

Fourth Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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

Vol. LXVII No. 11B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, December 4, 2014

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon.	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Greg, Hon.	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	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
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 13—The Planning Amendment Act
(Special Planning Areas)**

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education, that Bill 13, The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire (circonscriptions spéciales d'aménagement du territoire), now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Caldwell: The Planning Amendment Act will create an inland special port planning authority for CentrePort lands in Rosser municipality. This legislation will speed up development approvals, help attract new private investments and create jobs while ensuring local landowners and residents continue to participate in a public review process for planning and development at CentrePort. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further introduction of bills?

Bill 4—The Farm and Food Awareness Act

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Moved by myself and seconded by Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors (Ms. Crothers), I'd like to introduce Bill 4, Farm and Food Awareness Act.

Mr. Speaker: Could the honourable Minister of Agriculture please reread the introduction of the bill, please?

Mr. Kostyshyn: So, moved by myself, right—I so moved, seconded by Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors, that Bill 4, The Farm and Food Awareness Act; Loi sur la promotion du secteur agroalimentaire, be now read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kostyshyn: This bill proclaims this week on the third Monday in September each year as Manitoba farm and food awareness week and the third Tuesday in March each year as agriculture awareness day.

The bill allows the establishment of goals intended to help strengthen Manitoba's agriculture and food industries, increasing awareness of the role of Manitoba farms in our economy and increasing access to awareness of the availability of Manitoba food and other products from Manitoba farms.

When established, goals may be applicable to one or more public sectors, entities which include the government of Manitoba, municipal governments of all types and other 'ententities' that may have the status for reporting the organization under The Financial Administration Act. As the request of the minister, a public sector 'ententity' must be—provide the minister with information to assist in establishing a goal or assessing whether progress is being made in achieving these goals. Before a goal is established, the minister must consult with organizations or groups or persons that the minister believes have the interest in the goal.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Kostyshyn: Hear, hear.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

**Bill 205—The Workers Compensation
Amendment Act (Presumption re
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)**

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 205, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Driedger: Studies show that 10 per cent of first responders suffer post-traumatic stress disorder from on-the-job incidents, and suicide amongst first responders is increasing because of this disorder and it affects paramedics, police and firefighters. There

isn't a problem and it needs to be addressed. It needs to be addressed now, and this legislation will—intends to show that for those with post-traumatic stress disorder, it will be presumed to be a cause of their job.

Very important, Mr. Speaker. I've been dealing with some members in the last couple of months who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and I think this is legislation that is needed now.

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

Further introduction of bills?

**Bill 14—The Consumer Protection
Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts)**

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats d'améliorations domiciliaires), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, each year the consumer protection officer sees a significant number of complaints from Manitoban consumers regarding home renovations and repairs gone wrong. During public consultations Manitobans told us that the absence of contracts or the use of inadequate contracts left them vulnerable, and the building industry supported our initiative to address this.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides protection of both consumers and businesses by ensuring that (1) written contracts are in place for home improvement projects with a clear upfront price, and (2) price changes are agreed to by both parties and that clear timelines for the project are established.

Mr. Speaker, a written agreement is one of most important communication tools between a consumer and a contractor. I am proud to be introducing this legislation today that further protects Manitoban consumers and businesses.

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

Bill 207—The Delivery of Goods and Provision of Services in Winnipeg Outside the Perimeter Act

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), that Bill 207, The Delivery of Goods and Provision of Services in Winnipeg Outside the Perimeter Act; Loi sur la livraison de produits et la fourniture de services à Winnipeg à l'extérieur de la ceinture périphérique, now be read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand up today for my constituents and present Bill 207.

This bill will protect St. Norbert residents from delivery fees which other Winnipeggers do not have to pay simply because St. Norbert falls outside the Perimeter Highway. I spent my summer on the doorsteps and heard loud and clear from my constituents that this is an issue that needed to be addressed, and that's why I'm here today to present Bill 207.

The Perimeter is merely a road and not the official city limits. The official limits are actually five kilometres south of the Perimeter. Bill 207 assures that any company that currently delivers to the area inside the Perimeter will have to deliver to residents outside the Perimeter in St. Norbert in the same fashion without charging any extra fees to those outside the Perimeter in St. Norbert but still inside the city limits. Thank you.

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

**Bill 206—The Workers Compensation
Amendment Act (Employer Advisers)**

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Morris, that Bill 206, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Employer Advisers), be now read a first time.

* (13:40)

Motion presented.

Mr. Smook: The Workers Compensation Act currently provides for the appointment of worker advisers to assist workers and dependants who have claims for compensation. This bill would amend the act to provide for the appointment of employer advisers to assist employers in relations to claims for compensation by workers. This bill would create an office designated to help employers fully understand and access the WCB. Employers who have issues

with WCB would receive advice and aid should the situation require.

Small business is an important part of Manitoba's economy. This government often forgets the needs of employers. An employer adviser office would help level this playing field. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

Grace Hospital Emergency Room Upgrade and Expansion

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 to upgrade and expand the Grace Hospital emergency department in 2011 and to complete it by 2015.

The Grace Hospital was left as the last of all Winnipeg hospitals to be slated for an emergency room upgrade.

The provincial government has broken another promise to Manitobans by delaying the start of this upgrade by three years, as failure to begin construction in 2013 has left patients and hospital employees facing long wait times, overcrowding and the risk of unsafe conditions and care.

This provincial government has allowed ER wait times at the Grace Hospital to become the worst in Canada at triple the amount of time that emergency physicians recommend.

Ambulances in Winnipeg, including at the Grace Hospital, continue to face excessive patient off-load delays that are getting longer every year.

Last year the Grace Hospital in Winnipeg had over 23,000 patients seeking emergency care through the ER department and over 2,000 of those patients left the ER without being seen because they became too frustrated waiting to be seen.

Instead of fixing hallway medicine, there are now numbered hallway spaces.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to keep their promise to the people of Manitoba and make the upgrade and expansion of the Grace ER an immediate priority.

And this is signed by E. Smith, H. Gies, L. Stephansson and many others, Mr. Speaker.

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

Election Request

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) In 2015 the current provincial government will be in its fourth year of its mandate.

(2) There is a crisis of leadership unfolding on the government side of the House.

(3) According to media reports, the member for Minto stated that the Premier is more concerned about remaining leader than doing things in the best interests of the province.

(4) According to the media reports, the member for Seine River stated, if you are in a position where you support the point of view of the Premier, your priorities and your projects move up the queue.

(5) According to the media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated that the Premier has stopped listening to our advice.

(6) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated, we can no longer work for a Premier who refuses to hear us; he refuses to hear us not just on the leadership issue but also on a wide range of issues in our portfolio.

(7) The concerns over the Premier's leadership have not been confined to just government members. The NDP provincial council member Darlene Dziewit has been reported as saying, we have a crisis here in that I don't think the people of Manitoba trust our leadership anymore.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Premier to immediately consider calling an election so that Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of Manitobans.

And this petition is signed by E. Mans, D. Nyhot, M. Jeitsma and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Beausejour District Hospital–Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the northeast region of the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by H. Grycki, M. Dufort, D. Anderson and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Highway 10 North and 3rd Street North in Swan River–Traffic Signals

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

And this is the background for this petition:

Local residents have expressed concerns regarding properties located at the intersection of Highway 10 north and 3rd Street North in Swan River, including the Swan Valley regional high school, the Tim Hortons and the Co-op gas bar quadrisection.

There are no traffic lights or pedestrian crosswalks at this intersection. Students from the high school run across the highway to access Tim Hortons and the Co-op gas bar. When the daycare centre opens, children will need to cross the highway if they wish to access the wellness centre.

Highway 10 north is a major haul route for farmers and logging trucks, increasing the potential for a collision involving students and/or motorists.

This intersection is a dangerous corner for motorists, including school buses making left-hand turns onto the highway from either direction, especially in the hours before and after school and at lunchtime.

The traffic on this highway and at this intersection will only increase in the near future with the opening of the wellness centre and the daycare facility.

Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation is only offering to provide a painted-line crosswalk with unlit signage but nothing to actually stop the traffic for pedestrian crossing safety. Motorists often disregard painted-line crosswalks, creating a false sense of security for pedestrians who use them.

On October the 3rd, 2013, Winkler mourned the loss of one of their 16-year-old students, killed at a crosswalk consisting only of signage.

We petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation consider installing a set of traffic lights, including pedestrian lights, at the intersection of Highway 10 north and 3rd Street North in Swan River.

This petition is signed by T. Burick, M. Burick, D. Roberts and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): I am pleased to table the annual report for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba for the year ending March 31st, 2014.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

* (13:50)

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I'd like to table the actuarial valuation report for the Civil Service Superannuation Board for 2013.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'd like to table the annual review for 2013 for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to ministerial statements.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this honourable House today to acknowledge Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, which takes place on December 6th.

Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women honours the women who were murdered at École polytechnique 25 years ago on December 6th, 1989. Mr. Speaker, for a quarter of a century Canadians have remembered and honoured the women who were murdered on December 6th, and on that day we also remember the eight women and girls in Manitoba who lost their lives to gender-based violence in 2014. These women were mothers, sisters, aunties, nieces and friends. All had hopes and dreams. All loved and were loved. And all were important.

The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council acknowledges the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence which began on November 25th and ends on December 10th. On Friday,

December 5th, the council will hold their annual sunrise memorial to mark the events of December 6th, 1989. At the same time, we will acknowledge and honour the eight Manitoba women who lost their lives as a result of gender-based violence.

Remembrance and honouring is important, but it is not the only thing we can do. December 6th is also Canada's National Day of Action. We can speak out when we see or hear misogyny. We can choose to be a champion for respect and equality in all of our communities.

I invite all Manitobans to stop and remember the 14 women killed in an act of gender-based violence. I invite Manitobans to remember the eight women and girls who were killed in Manitoba and to speak out against violence. I encourage all Manitobans to let December 6th not only be a day of—for reflection and remembrance but a day for everyone to do their part in ending violence against women. Today and every day, let us all continue to raise awareness. Let's educate ourselves and others, boys, girls, women and men. Let's encourage kindness, support and understanding and teach our children that violence is not okay.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that, following the statements by my colleagues, we observe a moment of silence to honour the women who lost their lives to violence 25 years ago in Montreal and to remember and honour the eight Manitoba women and girls who lost their lives in violence in 2014.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would like to thank the minister for the statement.

Mr. Speaker, today we recognize December 6th as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. December 6th was declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women following the 1989 École polytechnique massacre in Montreal in which armed student Marc Lépine murdered 14 young women just because they were women.

December 6th represents an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. It is also an opportunity to consider the women and girls for whom violence is a daily reality and to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence.

Mr. Speaker, December 6th is the day to raise awareness of the harm gender inequality and gender-based violence causes to women and to girls, to families, communities and to all Manitobans. Sadly, we are very far from the point of ending violence against women here in Manitoba. With the recent events surrounding the lives of Tina Fontaine and Rinelle Harper, the atrocity of violence against women was highlighted nationally and called attention to the reality of its horrific effects.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Women's Foundation, half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. On average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. Furthermore, in any given day in Canada, more than 3,300 women along with their 3,000 children are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter to escape domestic violence. Every night, about 200 women are turned away because the shelters are full.

Sadly, according to the data released by Statistics Canada in 2011, Manitoba has nearly twice the national rate of violence against women. This is truly unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

We in the PC caucus acknowledge that violence to and exploitation of women and girls in Manitoba and throughout Canada is a crisis that needs immediate attention and action. We also know that greater attention must be placed on indigenous women and girls, who suffer disproportionately from gender-based violence.

On the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, we must look forward and find ways to improve prevention and ensure supports are available in Manitoba. As a province, we can and must do better so that everyone in our province is safe and cared for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, today, 25 years after the events of 1989 at the École polytechnique in Montreal, we gather to dedicate ourselves to decreasing, reducing, hopefully even eliminating violence against women in our society, a big task but something that we need to push ahead with.

I think it is important to remember not just the 14 women who have been—were killed back in 1989, but there were 10 other women who were injured. There were four men who were injured as well. And as well as this, it's to be noted that the injured and the witnesses and the university staff and the students suffered quite a variety of physical, social, existential, financial and psychological consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Indeed, a number of students, in the wake of this event, committed suicide, and in the suicide letters of at least two of them the anguish they suffered following the massacre was cited as the reason for killing themselves. Nine years after the event, many of the survivors reported still being affected by their experiences, though with time some of the effects had decreased.

It is important, and, I think, particularly this year on the 25th anniversary, that we recognize better the effects of the trauma on people's lives. This year, perhaps particularly because of the situation of Jian Ghomeshi and the women who have come forward, there's greater public awareness of violence against women and of the consequences and of the need for people to address this in an effective way.

I believe that there's a better understanding as well of the impact on violence not just on women but on men and the issue of post-traumatic stress disorder in our people who have fought for our country and who have been exposed to violence in war and who come back mentally—with anguish and often with depression as a result of this.

Yes, we need to forge ahead with a national inquiry against the missing and murdered women. Yes, we need to make sure that we recognize not just the women who died in Montreal but the women who died here and, of course, notably, Tina Fontaine and others who have been affected by violence, Rinelle Harper, obviously. I believe that now is a time that we can push the agenda on this issue in a more effective way than we have probably for quite a number of years.

And so I join with all other MLAs in being ready to work together to do what we can here in this Legislature and outside to reduce and to move toward the day when we can indeed eliminate violence against women.

Thank you.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to observe a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

I ask honourable members to rise.

A moment of silence was observed.

Mr. Speaker: Any further ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have with us this afternoon from Nellie McClung Collegiate, we have 26 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Grant Caldwell, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen).

And also seated in the public gallery, from East Selkirk Middle School we have 17 grades 7 to 9 students under the direction of Nadia Gorbay, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Children in Care

Update (Matias de Antonio)

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I am sure the House remembers the case of little Matias de Antonio, who died in the care of Child and Family Services while being transported last March 27th. After eight months, the family has received no explanation as to why Matias was taken from his mother, and now we are informed that there may be no inquest into his untimely death.

Mr. Speaker, Child and Family Services contractors responsible for the transport of children in the care of CFS report that they have seen no change in their transport protocols. It would seem nothing has been learned from the loss of little Matias.

Does the minister agree that it's now even more urgent than ever that an inquest be done to make sure this type of tragedy never happens again?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): No one in this House forgets the death of that child. It is heartbreaking, the loss of a child, for the family, for the community and for our province.

Following the baby's death, there was an investigation that happened. The Chief Medical

Examiner investigated, provided their results to the family. There's an internal investigation that's happening. The Children's Advocate will also be investigating.

We continue to provide supports to the family, offer supports to the family if they find that necessary. We want to support them in finding the answers so we can help them in their journey of healing, which will be most difficult. I do not underestimate that at all. We need to work together to strengthen the system.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, I believe Manitobans deserve more than just her crying with the family.

Mr. Speaker, Matias's mother, Maria, went back to Colombia several months ago to grieve for her loss with her husband, who is in school there. Now we hear the good news that she is expecting again but is faced with a dilemma. The rest of her family is here in Manitoba. Should she come back to Manitoba to give birth and perhaps face repeat actions by Child and Family Services again for an unknown reason?

Perhaps the minister could give her some advice on whether or not it is safe for her to come back to Manitoba to have her baby.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The child-welfare agencies across this province and directed by their authorities and all Manitobans' expectation is that the safety of children is the No. 1 priority.

I will not be able to make any judgments or assessments on any particular case. I will rely on the professionals that have been hired to take on that very difficult task of meeting with families and providing them with support.

I support the system. We've continued to strengthen the system. We have a lot of work to do, and we're committed to do that.

