

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

Monday, July 15, 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

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills. Seeing no bills, we'll move on to—

PETITIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): 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 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.

This petition's signed by J. Wood, J. Knight and C. Brown 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.

**Reopen Beausejour's Employment
Manitoba Office**

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 RM of Brokenhead and the town of Beausejour are growing centres with a combined population of over 8,000.

(2) Employment Manitoba offices provide crucial career counselling, job search and training opportunities for local residents looking to advance their education.

(3) The recent closure of Employment Manitoba's Beausejour office will have negative consequences for the area's population who want to upgrade their skills and employment opportunities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reopen Beausejour's Employment Manitoba office.

This petition is signed by P. Sanclemente, W. Sanclemente, D. Sanclemente and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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.

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.

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.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child shall 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.

This petition is signed by G. Neustaeter, D. Friesen, D. Friesen and many more Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

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 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.

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.

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.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child shall 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 K. Neustaeter, H. Neustaeter, L. Kehler and many more fine Manitobans.

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 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) 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.

* (13:40)

(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.

This petition is signed by M. Young, M. Gerus, C. Gerus and many other fine Manitobans.

Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—Ashern

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) There has been much discussion in the past few weeks with community members in Ashern and surrounding areas with regard to the lack of beds at the Ashern Personal Care Home. At the present time, there are 20 beds being used to full capacity, and there are approximately 15 to 20 clients on a waiting list for placement.

(2) Many clients have had to go outside the community to find placement in a personal care home in other communities such as Ste. Rose, Eriksdale, Lunder and St. Adolphe.

(3) In one instance, a husband and wife were separated, sending one to Ashern and the other to Eriksdale because of the lack of beds, making the situation extremely hard on family members and clients.

(4) With two municipalities and five First Nations communities in the area, there is immediate need for increase of 10 to 12 beds to the Ashern Personal Care Home.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Health consider building an addition to the Ashern Personal Care Home to accommodate the growing needs for placement in the community.

This petition is submitted on behalf of S. Mislebacher, L. Meads, G. Barlet and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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 M. Minuck, C. Lange, J. Halcrow and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(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 or-policy statement on autism services which notes 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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by C. Jordan, M. Hunt, V. Simons and many, many others.

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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.

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

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 lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

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 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 A. Reimer, A. North, K. Kulchyski and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with the diagnostic—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.

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.

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.

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, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by T. Flynn, L. Klippenstein, T. Childs and many, many other Manitobans.

* (13:50)

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

(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 services 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 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.

Signed by A. Robinson, C. Peterson, J. Moses and many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(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 services 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 a 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 list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This is signed by C. Price, A. Adriano, Y. Quinto and many, many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(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) 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 with this very effective ABA treatment

because of 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.

This petition is signed by C. Swan, S. Vlose, F. Doerksen and many more fine Manitobans.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(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 services 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 to access the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) 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.

* (14:00)

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 T. Holod, K. Holod and B. Beck and many, many more fine Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Manitoba Public Insurance first-quarter quarterly financial report for three months ended May 31, 2013.

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

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 Brent Neill, marketing manager for the fringe festival, who is the guest of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum).

And also in the public gallery, we have today Steve Dowbush from St. Albert, Alberta, and Delbert Roche from Thorhild, Alberta, who are guests of the honourable member for the Interlake.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro/PST Increase Government Intentions

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Late last week the Clean Environment Commission released its report panning the process that the NDP government has used to essentially market the west-side bipole route, and they said in their report, quote: site selection process was flawed. Well, that's exactly like the process used for the PST hike, Mr. Speaker. The government didn't consult effectively and tried to minimize the potential negative effects, and they failed to do sufficient preparatory research in both cases. The result of this incompetence and stubbornness will be hundreds of millions of dollars less in the hands of working

Manitobans and their families due to significant tax hikes and rate hikes.

The question I guess I have for the Premier is: Isn't it time to go back to the drawing board on the bipole west route and on the PST hike?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, with the strong growth we've had in the Manitoba economy, we will actually be out of power by the year 2022 unless we proceed with new hydro transmission and new hydro generation. And the members opposite call for stalling those projects will only put the Manitoba economy at risk where we have the lowest hydro rates in North America, the lowest hydro rates in North America because we are the largest exporter on a percentage basis of power to our customers to the south of us and increasingly to the east and west of us. The member's plan to stall hydro development will drive rates through the roof. Our plan will keep them among the lowest in North America.

Manitoba Hydro–Bipole III Environmental Impact Statement

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, an 8 per cent increase in rates last year over this is certainly an indication the government is willing to drive up hydro rates, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the Clean Environment Commission says—has told the government, has been trying to tell the government for almost a decade to clean up its act, and the government fails to listen. It's done worse than that by interfering in Manitoba Hydro's decision-making processes for years as well, and the issue here is \$30 billion is at stake. We're talking about a significant, significant financial commitment.

The NDP has pushed, politically pushed a west bipole route which will be 25 per cent less effective at delivering power and will cost a billion dollars or more in additional costs to taxpayers and ratepayers to construct. Hydro experts both past and present have been strong in opposition, and even the CEC report itself reveals a high level of frustration and describes the politically—politicized environmental impact statement that the government offered as, quote: fraught with problems. It says, it would have been justifiable for the commission to send Hydro away to start over.

