and Mrs. McDowell reside, I am honoured to extend my sincere appreciation to them as they were recognized at an honorary dinner hosted by the Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association on June 17th.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating Linda and David McDowell for their contribution to our province and wish them well in their future involvement in the advocacy of the social sciences in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Many Faces Education Centre

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Many Faces Education Centre in Flin Flon. Many Faces is an educational facility that provides northern students with the opportunity to attend an alternative school and work to obtain a high school diploma. I would like to thank Dan Reagan and the Flin Flon School Division for the vision to create the Many Faces Education Centre.

For 10 years, I was a teacher at Many Faces, where I had the opportunity to teach a variety of subjects to many wonderful students. Many Faces focuses on providing a welcoming environment which helps students realize their own potential, gain tangible skills and encourage students to develop a strong and successful future. While following the provincial curriculum, the school provides a space and academic format that differs from conventional modes of education.

Mr. Speaker, the Many Faces Education Centre is an asset to Flin Flon and the surrounding communities. One of my favourite things about my experience teaching there was that the students and teachers are treated equally. By using restorative justice and encouraging an environment of mutual respect, we found that there was decline in disciplinary issues because everyone understood that they were responsible for their actions.

Many students have chosen this alternative to a conventional education because they were facing barriers that traditional school was not able to easily address. Some students left high school to spend a few years working, some left to have children and others found that they required tailored supports to order to succeed. But what all those students have in common is the desire and drive to obtain a high school diploma.

Over the past 20 years, more than 400 students have graduated from the Many Faces educational centre. This year, 17 students worked hard to obtain their diplomas, and I'd like to wish them the best for the future.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great pleasure to have taught at Many Faces educational centre. Today I would like to ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join in me congratulating this fine institution for helping students in the communities and—succeeded for the past 20 years.

Thank you.

Committee Presentations

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, July 6th, 2013, was an absolutely beautiful day in Manitoba. The sun was bright. It was warm out. And it was a great day to be at committee at the Manitoba Legislature.

What was particularly pleasing to the eye was to see NDP members sitting at committee. And we know that they struggle, some of the NDP, with being lazy socialists; it was great to see members are out working hard, and we finally got them to work, Mr. Speaker.

But one of the things that we were perturbed with was, as individuals were making presentations, for instance, the NDP member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) never raised his head once. He was either sleeping or working on his BlackBerry, one or the other. In fact, I understand he's now featured on a YouTube video—you can find it on the Winnipeg Sun website—featuring himself either working on his BlackBerry the entire time or sleeping.

But presenters still came forward. And there was one in particular, a University of Manitoba graduate, just graduated from engineering, bright young product. In fact, he's getting married in a month. And one of the things he raised at committee was the fact that this government needs some ethics. He said that he's got to live by ethics set up by APEGM; why

can't the government apply some of these ethics to themselves?

* (14:50)

It's amazing, Mr. Speaker, that the youth of this province are getting up on a beautiful Saturday morning, coming forward, standing in front of the NDP and saying it's about time they lived by some ethics like everybody else has to. It's sort of like, when the people start—stop actually complaining, our youth are getting up and protesting against this government.

And the fact that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) wouldn't even look up from his BlackBerry, neither would the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), who seemed to be doing everything else, everything else but paying attention, and then they talk about that they're so glad that there's committee meetings.

Yes, they're glad, Mr. Speaker, because the PST went through, and now they're starting to listen to Manitobans. I give credit to that young Manitoban.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances. No grievances? We'll move on to—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun). The title of the resolution is "Manitoba Home Care Program".

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that pursuant to rule 31(8) that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one put forward—or brought forward by the honourable member for Rossmere, and the title of the resolution is the "Manitoba Home Care Program".

* * *

Ms. Howard: Would you please resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply as listed on today's Order Paper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Local Government. Member from The Maples.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): Excuse me. Point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): More of a point of clarification, Mr. Chairperson. There has been some confusion, I think, in committees, whether that was in committee hearing presentations or Committee of Supply. I know we have a rule in the Legislature that we're not able to refer to members by their name, it has to be by their constituency, but I think that there was some confusion among members whether or not that applied to this particular committee as well, whether it applied to committees that are hearing presenters.

I know the government isn't interested in the rules. I like to follow the rules, and so we just want to have that clarification from you, Mr. Chairperson. Where exactly does the rule in terms of being able to cite the name of an individual who's elected to the Legislature as opposed to their constituency or their ministry, if you could just give us some clarification so that all of us will be following the rules appropriately, new members and those who are more experienced? Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): Order. In the—when in the House or in the Committee of Supply, members are referred to by their constituency name, ministers by their portfolio. When in standing committee, there, can be addressed their name, last name.

An Honourable Member: Thank you for that clarification.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): You're welcome.

Report

Mr. Mohinder Saran (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254): Mr. Chairperson, in the section the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254, considering the

Estimates of the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation, the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) moved the following motion:

THAT line item 15.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson, this motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): Order. The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am now directing that the bells be turned off and the committee proceed to vote.

In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254 considering the Estimates of the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation, the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) moved the following motion:

THAT line item 15.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and, subsequently, two members requested a formal vote on this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion of the honourable member for Lakeside.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 18, Nays 30.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): The motion is accordingly defeated.

* (16:00)

Report

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255): Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy, I delivered a ruling stating that a motion to adjourn moved at our last sitting on

Friday, July 5th, 2013, for which the vote had been deferred, had now lapsed because the committee had risen following the deferral on Friday.

This ruling was challenged and sustained on a voice vote, but, subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): Order. The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired, and, therefore, directing that the bells be turned off and the committee proceed to the vote.

In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 considering the Estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy, the Chairperson delivered a ruling stating that a motion to adjourn moved at the sitting on Friday, July 5th, 2013, for which the vote had been deferred, had now lapsed because the committee had risen following the deferral on Friday. This ruling was challenged and sustained on a voice vote.

Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

Therefore, the question before the committee is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the results being as follows: Yeas 30, Nays 18.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): The ruling has accordingly been sustained.

The Acting Chairperson (James Allum): The hour being past 5 o'clock, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

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