Affordable Housing Units Construction Timeline

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): In 2012 this Minister of Housing promised single parents and other struggling families in Flin Flon that she would replace the badly needed 14 units of low-income housing at 4 Hemlock Drive that had to be vacated because of moisture problems. The community was led to believe that the construction would begin in 2013 to replace these units. It's almost 2015, Mr. Speaker, and nothing is happening.

When can these struggling families in Flin Flon who desperately need low-income housing expect construction to begin?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): Housing has been a priority for this government since 1999. Last year we fulfilled our commitment to 1,500 social housing and 1,500 affordable homes built, and we didn't stop there. We made a further commitment for 500 more social housing and 500 more affordable housing.

We're working with community partners across this province and developing many housing projects that are supporting families in social housing but also providing employment opportunities with our local-hire policy.

Occupancy Timeline

Mrs. Mitchelson: But how can Manitobans believe anything that this government says when they promise in 2012 and don't deliver?

Mr. Speaker, in May I asked the former minister of Housing when the 60 affordable housing units at the IRCOM building on Isabel would be completed, and he said, and I quote, there will be residents tenanted that building very, very soon. End of quote.

Mr. Speaker, it's now December and there's been nothing done, no construction, no activity on that site since May.

My question to the minister is: When can the 60 immigrant and refugee families that expected to move in to this complex last December, a year ago, expect to move in?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I stated previously, we are committed to building more housing. We are building housing projects across this province. There's examples in Steinbach, Sprague, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Winkler, Oakbank, in Winnipeg, in Thompson and Gimli, and that's only the short list.

We are committed to work with IRCOM II. We're committed to getting those 60 units finished. We're right now in the process of retendering the project and we believe that we will start-see construction there in the very near future.

University College of the North Ventilation System Update

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): The next session, Mr. Speaker, is going to be very, very, very, very soon.

Mr. Speaker, The Pas campus of the University College of the North had an engineering study done on their ventilation system, and this is what was said: There are definite concerns with respect to the transmission of fumes and odours into the classroom spaces and to the effect of such fumes on people present in the workshop during equipment operation.

Can the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Bjornson) give an update on the progress of the update of the ventilation system at The Pas campus?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, I actually—really glad to have the opportunity to talk about the upgrade of The Pas campus. It is historic upgrade: the Oscar Lathlin Library, aptly named, a significant investment completed.

I'm also very pleased to talk about the brand new UCN campus in Thompson. I'm particularly proud as minister to say that we're continuing to invest in UCN, unlike members opposite who opposed UCN, opposed building campuses in Thompson and The Pas. We're committed to every part of this province, and that includes northern Manitoba.

* (14:10)

Mr. Ewasko: Another statement from the report was, and I quote: Whatever the decision on methodology, something urgently needs to be done to improve the situation. End quote.

This was July 2011 is when the study was reported on, and I've had the pleasure of the tour of the library and it is a fantastic addition, but nothing in regards to the ventilation system has been done, nothing at all. This is just another example of the total collapse of this NDP government. They're all worried about themselves.

Why doesn't this Education and Advanced Learning Minister stand up and have a conversation with his MIT Minister, and why do they continue to fail the safe learning environment of the students and the staff of the UCN campus?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how any member opposite can get up and ask any question about UCN when they opposed the very establishment of UCN.

But I'm more than glad to talk about our investments that we're making throughout this province in our community college system, because it's not just UCN. It's Assiniboine Community

College, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to invite the member to look at the work that's been done on the Len Evans technical training centre. Or perhaps the member would like to tour the many new investments that have taken place in terms of Red River College, including the Royal Bank building, the downtown campus which is now celebrating more than 10 years of a presence for Red River downtown, and the many upgrades that are taking place at the campus on Notre Dame.

Mr. Speaker, it's this government that has made an historic investment in post-secondary education. Unlike members opposite, we're committed to it. They talk about it, then they vote against it.

Education Property Tax Credit Tax Relief for Seniors—Government Promise

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, during the last election the NDP government promised no new taxes. They suggested that hiking the PST was nonsense. They falsely promised to remove education taxes from seniors 65 plus.

It's clear to Manitobans that the former minister, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), felt quite comfortable misleading seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask this new Minister responsible for Healthy Living and Seniors: Does she believe that seniors deserve to be deceived time and time again, as did the former minister and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of this province?

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I'm glad to take a question from the member opposite about taxes, Mr. Speaker, because it is this government who reduced taxes by \$1.4 billion for Manitobans, \$900 million for families and over \$400 million for business. We came into power, the small-business tax was 9 per cent; now it's zero.

But I want to respond to the member's question. He asked a question about seniors. Mr. Speaker, this year we brought in the seniors' property tax credit. Over 40,000 seniors applied, 26,000 cheques were sent out totalling \$6 million.

Rebate Processing Delays

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, they broadened the PST. They raised the PST by 14 per cent. They remake—renege on their promises to eliminate the education tax for seniors, and then, rather than removing it, they broke their promise again and they capped it, the rebate.

But, Mr. Speaker, it didn't stop there. This rebate has taken 16 to 20 weeks longer to process, twice the advertised length. Many people have not received it, contrary to what the minister has just said.

And I would like to ask the minister responsible: Is the government's mismanagement and the NDP infighting to blame for these lengthy delays, or is both?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Well, Mr. Speaker, if the taxes are high on the property, then is that a bad thing? That was the words of the members—the Leader of the Opposition, actually, in December of 2012, who says, I'm paying perfectly good dollars to taxes, and how do you think we support all these programs?

He might think high taxes are a good thing. We don't think so. That's why we have been cutting taxes on education for the seniors. That's why we've increased the education property tax credit. That's why we've cut taxes for small business. That's why we've cut corporate capitalization taxes. That's why we've cut corporate taxes.

They talk the talk. He's happy to pay \$38,378 on his house. We're making sure that people who cannot afford it are paying less taxes on their property while we fund the education system.

Mining Industry Exploration Concerns

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Manitobans have been reading the newspapers over the last few weeks and seeing this dysfunctional government in action.

Today they're reading the paper, they're realizing there's dysfunction within the mining branch. Permits were not issued, were not denied after five years. Out of frustration, we have another Manitoban taking this NDP government to court.

Mr. Speaker, this sends a terrible message to the investment community and, as a result of this, we've seen the exploration dollars really drop off in Manitoba.

I want to ask the minister: What's he going to do to improve the situation on the exploration field?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): I think, Mr. Speaker, generally, I think what the public of Manitoba knows is the difference between the members opposite and members on this

side of the House is not only we care about building Manitoba, we take steps to build Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I have never heard a more negative, political, nitpicking, small-minded bunch of opposition in my entire life. While we build, they fume.

This year we have seen in Manitoba the building of two mines. There's no other jurisdiction in the country that has built two mines in the last year, and yet members opposite oppose that.

They didn't even have the decency to come to the mining convention. They haven't had any contacts with First Nations. They don't talk to people; they sit in their little group and criticize without looking at reality. Why would anyone vote for them?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was at the mining conference and I think I got a different message than the minister got.

Let me tell you what's happened under the NDP watch. We've gone from No. 1 in the world to No. 27 in the world under their direction. Just three years ago we had \$150 million of exploration money coming into Manitoba. Last year we were down to \$50 million. If the exploration money doesn't come to Manitoba, we're not going to be able to find new mines in Manitoba.

What is the minister going to do to address that?

Mr. Chomiak: Firstly, Mr. Speaker, that \$150 million in exploration led directly to the building of the Lalor and the Reed mine with an investment of three quarters of a billion dollars. That's billion with a b—billion with a b.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, I won't take legal advice from members opposite, particularly the Leader of the Opposition on his legal opinions as to what's the law in Manitoba. We know how his legal opinion with respect to the law is—has gone.

NDP Caucus Performance Record

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): The minister might want to switch to decaf coffee during the break, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) is heading into this weekend meetings with the NDP determined to do the wrong thing, and he's determined to disgrace the office of the premier. Now, while Manitobans are disappointed, they're not particularly surprised,

because the Premier has a long history of unethical behaviour: Crocus, firing whistle-blowers, covering up emails, misleading the House on Jets tickets, breaking election advertising laws, falsifying election returns, blaming civil service, bundling union donations. I need leave of the House to go on more because there's so many.