Will the Premier do just that? Will he step back from this flawed, politicized process—

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

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member's approach would put \$29 billion of export revenue at risk over the next 30 years. His refusal to continue to have a forward-looking plan to build Manitoba Hydro risks \$29 billion of export revenue which would pay down the cost of capital for the new generating dams which would keep Manitoba's rates the lowest in North America. He may want to take that risk; we don't.

We believe the Manitoba economy will continue to grow. We know that we need clean hydro to grow that economy. We know that our lower rates will be a magnet for economic investment in the province and we know that our exports will fuel renewable energy in places like Minnesota. Only the member opposite wants to stop it in its tracks. He wants to balkanize it; we want to build it.

Bipole III/PST Increase Government Consultation

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's still not too late for the Premier to start listening. I mean, I'm on the side of Ed Schreyer, Tim Sale, Len Evans. I don't think I'm alone in this. I don't think our caucus is alone. I think the government's alone in their position, quite frankly. Even their own supporters are incredibly frustrated with the government's insistence on trying to sell Manitobans on a flawed process.

And rather than listening—192 communications staff who don't listen, 37 NDP MLAs who have talking points but no listening points on the PST hike or bipole west, either one, they both show a pattern of top-down paternalism over genuine consultation, of hucksterism over intelligent research and of NDP willingness to take preconceived outcomes and throw them at Manitobans instead of developing reasonable strategies.

Will the Premier admit what a growing number of Manitobans are beginning to discover about him: that whatever the issue, he does not trust Manitobans enough to listen to them?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Actually, in the case as cited by the member opposite, we exactly listened to Manitobans. They told us they wanted flood protection. The members opposite, led by the Leader of the Opposition, was the only one in Manitoba that wanted to put a halt to the Red River Floodway. That floodway, for every dollar we've invested, has saved

us 35 dollars—\$35 billion of avoided costs because we moved forward with that billion-dollar investment.

Manitoba Hydro had a meltdown, almost lost its two bipoles in 1997. Recommendations from Manitoba Hydro was to build a new 'pibole'—bipole. When the leader opposite was a member of the government, they refused to build that extra security for Manitoba. They were so busy privatizing Manitoba Telephone System, they ignored the Manitoba Hydro system.

Now we need the extra transmission. We have a \$62-billion economy. A one-week shutdown of our economy: over a billion dollars. Building extra transmission is the best security for a strong Manitoba economy.

Manitoba Hydro Development Concerns

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): In a CEC report, on page 35, it says, once three alternatives were identified, the site-selection process was flawed by a combination of subjectivity, lack of clarity and false precision.

What concerns Manitobans is that the NDP are going to take us down a \$30-billion construction in Manitoba Hydro project, and what they're going to base that on is lack of clarity, subjectivity and false precision. What Manitobans want is a report that will actually show Manitobans that there's a road map where Manitoba Hydro is going.

Will the Premier (Mr. Selinger) do that?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, the report and the section that the member cites talks about the three options on the—on that side of the province to consider the site, not talking about the overall east side or west side in that particular reference.

So, if the member would only read that particular section properly—I know he has trouble sometimes in communicating this information, but that's not what the report says on the page that he cited.

Mr. Schuler: And the minister makes our case, Mr. Speaker, because the CEC was not allowed to look at both of the options; they were only allowed to look at one option. And even that one option, that option that the—only the government would allow them to look at, they say those options was flawed by

combination of subjectivity, lack of clarity and false precision.

Manitobans are concerned. This is a \$30-billion construction project, and we have one crack at this, and we better get it right.

Will the government do the right thing and do a proper study so that there's a road map, so that there's a blueprint where Manitoba Hydro is going to go and not do it all on chance?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, last weekend I talked to a friend from Calgary. He talked about it—about not being ready for the flood, and then talked to my uncle in Toronto who talked about the flood in Toronto and governments not being ready. We are building the infrastructure, not only to prevent the flood, Mr. Speaker, but also to build future hydro.

* (14:10)

In Saskatchewan they're spending \$15 billion over the next 10 years to renew coal. We won't go that way when we're blessed with hydro capacity—to not only build hydro for Manitobans, but to export it and to provide clean energy in North America. It's our duty to build this project and build it for all Manitobans and for Canadians as a national project.

Mr. Schuler: Actually, Mr. Speaker, it was Duff Roblin that built the infrastructure that protects this city and this province, and they should stop trying to take credit for that.

This minister says it's his duty. What's his duty is to make sure that he doesn't commit Manitoba to \$30 billion worth of construction that is based on a process that was flawed by combination of subjectivity, lack of clarity and false precision.

I ask this Premier: Will he do the right thing and follow what the CEC said: to do a proper study that will protect Manitobans over the next 20 years? We get one crack at this, Mr. Speaker, we better get it right. Will he do the right thing?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I might add to the member that the CEC said to go ahead with the bipole line in the report.

In addition, NFAT project is going to be done that's going to examine all of the exigencies; as well, the PUB is looking at all of these matters; as well, we're doing section 35 consultations. There are millions of dollars going on in studies to do—to bring precision to this, but I again add, if we don't develop hydro we'll have to import fossil fuels into the future

which will go to climate change and will be not taking advantage of the natural advantage we have in this province which is thousands of megawatts of hydro that will keep our hydro rates the lowest in the country.

Members opposite would have us privatize it and double the rates like they did with the telephone system that they privatized, Mr. Speaker, without taking it to the public.