Won't the Premier just finally admit that his unethical behaviour is not exactly unusual for him, it's business as usual?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, Tories lecturing anyone in ethics is quite the sight, Mr. Speaker, and especially when it comes to leadership matters.

The Leader of the Opposition, after he left Manitoba politics in the middle of the flood in 1997, ran for office nationally, got 13 per cent of the vote with the PC Party. He then quit the party, Mr. Speaker. He then got elected as a Member of Parliament and in 2005 was campaigning to be leader, actually, while he was a Member of Parliament. And when he was asked if he was going to run, he stated—and I think I've said this once before, but it bears repeating—I am copping what's known as a woman's answer, isn't it? It's a sort of a fickle kind of thing.

* (14:20)

This was the Leader of the Opposition in 2005. They have no lecture to us on ethics or, apparently, in terms of the equality of the sexes in this province.

Election Request

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that on my last question, the rebel alliance of the NDP, they actually appreciated that question because many of them feel the same way. But they shouldn't take any comfort or shouldn't be too smug, because when there's one thing that unites this divided NDP party, it's unethical behaviour.

All of them—all of them—were involved with raising the PST. All of them were—have been involved in sinking this province into debt. All of them have been involved in ruining the CFS system and putting kids in crisis. All of them have been responsible for the poor education outcomes for our kids. All of them have been involved for those long ER wait times that puts the risk—that puts the health of Manitobans at risk.

There is much that divides this party, but there's something that unites them: unethical behaviour and not putting the interests of Manitobans first.

Instead of having your House of Cards episode on the weekend, why aren't you finally doing the right thing? Stop the music with the musical chairs in your office, Mr. Premier, and call an election.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, now it's time for part 2 of Tory ethical behaviour in this province.

How anyone on that side can lecture anyone about ethical behaviour after the Leader of the Opposition was a key Cabinet minister during one of the biggest scandals in Manitoba history, the vote-rigging scandal, a scandal that involved not only members of the Conservative Party but Taras Sokolyk, the chief of staff, Jules Benson, the clerk of council-of Cabinet. This is the Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, they can lecture us about a lot of things. Ethics is definitely not one of them.

Legislative Session Spring Sitting Date

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, in many years at the time that we close the fall sitting, we have a date for when the spring session will start. This year is an exception. We are ending this fall session, but at this point we have no idea when the Legislature will return for the spring session.

It is common courtesy as well as good government to know when the Legislature will sit in the spring.

I ask the Premier: When will we return to the Legislature to sit in the spring?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, today may be the last day for the member of River Heights in the Legislature, but I can tell you every member on this side of the House will come to work every day for the people of Manitoba, not only in the Legislature, not only in their constituencies, but they will be out listening and responding to the priorities of Manitobans wherever they live in Manitoba, wherever they live, the north, the south, the east, the west.

We will be doing the job every single day for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, you know, there are many like myself who work day in and day out, but it is only when the Legislature is sitting that we can

ask questions. It is only when the Legislature is sitting that we can actually have bills passed.

If the government and the Premier are really going to have business as usual and are going to focus on the needs of Manitobans, the Legislature presumably can't sit the same day as this last year, which was March the 6th, but the day after that weekend is March the 9th.

Can the Premier tell us: Will we get to work on March the 9th in this Legislature or not?

Mr. Selinger: The member opposite may like to sit. We like to act.

If he wants to pass bills, we're willing to pass them today, Mr. Speaker. Bring them on.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, sadly, this government has stalled so long in order to get the Legislature sit on November the 20th.

We called for the Legislature to sit in the beginning of September because we had critical business to deal with: the zebra mussels bill, which they only brought in the other day; the surface water management bill, which is not even here; the budget deficit, we don't even have the third-quarter report.

Why is this minister and this Premier not attending to the needs of Manitobans? Why are those bills not being dealt with? Why are we so late?

The Premier has a lot to answer for. Will he now explain himself?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, there's been 13 bills introduced in this Legislature. We're completely prepared to deal with all of them and pass all of them. Members opposite talk it out 'til 5 to 5 every day, Mr. Speaker, stall and ring the bells.

The reality is—[interjection] A little touchy—a little touchy, Mr. Speaker, a little touchy.

What can I say? We appreciate the opportunity to be here in the Legislature. We'd like every minute to count. The members want to ring the bells, that's up to them. We want to get the work done of the people of Manitoba.

Consumer Protection Initiatives Home Improvement Projects

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, the decision to undertake a major home renovation can be a nerve-racking decision for any family. Whether it's a new kitchen, roof repairs, foundation work, it often costs thousands of dollars. It can affect a

family's routine and their well-being. Adding to the stress are unclear terms or lengthy delays that can sometimes occur when communication between consumers and home renovation companies isn't clear.

Our NDP government has been a leader in consumer protection and has taken steps to protect families from unfair cellphone contracts, misleading cable and Internet promotions, clear and upfront pricing for cars and car repairs and to make sure that new homes come with good warranties.

What actions is the minister taking to protect Manitoba families' hard-earned dollars when they undertake major home improvement projects?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I thank the MLA from Concordia for this question, and it's one of those bills that the Premier referred to that we'd like to pass.

Mr. Speaker, we stand up for Manitoba families. In fact, the new rules we introduced today will get—make sure that consumers get an upfront price with regard to renovation projects, pay what has been agreed to, concrete timelines for the work to be done. Mike Moore from the Manitoba Home Builders' Association today joined me at McMunn & Yates centre to make this announcement, to talk about the new rules coming into play with regard to home renovations.

And, once again, Mr. Speaker, we stand up for Manitoba families. The opposition have continually voted against consumer protection, every single time. So, once again, to back up what the Premier said, we would like to pass legislation like this, but the members opposite don't stand up for families. They vote against consumer protection legislation like this piece of legislation.

NDP Leadership Caucus Support

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, a \$300-million tax hike tells me that the government's not interested in protecting consumers, they're interested in fleecing them.

The Premier just delivered at noon a state of the province address. He didn't acknowledge what the audience understood full well, that a dysfunctional government has performed badly for the people of Manitoba, that it is divided and that this session was prefaced, of course, by added dysfunction, by

the resignation of five failed Cabinet ministers. The so-called rebel five finger-pointing faction reduced Cabinet by a fraction. Their rebellion lost thunder when they all knuckled under.

But how long can the MLA for St. Boniface trust the loyalty of his caucus? How long will this dysfunction be allowed to continue and hurt the economic and social prospects of the people of Manitoba, or does he trust his colleagues at all? How long will this government patch itself together? Will it be days, will it be weeks, will it be only hours?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Fort Whyte, obviously missed the state of the province address today.

We acknowledged the great work of the people in the room in building this economy. They acknowledged that we have one of the strongest growing economies in the country, third best economy over the last decade, Conference Board of Canada said the second best economy last year.

We discussed together opportunities for young people to get dual credits in high school, trades, post-secondary education opportunities.

We identified the priorities of Manitobans in terms of infrastructure, critical infrastructure for flood protection, strategic investments in CentrePort. There's a bill tabled in this Legislature today which makes CentrePort a special planning area, Mr. Speaker, that allows them to fast-track development applications for major investments which will make Winnipeg a hub for serving North America east, west, north and south for movement of goods and services. And on Highway 75, we reiterated our \$200-million commitment to building a better roadway down there, which moves \$19 billion of goods into our major marketplace.

*(14:30)

I'm only sorry the Leader of the Opposition missed it today

Government Record

Mr. Pallister: And, of course, the Premier continues to misrepresent statistical realities and try to slipstream on previous administrations.

But the reality, of course, is something different: ninth in Canada in economic growth, ninth in Canada in average weekly wage growth under this administration, which—he refuses to talk about his

own administration because he can't run on his record. It's so bad, Mr. Speaker, that he has to play games with his statistics.

NDP talking points, that the Premier likes to repeat, claim that Manitoba's priorities are being placed first when they're being placed last, and the rebels in his caucus know it. Unfortunately, the rebels without a cause or spine did not stand up and say that this Premier's record is so bad he needs to resign when it counted.

Now, the facts are that all the members opposite, regardless of which faction they are in or which flower they wear, ran on a balanced-budget promise they have failed to keep; \$16 billion of additional debt and the first negative outlook in 28 years, that's hardly a record to be proud of.

NDP waste is threatening front-line services. Health, social and education rankings are bottom of the barrel under this administration.

Will the Premier simply admit that his performance—not Gary Doer's but his—is absolutely bottom of the barrel?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows a lot about dwelling at the bottom of the barrel. You can see it from the statements he makes, whether it's in the House or out of the House. He's a paragon of virtue when it comes to taking the high road. He's a man that always aims higher. We see that every single day.

He ignores the realities of what's been accomplished in this province of Manitoba. Just step out the door and see. See the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, see the Convention Centre expansion, see the new Hydro building downtown, see Red River—the Red River College campus downtown, see the numerous hundreds of units of new housing downtown and the 140,000 more people living in this province right now and the renaissance that's going on in our economy not only in Winnipeg but all across this province.

All he's got to do is look around. But what's he doing? He's looking at the bottom of the barrel, because that's where he likes to dwell, Mr. Speaker.

Government Intentions

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Premier fired a colleague of his for telling the truth, that's pretty bottom of the barrel; took two and a half years to come clean on Jets tickets that he insisted everyone else in his

caucus should own up about; hired three staff for his office which he didn't need before he decided to campaign for the leadership of the NDP. I think his own record puts him at the bottom of the barrel, Mr. Speaker, and he's making a case for that every day that he remains conflicted about his performance as premier versus candidate.

Now a flurry of self-serving announcements will be coming up by the Premier. The Premier will use his office as a campaign headquarters while he shops for delegates with hard-earned Manitoba money taken from people he isn't interested in buying support from just now.

He should be focused on the budget, Mr. Speaker, but he's not. He's going to be focused on saving his job, and everybody here knows that. He's already skipped a major trade outreach mission to China to prop up his ailing leadership at the expense of Manitoba prospects, of Manitoba opportunities, of Manitoba jobs, and he'll continue to do that.

Will he verify today that he actually intends, over the next three months or so, to continue on as a part-time premier?

Mr. Selinger: This coming from the member of the Legislature that missed the entire flood this summer, Mr. Speaker? Unbelievable—unbelievable.

He talks about firing people. Can he explain to us why he fired a young staffer for supporting an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and children?

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member to lay out his vision for the future of Manitoba, one that actually hires one more nurse in Manitoba, one that'll hire one more schoolteacher in Manitoba.

Last night, apparently, to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, he blurted out in a fit of careful planning that not only will he roll back the PST and not have money for infrastructure, but now he's going to roll back the payroll tax as well. They had 11 years to do that when they were in office and they didn't do it then and they won't do it now.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, the people who know the Premier the best, perhaps, apart from his own family, are now sitting in the upper reaches of this place because they don't believe a word he says. They don't trust him. They don't think his priorities are the priorities of Manitoba. So I'm not

going to feel particularly hurt by the false accusations he makes about our party. And, frankly, I've been criticized by people with far more credibility who didn't sell theirs for a 1 per cent PST hike.

Now, he's a part-time premier. He heads a dysfunctional government. His rebels are without a cause. His temporary replacements in Cabinet, enjoying their new offices for now, but their name tags have Velcro on them, Mr. Speaker, and their business cards are erasable. This is embarrassing instability and disorganization. It pushes away growth and opportunity.

The Premier has this day and only this day to do the right thing. Certainly his own council will call on him on Saturday to do the right thing, and I expect him to refuse yet again. Even when his own people ask him to do the right thing, he will refuse because he simply does not listen.

Will he step down today and stop trying to be a part-time premier?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, every single day, when we come to this Legislature, myself and every member of this caucus, we put a priority on working for the people of Manitoba, and we put that plan that we identified in the Throne Speech in front of the state of the province address at the Convention Centre, and people heard about the things that are going on.

And many of those people in the room contributed to those ideas, whether it was Innovation Alley on Adelaide Street downtown in Winnipeg, a project that we support; Startup Winnipeg, which helps young entrepreneurs get the support they need and the mentorship they need to start new companies in Manitoba. We saw that they were doing that today, and we've been pleased to support them on that. All the members on this side of the House have supported that initiative.

We saw The Boldness Project, which is helping early childhood development initiatives unfold in the Point Douglas area, and that was supported by many people in that room today; many business people have contributed to financing that project. We saw some very good results there, and we will see good results in the future. We talked about the experience we had out at Sisler High School where they have started up a cyber tech academy, the first of its kind in Manitoba.

And every time we do these things, what do the members opposite do? They pretend it didn't happen and they vote against it. Where's their vision? Where's their plan, other than more tax cuts for everybody?

Mr. Pallister: Well, more tax cuts for everybody is a pretty good idea, Mr. Speaker. Actually, it's not my idea. The Premier suggested last campaign—I remember it distinctly—that it'd be nonsense to suggest he would raise the taxes. I remember that very clearly and so do Manitobans.

But, Mr. Speaker, what did Manitobans get from this man who pretends he cares? Five hundred million—\$500 million—a year less in their pockets, broadening of the PST, hiking fees, the biggest tax increases in 25 years, that's the caring. That's what working Manitobans, vulnerable people in our province, seniors got from this government.

This gentleman tries to ride on the coattails of Gary Doer. He's no Gary Doer. He can't build—he cannot build relationships of trust, Mr. Speaker, and his colleagues know it. His unfocused spending means Manitobans pay more and get less, and he and all his colleagues broke their promises on the PST and other tax hikes.

Now, Gary Doer said that it was a conflict of interest for ministers to run for office while holding their positions. Was he wrong?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Opposition's time on this question has expired.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we articulated this in the Legislature in the last budget. We—I mentioned it again today in the state of the province address.

What are people getting? Mr. Speaker, last year they got 8,000 more jobs and a \$1.1-billion lift in the economy and paving of roads and infrastructure all across this province, part of a 5-and-a-half-billion-dollar plan which will lift the economy by \$6.3 billion and generate up to 60,000 jobs or person-years of employment. That's what we're putting forward.

* (14:40)

Members opposite were screaming for that, then they voted against it. They were hypocrites when they did that. They want to see investments in infrastructure. They want to see all those things, but when it comes time to support it, they oppose it every single time.

It was the Leader of the Opposition that wanted to halt the project for flood protection for the city of Winnipeg. He wanted to stall it in its tracks. We built it. It's in place, it came in on time, it came in on budget, and he still hasn't recovered from wanting to stop it.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Premier needs to go out on time. Mr. Speaker, 3,800 fewer private sector jobs in Manitoba right now than there were in June of last year, the worst record in Canada, hardly anything to be proud of.

Speaking of ironic, we were all treated here to a speech by the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), one of the dissident crew that's not that dissident, and it was filled with irony about teamwork and love, and even her rebel colleagues got a big laugh out of that. Now, this member spoke about love, but love is not talking. Love is deeds. Love is actually demonstrating your caring with appropriate action.

This group does that. This group is a government in waiting. We are united by a common purpose. We are not a group of dissident factions. Mr. Speaker, we love to see working families rewarded. We love to stand together united against NDP waste and tax hikes. We will stand up together united on behalf of vulnerable Manitobans and against the initiatives this government would pursue that would hurt them. We love our province too. We will stand united in the pursuit of real change.

The obstacle to real change today, Mr. Speaker, is this Premier. Will this Premier do the right thing and call an election, or he will miss his chance to ever lead in an election—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition's time for this question has elapsed. Order, please. Order, please.

Mr. Selinger: He talks about the economy: second best—second best performing.

Here's some facts for him. The average weekly wage in Manitoba went up 5.4 per cent, the best among all the provinces. Manitoba had 8,000 jobs in the last period of reporting. Mr. Speaker, 6,600 in the private sector, something the member opposite is in denial about; third lowest unemployment rate in Manitoba; retail sales up 1.2 per cent. And we are seeing that every single day more Manitobans are working in Manitoba at higher wages, in better jobs, with better infrastructure and more choices in education, all things the members opposite would cut in their budget.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It is now time for members' statements.