Manitoba Hydro–Bipole III Environmental Review Process

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, the minister can—should remember himself that his own Public Utilities Board, a year ago, told him to put all of his projects on hold until he did an economic analysis of them. The Clean Environment Commission determined that the process for environmental review of Bipole III is flawed. In spite of being told many times to enhance that review process, the NDP has still not listened. So the CEC report had to tell them again in the Bipole III that even stated, and I quote: it would have been justifiable for the commission to reject the EIS as presented and send the proponent away to start over.

With this serious concern over process being stated in the forward of the Bipole III report, will the Minister of Conservation fix the environmental review process as the Clean Environment Commission has recommended?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): The Minister of Conservation has already indicated that by next year they will be putting in place new regulations, new processes for the clean environment process. Don't forget, Mr. Speaker, that these processes that are put in place are—go back to 1988, were brought in to deal with procedures at that time. Notwithstanding that, they're a lot better than what happened in the 1960s when the areas were flooded and where we are forced now—pay up to a billion dollars reparations to First Nations in order to deal with the damage. The Minister of Conservation's already indicated he's going to take those recommendations and he's going to move them forward, and those indications were provided in the minister's statement of green now for the future.

Mr. Speaker: I'm going to ask for co-operation of the members of the House again. I'm hearing voices again as I've heard last week that are interfering with the debate that's going on here, and I would prefer

not to single out any particular member of the House that continues to have things to say during question period when they don't have the floor, so I'm going to ask for the co-operation of all honourable members, please allow the debate to occur.

The honourable member for Arthur-Virden has the floor.

Clean Environment Commission Keeyask Project Recommendations

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, there does seem to be some hollow rhetoric from that side of the House.

The NDP Minister of Conservation reneges his responsibility by not implementing previous recommendations to improve the hearing process, and now he says he's going to fix it again one more time. But last November 16th this very Minister of Conservation initiated a CEC review of the Keeyask project.

Will he now heed the recommendations of the CEC's Bipole III report and eject these recommendations into the Keeyask process or will he just let the CEC hearings and process proceed for Keeyask with the same flawed process?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reiterate that there was a process in place in terms of the Clean Environment Commission that in this report, and I hope members read the entire report, recommended that the bipole project go ahead. It also recommended that a process be undertaken to review all of the projects prior to proceeding on the other processes; and the Minister of Conservation has already indicated that he's going to put in place new standards and new provisions for the CEC process, and indicated that prior to this report coming out.

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister must know now that he and his colleagues and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) have allowed a flawed process to proceed. Admittedly, after much concern about the processes mentioned in the Bipole III report, the NDP got their recommendations for licensing from the flawed process. The minister recommended Hydro's environmental impact statement last July 6th for Keeyask. The application for participant status in Keeyask's environmental review ended February the 15th.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the minister fix the review system before the Keeyask public consultations begin, or will he ram the project through the same flawed process as Bipole III?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the member totally contradicts himself. The CEC project hearings went through the process and indicated that the process should go forward, that the bipole should go forward.

Despite members opposite being opposed to bipole from day one, beside—despite members opposite being against hydro development, besides members opposite wanting to import coal or oil to fulfill our energy needs, besides members opposite—from not having any attention paid towards climate, not even talking about climate change—notwithstanding what's happening on this continent, notwithstanding that they agreed that bipole should go down, we put in place a process for Keeyask and for public hearings.

There are section 35 hearings. There's NFAT hearings that are going to go on, that are going to take place across the province with public interventions.

I think the processes in place will—

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

PST Increase Referendum Request

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Carl & Kay's Fine Foods is a family business spanning two generations in Sprague, Manitoba, owned and operated by Murray Machej. Mr. Machej thought he had stability in his business when the NDP promised not to raise taxes in the 2011 election, but the NDP broke their promise and raised the PST by 14 per cent without allowing Manitobans their right to vote in a referendum.

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. Why is this Premier (Mr. Selinger) willing to disrespect hard-working Manitobans like Murray Machej and not call a referendum?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that Mr. Machej's store in Sprague, Manitoba, does a good business. I know that store personally. My grandparents lived right across the street from Carl Machej's store when they started there. That's why—that's one of the reasons why I was—I'm so proud to be part of a government that has moved the 8 per cent small business tax rate

down to zero per cent to help people like Mr. Machej out.

Mr. Smook: Murray Machej and his family have worked hard to grow a successful business in Sprague. The government has raised the PST by 14 per cent, sending their customers across the border to Roseau and Warroad.

Why is this government disrespecting small business like Murray Machej and raising the PST without a referendum? Mr. Speaker, when will this government stop disrespecting Manitobans and call a referendum?

Mr. Struthers: Well, I know, Mr. Speaker, that when you go down to visit Sprague, it's always tempting to go across the line to Warroad, across the line to Roseau, to see what's going on down there. But you would not go down to Warroad or Roseau from Sprague when you have the kind of advantages that a small business has in Sprague, Manitoba, the kind of advantages that we made: from 8 per cent down to zero per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this government do—does those kinds of things to help small business, and we know if—whether it's Mr. Machej's case or any other small business in this province, that they make real benefits from those kinds of tax decisions that we make. We know they work hard, and we know they contribute to the economy, not just of Sprague, but the whole province.

Mr. Smook: Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister is willing to go down to Sprague when Murray closes his doors because of lack of business.

* (14:20)

The NDP has decided to break the law and raise the PST without listening to the people of Manitoba, including Mr. Machej. This government has avoided a referendum, even as their constituents line up in opposition to a hike of the PST.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government stop disrespecting Manitobans, pull Bill 20 and hold a referendum?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, in Budget 2013, we increased the threshold from \$400,000 to \$425,000 for small business. If members opposite are interested, in 2014 the elimination of that tax will save each small business \$55,250 every year, and that's a cumulative total of \$519,400 since we became government in 1999. They can't tell us we're not doing stuff for small business, because we are.

Mr. Speaker: One moment, please. I want to caution the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), please, when you're making your comments, please direct them through the Chair.

The honourable member for Riding Mountain has the floor.

Child and Family Services Sexual Abuse Case Concern

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, today we learn that Child and Family Services officials turned a blind eye to a serious situation involving child sexual abuse in a remote reserve community. We know that a disclosure was made to the RCMP. Despite this, local Child Protection officials refused to act. They even went as far as to try to silence the individual.

Mr. Speaker, all of this was only uncovered when a CFS official from Winnipeg became involved because local authorities didn't want to deal with the situation.

Mr. Speaker: When did the Minister of Child and Family Services become aware of this situation? What has she done to ensure children under her watch are not being sexually abused?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Mr. Speaker, these are very serious allegations. It's our expectation that every agency, and every agency has a responsibility under the law and under the standards, that they take sexual abuse very seriously, that when it's reported to them that they take appropriate action to protect children and to deal with the adults or the perpetrators accordingly. If that wasn't done in this situation, that's extremely serious.

We are following up with the authority in charge to figure out exactly what happened in this situation and what kind of follow-up is necessary to make sure that every child is assured that they are safe from abuse and that those who prey on our children are dealt with accordingly.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, I agree this is a very serious situation, but we also know that this is not an isolated situation. The local Child and Family Services authorities have been described as uncooperative and reluctant, even at the senior management level, to address this situation. The individual involved says the CFS knew of repeated allegations of sexual abuse and did nothing.

For those who are survivors of sexual assault know how devastating it is not to be believed or supported, Mr. Speaker. This is not acceptable.

I will ask again: What has the minister done to ensure children under her watch are not being sexually assaulted?

Ms. Howard: Again, I will say the allegations that have been made about what this agency did or didn't do in response to allegations of sexual abuse are extremely serious. I take them very seriously.

We've asked the southern authority and the Child Protection branch to work together to find out exactly what happened here and what has to happen to ensure that every agency is taking these kinds of allegations seriously and acting appropriately. It's very clear in the law that the safety of children is supposed to be paramount. It's very clear in the law that everybody who is aware of sexual abuse has a responsibility to report it. That is my expectation of how agencies and how individuals should be acting. If that didn't happen in this case, that's extremely serious and will be dealt with accordingly.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, this is not an isolated event. We've asked the minister when she knew about this, when she was briefed, and we agree they have to act within the law, but she's hiding behind the law, not enforcing it.

We know that we have children in crisis in this province. The good work of many authorities and agencies is overshadowed by circumstances such as this one, where an individual makes a series of cries for help and are ignored by this very Child Protection official in place to help. They allowed this abuse to continue.

Has the minister learned nothing from Gage Guimond, Phoenix Sinclair and the many others who have seen a tragic life and death situation? What is she doing to protect children under her watch? Why has she not acted on this child who was abused, cried for help and was ignored by this minister's government?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Howard: I became aware of these allegations late last night. Immediately, what I did was request of my officials that they work with the authority that's involved, that they work through the Child Protection branch to find out what happened in this situation. As soon as we have that information, we will be able to act to make sure that every agency,

every worker understands the law and is acting according to the law.

I have zero tolerance for people who would ignore the cries of help of a child who is being sexually abused. There is zero tolerance for people who would allow a sexual predator to remain undealt with.

And we will act accordingly when we have all of the facts in front of us, and that is what is happening as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

Rental Allowance Need for Increase

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, this government's we-know-best approach to dealing with poverty and homelessness issues continues. We find more and more Manitoba families with problems related to poverty.

The coalition Make Poverty History Manitoba worked hard to develop a consensus for the need to increase the EIA rental allowances. This government didn't listen. We did, Mr. Speaker.

When will this government start to really listen to Manitobans?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): And we've been listening to Manitobans who know that education is a great equalizer, and we continue to invest in education when members opposite used to cut education.

We also know that we've provided more income supports for Manitobans in need and we know that members opposite cut income supports for Manitobans in need, Mr. Speaker.

We know that affordable housing is important. That's why we're building 1,500 more social and 1,500 affordable housing units by 2014 and developing an additional 500 more of each.

And we know that minimum wage is very important. We know members opposite vote against that budget every year when we've raised minimum wage. We know, since we've been in office, that the increase in minimum wage has resulted in \$6,800 more in the pockets of individuals working in minimum wage jobs, Mr. Speaker.

And we also know that child care is very important—

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

Antipoverty Groups Government Consultations

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Dealing with issues of poverty and homelessness requires a government prepared to listen and consult on solutions. The NDP's approach to dealing with issues of poverty reduction and social inclusion has been more this-government-knows-best than one of listening. Manitobans want a better approach.

When will this government take the time to work with antipoverty groups and actually collaborate on solutions?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): It's my privilege to stand up and talk about our commitment as far as reducing poverty and 'cludance'—and providing social inclusion.

We are working diligently with community groups across this province. We've just concluded consultations in 12 communities. We met with hundreds of people, had conversations about what we need to do to deal with poverty.