They're the Taxmen

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): And this, Mr. Speaker, with apologies to The Beatles, and keeping with my end-of-session tradition, I want to present the lyrics to an old favourite of this government, and the lyrics are:

Let me tell you how it will be. / There's one for you and 35 for the NDP. / Coz they're the taxman. / Yeah, they're the taxman.

Should 8 per cent appear too small, / Be thankful they don't take it all. / Coz they're the taxman. / Yeah, they're the taxman.

Now if you drive a car, I'll tax the street. / If you try to sit, I'll tax your seat. / And if you get too cold, I'll tax the heat. / If you take a walk, I'll tax your feet.

Hey, coz they're the taxman. / Coz they're the taxman, / Yay, the taxman.

Don't ask me what I want it for—ah, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). / If you don't want to pay some more—ah, the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). / Coz they're the taxman. / Yeah, the taxman. /

Now my advice for those who try / To lead the NDP and lie, / Manitoba will say bye-bye. / Coz they're the taxman. / Yeah, they're the taxman. / And you're working for no one but them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ebola Prevention—Recognition of Volunteers

Ms. Christine Melnick (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some of our local heroes for the important work they're doing to help reduce the spread of Ebola abroad.

Dr. Jim Strong is a prominent researcher at the national virology laboratory and a professor at the University of Manitoba. On November 21st, the Sierra Leone Nationals Association held a fundraiser where Dr. Strong gave a very powerful presentation on his most recent visit to Sierra Leone to the several hundred who were in attendance that night. Dr. Strong spoke passionately about Canada's role in treating the Ebola outbreak in Africa that has killed

more than 5,600 people since it was first detective-detected in 2013. Throughout his presentation, the room was still, mesmerized by his information.

Even though Winnipeg is half a world away, there is still such a strong connection to our city and our province. The national virology lab here in Winnipeg is an Ebola research powerhouse and is currently in the process of sending 800 vials of vaccine to West Africa, which should be arriving in mid-December.

Organizations such as the Sierra Leone Nationals Association and African Communities in Manitoba Incorporated are working to raise awareness to help their families, friends and people whose names they will never know. At the fundraiser, the Sierra Leone Nationals Association presented the Red Cross with a cheque for \$10,000 that was raised from selling Fight Ebola T-shirts across the city.

Our government is a partner working to help stop the spread of Ebola and protect others from becoming infected with this virus. In September, we announced \$100,000 in aids-in aid, and we recently donated more than 3 million respirator masks so that medical professionals in affected regions would have the necessary equipment to keep them safe.

Through the hard work of individuals like Dr. Jim Strong and organizations such as the Sierra Leone Nationals Association and African communities of Manitoba inc., we are making a difference and helping those who need it most.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members help me in thanking these dedicated members of our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Don Kroeker

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of this House to Mr. Don Kroeker, who was inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame earlier this year. Don's many years of dedicated service and leadership and agriculture community involvement and volunteerism set a high standard and stands as an example to others.

In 1957, Don married Eileen McGill, and together they raised five daughters, Wendy, Kathy, Diane, Cindy and Donna. Don and Eileen moved to the family farm where he became manager of farming operations with Kroeker Farms Limited.

Don's entrepreneurialism and initiative ensured further growth in the farm family business, led to improvements in agricultural practices. Under Don's leadership, potato production at Kroeker Farms grew from 500 acres to 5,000 acres, and Kroeker became the largest potato producer in Canada. Don's innovation led him to introduce the first hydro-cooled sweet corn production in Manitoba.

Hard work, industry and commitment to community are hallmarks of Don's record of service. Whether it's through his church and faith-based organizations or corporate board or agricultural association, Don lent his time and talent. He served on the board of directors for Peak of the Market as well as organizations, including Keystone Vegetable Producers Association and the Manitoba Potato Council.

* (14:50)

Locally, Don helped to develop Winkler Bowling Lanes, the Southland Mall, the Winkler Home for the Aged and the Winkler Airport Board. He was an honorary chair for the Bethel Heritage Park, served at the Mennonite Brethren Church in Winkler, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada, Bible Centred Ministries International and is the current chair of the New Earth Agro.

Don earned the Distinguished Service Award from the Prairie Potato Council and honorary life membership in the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists and a Certificate of Merit by the U of M.

I'm honoured to congratulate Don on his induction into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

World Ultimate Club Championships

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply proud today to tell the story of our province's exceptional showing at the World Ultimate Club championships held this past summer in Lecco, Italy. No less than three different ultimate Frisbee teams from Manitoba qualified for these world championships. Their names are General Strike in the open men's division, Fusion in the women's, and my own team, Flood, in the older masters division. Manitoba athletes also competed as members of Canada's national junior teams in both the men's and women's tournaments.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the honour and privilege of competing at the national level in three different sports so far in my life, but running out onto the field at that first time in a world championship with the maple leaf proudly on my shoulder was a special moment I am not going to forget anytime soon. All of the training, the practices and, yes, even the endless wind sprints and the stupid burpees were a small price to pay for the chance to compete for your country against the best athletes in the world in a sport that you love. I can't thank my teammates and especially our team captains for that opportunity.

So how did we do on the world scene? Well, all three Manitoba squads came back sporting winning records against the best in the world. Both Strike and Fusion finished in the top 10. My own team, Flood, came within a whisker of top eight, and then battled hard for a top 15 finish.

Manitoba players on the women's junior national team won the silver medal while the junior boys won the gold. High-quality ultimate Frisbee is coming soon to Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, because we have just been named the host of next year's national championships. This August tournament will bring over 2,000 participants and \$2 million in sports tourism activity to our province. Winnipeg Ultimate Park in Maple Grove will be the venue, a facility, I'm proud to say, became reality with financial support from our government.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking and congratulating all of the Manitoba athletes who competed at the world championships in Italy and allow their names to stand in Hansard as part of the official record and archives of our fine province.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to include the names that the honourable member referenced in his member's statement? *[Agreed]*

General Strike Roster: Yacine Bara, Kevin Boreskie, Cam Burden, Jordan Chochinov, Ty Chochinov, Mike Chura, Sam Creed, Brad Davidson, Dan Desrosiers, Ty Ganes, Zach Goldberg, Jesse Greenberg, Bailey Herron, Dean Johnstone, Scott Jones, Ethan Kovacs, Jordan Kovacs, Mark Lloyd, Matt Loxley, Jon Luk, Josh Magnusson, Kyle Parker, Daniel Plourde, Weichi Truong, Scott Warwaruk, Hugh Wichenko, Brendan Wilson, Elliot Wong.

Fusion Roster: Alexa Kovacs, Bailey Armstrong, Carmen Lee, Carrie Dunford, Cayla Mooney,

Cheryl Coulter, Elan Chochinov, Emily Forrest, Emma Brooks, Erin McKinlay, Heidi Howes, Hillary Prescott, Kaiya Seaman, Karen Hatch, Kate Scarth, Krista Aitken, Laura Boman, Laura Hatch, Leah Parker, Meghan Marsland, Mel Stevens, Nicole Vidal, Paige McCullough, Robin Merasty, Samie Lovat, Taylor Rusnak, Tita Seaman.

Flood Roster: AJ Hunter, Brian Cruz, Cam Jones, Charlie Reed, Chris Kuypers, Clark Greenfield, Corey Draper, Corey Young, Dave Howes, David Campbell, Donovan Wiebe, Duane Poettcker, Eddsel Martinez, Ian Clegg, Jeff Yuen, Jeremy Kuypers, Jon Boman, Lee Crierie, Lee Davis, Mark Semenek, Mark Mutawe, Mike Morris, Rob Altemeyer, Rob Burns, Ryan Pilgrim, Tim O'Toole, Trevor Horvath.

Mr. Speaker: I believe, the honourable member for Brandon East—the honourable Minister of Municipal Government.