We know that the best way out of poverty is jobs and education, and we're prepared to do that. We'll continue to support families as we have with better housing, better jobs and opportunities for education.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, we know this government really likes announcement and ribbon cuttings. But Manitobans know that when they're smiling and glad-handing, they're not really there to listen. Maybe this government would do well to remember the Calvin Coolidge quote: no one ever listened themselves out of a job.

Mr. Speaker, if the government won't listen to antipoverty groups to develop real solutions to poverty, will they be out of a job?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We're listening every day—every day—when we meet with the poverty reduction agencies and we have these conversations.

Shall we talk about the member across the way from Fort Whyte? He stood up one day and he said, I'll support Make Poverty History. And guess what? Since then, he's retracted that comment twice.

Now, what we're doing is we're working with Manitobans. We're acknowledging that there's an issue of poverty. We continue to build more housing,

continue to provide employment opportunities and supports for all Manitobans.

We're proud of our record. We know we have more work to do, but we're the people that will do that work.

* (14:30)

Children and Youth Report School Age Readiness

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, a raft of statistics shows the NDP have been failing Manitobans when it comes to the health of our children. The Healthy Baby community program, which has been running under the NDP for some 12 years, has failed to reach over three quarters of the children and families who are most in need.

One result is the recent report in—on Manitoba's children and youth, a report which shows, on page 51, that children in Manitoba are progressively less prepared for school and continue to fall behind the rest of Canada in school readiness.

I ask the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief): What specific actions is he going to take to reverse the current direction of the Province and improve the school readiness of children?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we've made several significant investments in young children and families, not the least of which is the Healthy Child program. It's a—the whole—the entire envelope's over \$28 million, \$4.5 million for people starting with a prenatal benefit, starting with home visits, starting with the ability to have access to a nurse. Our daycare program has been converted into an early childhood learning program, and we have very significant resources all throughout Manitoba that help young families get off to a healthy start and we will continue to do that.

And I'd just say to the member opposite, I appreciate him raising the question, but when it comes to actually voting resources for these types of activities he's never there to support those votes in the budget where it really counts.

Child Poverty Government Support Programs

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans continue to be amazed at a government which can spend so much and still be going in the

wrong direction with fewer children being ready for school.

Mr. Speaker, the Free Press editorial today refers to the pittance of support that the NDP provides in the right direction as being a powerful symbol of the low priority of the government places on helping children at risk, with \$81 a month available to eligible new moms, you know, averaging \$2.70 a day. The distance it will go in Winnipeg alone when two litres of milk from a 7-Eleven is \$4.09 and other things are very expensive, add to this that many people in need are not even receiving this pittance—and you have a problem.

I ask the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities: When will he actually connect the people who need it to the supports that are there for them?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we've increased the northern food allowance seven times. We've put in place a prenatal benefit which does not exist elsewhere in the country, widely admired around the world. We've got over 900 community gardens in the north right now. And we've increased the minimum wage so that when people go out and get a job they can earn an extra \$6,800 a year. And all of these interventions are at a time when we have the second lowest unemployment rate in the country and a plan to build our economy to create thousands of jobs in remote parts of the province where the members opposite, including the ones making the most noise as we give an answer, would halt those projects, put those people on the unemployment rolls, give them no hope for a brighter future.

We want to build the north with our hydro resources, with housing, with employment and training, and ensure young families have families with sustainable incomes for the future. That's our plan for the future. The members opposite would bury all that and do absolutely nothing.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this government is spending so much and going in so many directions, but achieving so little for the children of Manitoba. When we have a government which is dictatorial and non-democratic, refusing to listen to people and have a referendum on an increase in the sales tax, it gives Manitobans the message that the NDP government is not for people in our province. And what we are seeing with disadvantaged children in Manitoba is—situation is getting worse.

I ask: What specific measures will the NDP government take to reverse the damage it has done over a generation of disadvantaged children who have been born since they came to power in 1999?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the child poverty rate in Manitoba since 2000, according to the market basket measure, has gone down 28 per cent. The members opposite, the Progressive Conservative Party, refused to make the National Child Benefit available to people on social assistance. That cost them over \$500 a month. Then they went and slashed benefit for \$150 a month. So you're up to \$650 a month out of the pockets of Manitobans. We've put all that money back. We've raised the northern food allowance. We've raised the minimum wage and we're building more housing and more jobs.

What is the result, Mr. Speaker? Twenty-eight per cent reduction in child poverty, second lowest unemployment rate in the country, one of the highest participation rates in the economy, University College of the North educating northern people under northern governments—northern governments like we've never seen before. If we followed the recommendations of the members opposite; more people would be unemployed, more people would have less money in their pockets and more people would have a bleak future. We're building for the future of Manitoba including—

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

Criminal Property Forfeiture Legislation Training and Equipment Grant

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, police forces and victim services agencies in Manitoba do excellent work each and every day, and I was so pleased to hear about the recent announcement of over \$300,000 that goes from criminal activity dollars that have been forfeited being reinvested into keeping our streets safer.

So I would like the Justice Minister to share a little bit more about how that program works and what we can expect from it in the future.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I was proud to stand with Chief Clunis and the women and men of the Winnipeg Police Service as we announced a grant of over \$356,000 for specialized training equipment to tackle crime.