Remembering Clair Murray

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my condolences to the Murray family, Mildred, Doug, Paul, Danny, Chris and their families, for the loss of a husband, father, grandparent, great-grandparent and friend. Clair Murray passed away at his home in Brandon surrounded by loved ones on November 21st. Clair was an amazing man, a true patriarch in western Manitoba who will be greatly missed by all who knew him and all whose lives were touched by his engagement in our community.

Clair was born in Lyleton, Manitoba, moving to Souris shortly thereafter and served like so many prairie boys in the Royal Navy during World War II. After the war, Clair and his brother, Ewart, took over their dad's car dealership in Souris. Clair was a great businessman who had great people instincts. As the Murray family noted last week in the Brandon Sun, it was in Souris where Clair's lifelong love of buying and selling cars began. The car dealership thrived and began expanding, ultimately seeing the Murray Auto Group grow to over 30 dealerships across the country. Clair himself spent nearly 70 years in the auto industry, and his four sons all continue to run dealerships today. In fact, Clair never retired from his work and received a national award as the longest serving GM dealer in all of Canada.

Clair was a fine gentleman with many great qualities. Some of my fondest childhood memories are of playing with my best friend Danny, as we ran

amok through Clair and Millie's great rambling historic home on Victoria Avenue in Brandon. At Park Community Centre all the boys played hockey, a sport that was a great love of Clair's throughout his life. Along with hockey, Clair loved piloting his plane and enjoying hunting in the outdoors.

Clair loved his family deeply. Last April he and his wife Millie celebrated 60 years of marriage. Family time was very important to him and Sunday evening dinners, which I also had the occasion to enjoy from time to time as a child, were an ongoing part of Murray family gatherings throughout Clair's life. Many fond family member-memories were also made at the family home near Clear Lake.

Mr. Speaker, Brandon and western Manitoba lost one of its great men with the passing of Clair Murray. Our province is a greater place for having had him among us.

Thank you.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on a grievance.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak on a grievance.

My grievance is that, for 15 years, in their vain attempt to deflect from providing any real answers, NDP premiers and ministers have 'consinuously' misled the Legislature by putting false information on the record about the events of the 1990s.

In this session alone, the Premier (Mr. Selinger), short on current information, stood up and talked about federal cuts in transfer-fiscal transfers to Manitoba from when I was in Ottawa. This misinformed blast from the past was provided instead of answering questions directly, related to the responsibility his provincial NDP government has to this province today.

November 21st, as he has previously, the Premier talked about a 39 per cent reduction in funding. It's sad that the Premier and his party are so misinformed and so ready to use such inaccurate deception to attack others. I've spoken to correct the record before, and I will do it again.

Let us look at the record, the actual facts of federal transfers from the government of Canada to the province of Manitoba during the time I was in Ottawa. The baseline was the last budget of the federal Conservative government of Brian Mulroney

in 1993. The budget that year delivered a total transfer of \$1.636 billion to Manitoba. Equalization payments made up almost half of that amount, with \$801 million, that's straight from the Manitoba Public Accounts. A \$42-billion deficit had been handed on from the government of Brian Mulroney in 1993, creating an obvious challenge for the budgets of 1994-1995. What was actually done was to increase equalization transfers as a way to protect provinces like Manitoba, which were less well-off. This increase in equalization transfers was done even in the face of the very high deficit and debt that we, as a country, were facing then.

The equalization amount transferred to Manitoba went up in the first Liberal budget of 1994-95 from the baseline of \$801 million to \$1,080 million, an increase of \$279 million. Per capita transfers for health and social spending remained close to what they'd been the previous year. The result was that the overall transfer to Manitoba went up from a baseline of \$1.63 billion to \$1.904 billion, an increase of \$268 million to the total transfer. That's an increase of 16 per cent in the first year of the Liberal government in Ottawa in the 1990s and the total amount transferred; some decrease.

In fact, percentage-wise and in dollar amount, it still stands out as one of the larger one-year increases in federal transfers from Ottawa to Manitoba in history, and yet we have a Premier standing up with his government, trying to rewrite history and continually declare it never happened. More than that, they try to call this increase a drastic decrease.

'Aggressingly' attacking the deficit that all of Canada inherited from Brian Mulroney's government, the budgets of 1995 and '96 provided somewhat more modest levels of increase over the baseline in total transfers to Manitoba. These were increases of 15 and 9 per cent, respectively, above the baseline, with increases of 33 and 36 per cent respectively above the baseline in equalization transfers.

The equalization increase to Manitoba shielded the province from decreases elsewhere. In fact, through equalization, Manitoba received a much higher proportion of the dollars than with a transfer done in other ways. Equalization transfers also gave Manitoba the flexibility to prioritize the transfer dollars as the provincial government saw fit.

By 1997-98, the budget in the last year I was in Ottawa, the total transfer had risen to 22 per cent above the baseline, and the federal equalization

component of the transfers had risen from \$801 million in the baseline year to \$1.164 billion—a \$363 million or 45 per cent increase.

A 45 per cent increase in federal equalization transfers to Manitoba in the four years I was in Ottawa, and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has called this a decrease of 39 per cent.

* (15:00)

These numbers come straight from the Public Accounts of the Province of Manitoba, so anyone, including the Premier, can assess their accuracy. It's time the Premier and his ministers recognize the absurdity of the mendacious claims and stopped hiding behind a misrepresentation of the fact.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but by 2005 the time of the last budget of the Liberal government in Ottawa, the total federal transfer to Manitoba had grown to 3.103 billion, 90 per cent above the baseline, the last Conservative budget before Liberals came to power in Ottawa.

Indeed, a very strong case can be made that the federal government transfers from Ottawa to Manitoba from 1993 to 2006 were critical dollars that helped the Manitoba government a great deal during this period, and, of course, much of that time it was an NDP government. The Premier, sadly, has a penchant for distorting fact, and this penchant has gone on long enough.

The Premier and his ministers are crafty at times, for sure, and those who watch question period know these inaccurate attacks are sent my way when the Premier and his ministers don't have any real answers to my questions, which, of course, is sadly quite often. But today I put the facts on the record. The facts that the Premier and his ministers should know but attempt to change, but they are the facts and they can be found, as I have said, in the Public Accounts.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is one other facet of erroneous NDP math spin, which also warrants addressing. Their attempt to diminish the roles of the review of science and technology policy, which I had a hand in and which had large increases in the federal science and technology budgets. The review I led was the turning point to move to the largest ever increases in funding for science through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council,

and the Medical Research Council, now the Canadian institutes for health research.

The numbers speak for themselves. For the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, funding was 101 million in '93-94. Following the review I led, the funding increased by 469 per cent to reach 575 million in 2005-2006. The situation for the Canadian institutes for health research and NSERC are similar, with increases of 306 and 173 per cent respectively. The overall average increase for all three councils was 260 per cent.

Perhaps now, after over 15 years, instead of a creative though completely inaccurate journey down memory lane, this NDP government can focus on the prevent-present and the province of Manitoba instead of on the past.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any further grievances?

The honourable member for Steinbach, on a grievance.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a grievance.

I want to put a few words on the record concerning a significant issue in my constituency. It's something that has been a problem for the last several months impacting those who are older and those who have mobility issues within the Steinbach constituency.

It's an issue that I raised with the previous Health minister and the previous minister of Finance, both of who gave me an assurance that it is something that was going to be addressed, but, unfortunately, both of them are no longer in their roles, Mr. Speaker. The Bethesda Hospital entrance was redone this summer. I know members opposite sometimes call it a new hospital; it's not actually a new hospital. It's a new entrance for the emergency room and for the general entrance for the hospital.

But I think for the first time—people tell me in the first time in 20 years a hospital entrance has been built that isn't a ground-level entrance. That means that for somebody to enter the hospital they have to climb a series of stairs or go up a narrow and steep ramp, Mr. Speaker. Doctors have spoken out about this in our community. Certainly, residents have spoken out, and many people who are older and who have mobility issues and, in fact, even some who don't have those issues have said that it's caused them to either not be able to get into the hospital or

not to be able to get their loved ones into the hospital.