You know, the Progressive Conservative opposition said that criminal property forfeiture legislation wouldn't do anything to take on organized crime. They've been proved wrong once again, and that's thanks to this legislation, the hard work of law enforcement and our provincial Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit. We're taking property and money away from the bad guys and we're giving it to the good guys, to law enforcement. We're giving it to those who help victims and the victims themselves. This equipment will help the Winnipeg Police Service. We're giving them two cargo vans to transport offenders and officers, surveillance equipment, an automated licence plate reader, safety equipment as well as specialized training in certain areas. We'll be giving out over a million dollars. That's about—

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

Employment and Training Centre Office Closure (Beausejour)

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, recently the NDP government announced the closure of the employment and training office in Beausejour. The news couldn't have come at a worse time. With the PST hike Manitobans already have to pay 14 per cent more in taxes, but now, on top of it all, they'll have to commute far distances in order to access essential services and programs.

Will the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade stop disrespecting Manitobans and start listening to their concerns?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, Mr. Speaker, out of respect for Manitobans, when we review government programs, we see how efficient those programs are. And the member opposite is talking about an office that has had less than one person per day coming to the office for—to have their needs met. Now, I don't belittle that they—there are individuals who do need those supports, but there are a couple of ways that they could do that. One of them, of course, is that most of the services are available online, and the other way that they can get those supports is through a hybrid of models where we'll have individuals who'll be going to other offices and arrange meetings and have scheduled meetings to have consultants talk to those individuals to meet their needs.

But clearly when we looked at the office use and having less than one person per day coming to the office, we thought there were better ways we could invest money in supporting Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Office Closures

Mr. Ewasko: I'm sure that the—I'm sure glad that the minister decided to put some of that information on the record so that I can pass that along back to the community, Mr. Speaker.

If the NDP minister from Gimli really listened to Manitobans, he would know that closing offices impacts families' timely access to services. In addition to the education and training centre in Beausejour, the provincial government has announced they'll be closing at least 20 offices in Manitoba with plans to consolidate and move several other offices without consultation, some of these being the MAFRI offices as well, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Minister of Agriculture stand up today, apologize to those Manitobans who are going to be affected and show them some respect, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I'm sure the member opposite is quite familiar how agriculture has changed in the last number of years, and there's a number of producers out there that really don't need the necessity to walk into a MAFRI office or a GO office these days. I think they're very, very capable of using the telephone service that we have, the BlackBerry services we have, in appropriate locations. So what we're seeing today is agriculture is changing. But, at the end of the day, let me say this, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite want to listen: there was no job layoffs when the office closure took place—that is what we're committed to working with the people of the province of Manitoba.

* (14:40)

Office Closure (Beausejour)

Mr. Ewasko: It's very interesting that this minister decides to put on record that he feels that his offices are irrelevant, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. Selby) said during budget Estimates on July 5th, and I quote: It only makes sense to train people closer to their homes.

So why is the minister from Gimli disrespecting Manitobans again, and not listening to the Minister

of Advanced Education and Literacy, by closing the supportive employment office in Beausejour?

When will this NDP government get its message straight, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Bjornson: It's really fascinating listening to members opposite talk about training, because we have been the only government that, time and time and time again, has invested more in education, has invested more in apprenticeship programs and has undertaken a review to look where we could best put our resources, Mr. Speaker.

Now, members opposite, if you want to talk about their record with respect to education, I know when I was teaching in Gimli High School, I was fortunate to be kept on as a teacher in my years in Gimli High School, because over 700 teachers were let go when they kept cutting funding to education services, Mr. Speaker. Add that to the thousand nurses that were let go when they were in office.

And if you look at those 1,700 very important jobs providing services that matter most to Manitoba families, many of those people were in rural Manitoba when they had their jobs cut by members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

GO Office Closures Government Consultation

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): We on this side of the House believe in consultation. What we saw in lack from this government is a total disrespect for but—rural Manitoba.

Twenty-five per cent of our economy comes from rural Manitoba through agriculture.

What consultation did the Minister of Agriculture have with those GO offices that he closed down with lack of consultation?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): What I'm indicating today is that members opposite are quite familiar with the horse-and-buggy days of using to seed is no longer the case. Agriculture is changing in a massive way.

We're providing economic development ideas with the people and the producers. We are saying to them that we are here to work with them. In fact, our staff are very committed to go to the producer's residency even discuss if we need to.

So when we talk about—we are committed. We value the agriculture procedure in the province of

Manitoba. Members opposite choose to say, cut, cut, cut, spend, spend here, cut, cut, cut, spend.

We are working more towards being very accountable for the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba and provide professionalism in agriculture industry in the province—

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival has been an important part of theatre culture in Manitoba since 1988. Founded as part of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Winnipeg fringe festival is the second largest event of its kind in North America. Every July, the Fringe welcomes theatre companies from all over the world to perform for our wonderful Manitoba audiences for 12 straight days.

This year's festival will begin Wednesday, July 17th. It will run until July 28th. With 169 plays, musicals, comedy, improv, drama, dance and more, Winnipeg becomes a hub of artistic expression where creativity and imagination flourishes. In addition to indoor productions throughout the Exchange District, Old Market Square also hosts entertainment at the outdoor stage.

Celebrating arts and culture is important part of creating a lively and diverse province. That's why our government believes in the value of supporting arts and cultural festivals like the Winnipeg fringe festival through the Manitoba Major Arts Festival funding.

The fringe festival does a great job of encouraging people to participate in a flurry of activities offered over the 12 festival days and nights. Last year's fringe festival was the biggest to date, selling more than 100,000 tickets and breaking many attendance records. Utilizing the space of 32 venues, over 1,400 performers entertained spellbound audiences. Not only is the Winnipeg fringe festival for adults, it is fun for the whole family. Approximately 7,000 young fringers participated in kid-friendly activities last year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all those involved—the staff, volunteers, stage crew,

performers and especially the audience—for making the fringe festival a success year after year.

I encourage all members of the Legislative Assembly to find the time to escape the sometimes bleak, occasionally absurd, political theatre of this Chamber and enjoy all the imagination, creativity and originality that the fringe festival has to offer. Thank you.

Winnipeg Folk Festival

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I would like to rise today and congratulate the Winnipeg Folk Festival on their 40th anniversary. For 40 years, the Winnipeg Folk Festival has been a highlight on Manitoba's cultural calendar and one of the most successful festivals across the continent, attracting visitors and musical artists from across the world.

It all started in early 1973 when CBC documentary filmmaker and banjo picker, Mitch Podolak, saw an ad on TV for the upcoming Winnipeg centennial anniversary. It seemed crazy at the time, but Mitch thought to himself that it would be a good idea to hold a festival in commemoration of the anniversary.

At the time, the only folk festival in Canada was in Mariposa, and so the Winnipeg Folk Fest has something unique to offer not only Manitoba, but Canada. Forty-two acts were booked for the first Folk Fest, admission was free and workshop stages were scattered across the park site.

Forty years later and the Winnipeg Folk Festival stretches out over five days at the newly renovated Birds Hill Park, which now boasts a shiny new entrance, campsite and food pavilion for visitors.

It doesn't just play folk music either. Now there's something for the whole family to enjoy, whether it's children's music at the big Chickadee stage or electronic sounds at the Big Blue stage at night. There's also ethno-fusion, world beat, reggae and indie rock selections to choose from.

The annual festival runs on a budget of more than \$2 million and employs 20 staff, generating approximately \$14.7 million in economic activity for Manitoba from the annual park fest alone.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this House to congratulate this year's organizers for pulling off yet another spectacular Folk Fest. I am already counting down the days until next year's festival, and I look forward to seeing the festival grow even bigger and better in future years.

Eriksdale New Horizons 40th Anniversary

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, after a lifetime of contributing to our province, our seniors deserve to be able to lead active, engaged lives in their retirement years. This June, the Eriksdale New Horizons seniors' club celebrated their 40th anniversary of working in the community.

New Horizons offers a variety of recreational programming for seniors in the Eriksdale area. Members can participate in shuffleboard, cards, board games, pool, quilting, Tai Chi and much, much more. The club offers congregate meals five days a week, giving members the opportunity to enjoy healthy, affordable meals in a social setting. Meals are delivered to seniors who have mobility issues. Seniors can also connect with members of other seniors programs in the region through regularly held fun days that different communities host in turn.

Many seniors face increasing social isolation as they age. Clubs like Eriksdale New Horizons don't just offer seniors a way to pass the time, they bring people together for companionship and community activity. I am proud to be a part of a government that believes in supporting our seniors programs such as Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative. We are working with communities like Eriksdale to ensure that seniors can stay active and healthy and continue to contribute to the fabric of our great province.

To celebrate this milestone, the club hosted an anniversary tea. I was very pleased to be able to attend and meet some of the dedicated participants and volunteers who have done so much work to make Eriksdale New Horizons a success. These committed individuals are truly an example of what can happen when members of the community work together, and they deserve recognition and thanks.

I invite all honourable members to join me in congratulating the Eriksdale New Horizons seniors' club on their 40th anniversary.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to close by wishing my two old friends, Delbert and Steve, a safe journey back to Alberta.

St. Labre 200

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, for the fifth year in a row, the population of the tiny community of St. Labre boomed as hundreds of locals and tourists visited the St. Labre 200, a three-day event which took place July 12th to the 14th.

The St. Labre 200 requires 12 teams to build their own golf carts within 24 hours. Using supplied materials, teams are challenged to build go-karts from scratch on the first day and race them on the next day in a fast-paced, nail-biting 200-lap race on a quarter-mile dirt track.

The main event took place Saturday evening and had the entire crowd in suspense. This year's winners were Marchand West Loose Chains. But the St. Labre 200 isn't just about racing. There are events for the entire family to enjoy as well. Following the race, there's a concert and a spectacular fireworks display.

* (14:50)

The St. Labre 200 also boasts an excavator rodeo, pie-off and a rubber-boot throwing contest. And for children, there are balloon bouncers, remote control car races and a mini-train ride. Admission to all events is free, ensuring that everybody has the opportunity to participate.

Most of the money is raised by selling the carts off in the Calcutta. This year's top-selling cart went for \$3,000. The proceeds from the Calcutta are then given to charity. This year's recipients included Rec Opportunities for Children, Today House Shelter and the RM of Piney Recreation Commission. This year, over \$8,000 was raised, adding to the \$22,000 already raised by the St. Labre 200 over the past four years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of this House to congratulate this year's St. Labre 200 winners, participants and the organizing committee for their exceptional work in making the competition a fun and exciting activity to participate in for all. I hope to see events like the St. Labre 200 continue to be successful in future years, raising money for charities that do great work for all our communities.

Thank you.

Nelson Mandela International Day

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, July 18th marks the birthday of an incredible man who has fought for the rights of humanity, contributing to the culture of peace and freedom internationally, former South African President Nelson Mandela.

As Nelson Mandela remains in hospital in critical condition, people throughout the world will celebrate Mr. Mandela's birthday with a day dedicated to his life's work.

Every year, the Nelson Mandela Foundation encourages people to join together in celebration of Nelson Mandela Day, ensuring his legacy lives on and in building a global movement for good, inspiring individuals to help change for the world for a better one, one action at a time.

In November 2009, the UN General Assembly declared July 18 Nelson Mandela International Day, recognizing the contributions Mr. Mandela made in the field of conflict resolution, race relations, promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation, gender equality and rights of children, among others.

Nelson Mandela devoted 67 years to bring change to the people of South Africa. He spent his life fighting for the rights of humanity as a human rights lawyer, a prisoner for 27 years, an international peacemaker and the first democratically elected president of free South Africa. On Nelson Mandela Day, the Nelson Mandela Foundation asks individuals to devote 67 minutes of their time, one minute for every year Mandela dedicated to public service in the community, and make a goal of doing something good for others on that day.

Mr. Mandela said that we can change the world and make it a better place. It's in your hands to make a difference. Mr. Speaker, each person has the ability to make a difference in their community. One small act of kindness can have immeasurable impacts on the lives of others. Let's continue to work to make our province and world a better place for every person.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances. Seeing no grievances—

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Would you resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply as listed on today's Order Paper, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

*(14:50)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

In accordance with the agreement reached in the House on July 10th, 2013, the committee will now begin voting on motions and accompanying resolutions deferred from sittings of the Committee of Supply last week.

Nine motions in total, each with an accompanying resolution, were deferred. We will begin with votes deferred on three motions and resolutions from the Chamber section, followed by votes deferred on three motions and resolutions from room 255, concluding with votes deferred on three motions and resolutions from room 254. For each section, the Chairperson will first report all the votes deferred and then we will consider them individually.

Report

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson of the Committee of Supply): To begin, I'm reporting the following motions and resolutions deferred from the Chamber section of Supply.

During the consideration of resolution 19.1 from the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs on July 10th, 2013, the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) moved

THAT line item 19.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested a recorded vote. The accompanying resolution 19.1 has also been deferred for a vote.

During the consideration of resolution 30.1 from the Estimates of the Department of Housing and Community Development on July 11th, 2013, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) moved

THAT line item 30.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested a recorded vote. The accompanying resolution 30.1 has also been deferred for a vote.

During the consideration of resolution 18.1 from the Estimates of the Department of Innovation, Energy and Mines on July 11th, 2013, the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) moved

THAT line item 18.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote and subsequently two members requested a recorded vote. The accompanying resolution 18.1 has also been deferred for a vote.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Moving to the first item, then, the question before the committee is the motion moved by the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) during the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs,

THAT line item 19.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Order. The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm directing that the bells be turned off and the committee proceed to the vote.

The question before the committee is the motion moved by the honourable member for Tuxedo

THAT line item 19.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

* (16:00)

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 14, Nays 29.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The next question before committee is the deferred resolution 19.1.

ABORIGINAL AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Resolution 19.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,126,000 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Executive, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The next question before committee is the motion moved by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) during the Estimates of the Department of Housing and Community Development,

THAT line item 30.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

Shall the resolution pass—hold on a second. I should correct it, that it—correction, it was a motion, not the resolution,

THAT line item 30.(a)—30.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

* (17:00)

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

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

The question before the committee is the motion moved by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie,

THAT line item 30.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 14, Nays 29.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being after 5 p.m., 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 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 15, 2013

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		Clean Environment Commission Maguire; Chomiak	3465
Provincial Sales Tax Increase–Referendum		PST Increase	
Wishart	3457	Smook; Struthers	3466
Stefanson	3459	Child and Family Services	
Reopen Beausejour's Employment Manitoba Office		Rowat; Howard	3467
Ewasko	3457	Rental Allowance	
Applied Behaviour Analysis Services		Wishart; Bjornson	3468
Rowat	3457	Antipoverty Groups	
Pedersen	3458	Wishart; Irvin-Ross	3468
Cullen	3458	Children and Youth Report	
Maguire	3459	Gerrard; Selinger	3469
Briese	3460	Child Poverty	
Mitchelson	3460	Gerrard; Selinger	3469
Helwer	3460	Criminal Property Forfeiture Legislation	
Schuler	3461	Wight; Swan	3470
Smook	3461	Employment and Training Centre	
Graydon	3462	Ewasko; Bjornson	3470, 3471
Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care–Ashern		Ewasko; Kostyshyn	3471
Eichler	3459	GO Office Closures	
Tabling of Reports		Eichler; Kostyshyn	3471
Manitoba Public Insurance, Quarterly Financial Report, Three Months, March 1 to May 31, 2013		Members' Statements	
Swan	3462	Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival	
Oral Questions		Allum	3472
Manitoba Hydro/PST Increase		Winnipeg Folk Festival	
Pallister; Selinger	3462	Ewasko	3472
Manitoba Hydro–Bipole III		Eriksdale New Horizons 40th Anniversary	
Pallister; Selinger	3463	Nevakshonoff	3473
Maguire; Chomiak	3465	St. Labre 200	
Bipole III/PST Increase		Smook	3473
Pallister; Selinger	3463	Nelson Mandela International Day	
Manitoba Hydro		Gaudreau	3473
Schuler; Chomiak	3464	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Committee of Supply	
		Aboriginal and Northern Affairs	3475

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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