In short, this government has built a hospital that sick and—people and those who have disabilities can't get into, and that's unfathomable. And, while I appreciate that the former minister of Health and the former minister of Finance both gave me an assurance that this would be addressed, it hasn't been addressed.

I want to read into the record only some. I don't have time in the few 10 minutes I have to read all of the emails that I've gotten, but all of these have been forwarded to the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady), and so this is not something that I haven't shared with members, but I want to put them on the public record because it is significant.

And I'll read from different comments. I watched an elderly lady trying to get up the stairs shortly after the front entrance opened. She stopped midway for a breather and was barely able to make it to the second set. This was under good weather conditions. These stairs are also quite narrow. I have an aunt who can walk on flat surfaces, but there's no way she can get up these stairs because of her bad knees. She doesn't have to use a wheelchair yet. How are these kinds of people expected to get into the hospital? That was one comment.

I'll read another one. My friend uses this entrance daily as she visits her sister in a wheelchair who is a patient there. When she first told me about this brand new entrance she said that it was slightly difficult walking and that it was impossible where she struggled up the stairs, and to her—and to wheel her sister along that entrance was impossible. This just doesn't make sense at all.

Mr. Speaker, this is another email that I received from a constituent. My dear mother-in-law has been in hospital for seven weeks and taking her out for walks has been a challenge. When leaving the entrance to the hospital, the wheelchair ramp is narrow and difficult to meet/pass a person walking, let alone another wheelchair. I am very physically able and my mother-in-law is only 130 pounds, and pushing her up is another challenge. I am able to, now that the ramp is dry and free of ice, although when winter sets in, can you imagine? It will only get more difficult, and, of course, that was sent to me before the onset of winter.

Here's another email I received from a constituent regarding the new entrance at the

Bethesda hospital, which is a second-floor entrance. My husband and I are both seniors, each over 80 years old. Our walking mobility is very limited. Last week the doctor told me that I needed an X-ray at the Bethesda hospital. I said, how will I do that? I guess the doctors don't have an answer either. It was suggested that I go to the hospital, wait at the bottom of the ramp and have someone go up to tell the front desk that there was someone below who needs a wheelchair. I was lucky. When my husband went to park the van, a friend walked by on the sidewalk and asked whether I was sick and needed a wheelchair. She walked up the steps and came down with the wheelchair and wheeled me up, saying that it was a steep—a very steep incline. She took me all the way to the X-ray department and went on her way. We were on our own now. My husband worked hard to avoid a runaway descending the steep ramp. The design of the front entrance of the hospital denies people with disabilities and need to access this facility.

I'll read another comment, Mr. Speaker, from another constituent. I've not had to enter the hospital with the newly constructed entrance and I'm grateful for that. Many of my friends, however, have and some had to go back as they could not walk the stairs and not—nor the ramp, after all, it is an entrance to a hospital not a physical fitness centre.

Here's another one from another constituent, Mr. Speaker. The ramp itself creates much difficulty for many reasons. Individuals must walk single file. No one may pass by one another person walking up or down the ramp because it is too narrow. I would assume that the length of the ramp was required due to the height that it has to reach to meet code. This is completely impractical for the elderly to do and to utilize the walkway without becoming entirely winded in the process. The alternative to the ramp is a 14-riser set of stairs that are also much too narrow to properly assist anyone moving up or down, and then she relays a story. The previous time when we were leaving the hospital from a visit, my mom began running after her walker because the incline was such that her walker was running ahead of her and she was unable to figure out how to use the brakes effectively. Thus, I positioned myself in between them to be able to hang onto my dad in front of me if necessary and break my mother's runaway walker if necessary.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind members of the House, this is a multi-million dollar entrance that the government built and was—has been bragging

about for, well, for a number of years actually. In fact, they didn't even have a grand entrance—or a grand opening because—I imagine because of all the complaints because it's not a ground level entry. I mean, we have the government who says that they're so concerned about people who have disability issues. We had the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) talk about accessibility yesterday and I agree with her in her comments, and yet they build a hospital that sick people and those who are living with a disability can't get into because it's a second floor entrance.

* (15:10)

I'll read a couple of more. This is from another constituent. I just had both of my parents in the hospital and there is—and, no, there is no way to get up that ramp. I had a gentleman get me—my father up for me. The other times I struggled with it. I also have bad knees and the stairs are really difficult for me to get up. I have to rest every other step.

I'll read a couple more stories; I know my time is running short, Mr. Speaker.

The last four and a half months I've been taking my 90-year-old neighbour to the Bethesda Regional Health Centre in Steinbach to see her 92-year-old sister. These two sisters relied on each other for almost everything. Many times my neighbour would painfully struggle up the long ramp with her walker to see her sister. Her legs could hardly carry her. Some days she was too tired to go, knowing the difficulty she would have getting into the building. On rainy days she stayed home because there's no roof or shelter by the entrance.

One early morning the hospital called to say her sister had passed away. My neighbour, once again, bravely began the journey up that long ramp to say her last good bye to her beloved sister.

And one more, Mr. Speaker; I know I won't have time for any more after that.

My aunt has been in Bethesda Hospital rehab for nearly six months and we like to visit her weekly. Being able-bodied we find the stairs hard to manage. I can only imagine what people who have problems must go through. Having watched people use the wheel-chair entrance I can see how hard it is for them as well.

I heard a comment from someone that they no longer visit a patient because of the difficulty getting into the entrance.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is a brand new entrance that has cost millions of dollars, but the government built it not as a zero-entry level. You have to go up a set of stairs or a very narrow and steep ramp to be able to get into the hospital. What use is it to have a brand new entrance for a hospital when sick people and those who have a difficult time with mobility can't get into that hospital?

And, you know, I know that this is a partisan place sometimes and the government will talk about how they've built this new entrance—sometimes they call it a new hospital, but they have nothing to be proud of, Mr. Speaker. You can't get into the hospital if you have a difficult time walking or you have to have great assistance to get into it. I know that doctors have contacted this government. I know that patients have contacted the government. I contacted the former minister of Health. I contacted the former Finance minister. They both, to their credit, recognized it as a problem. They both said that it had to be fixed, but it's been six months now and people still can't get into the hospital.

So, I mean, there is great lip service to talk about how important it is, you know, to have accessibility, and I think that that's great and I think that is important, and we support accessibility, Mr. Speaker, and we want people to be able to have full mobility and full accessibility in our society, but they just built a hospital that makes it difficult for sick people and disabled people and those living with mobility issues to get into the hospital.

So I'm pleading with this government—I know they have a lot of other things going on, Mr. Speaker, but this is something that everybody recognizes as a problem. It's hurting people who are sick, it's hurting people who are living with disabilities and this has to be addressed sooner than later.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any further grievances?

Seeing none, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Steve Ashton (Government House Leader): Committee announcements, first of all, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to announce the following committee

meetings: The Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Tuesday, December 16, 2014, at 2 p.m., to consider the Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

The Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Friday, December 19, 2014, at 2 p.m., to consider the following reports: Annual Report of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013; and the Annual Report of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

I'm also pleased to announce a meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts which will meet on Monday, December 8, 2014, at 2 p.m., to consider the following reports: first of all, the Auditor General's Report, Operations of the Office, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014; and, second of all, the Auditor General's Report, Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated January 2013.

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* * *

Mr. Speaker: Are there any—honourable Government House Leader.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask if you can please call the following bills in this order: Bill 9, 5, 8, 2, 7, 3, 11, 6, 10 and 12, all at second reading, and then followed by the report stage for Bill 71.

Mr. Speaker: Make sure I have the numbers correct here.

We have—been announced that we'll be calling bills in the following order: bills 9, 5, 8, 2, followed by bills 7, 3, 11, 6, 10 and 12. That's for second readings. And then we'll—proceeding to report stage of Bill 71.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 9—The Chartered Professional Accountants Act

Mr. Speaker: So we'll start by calling Bill 9, the chartered professional accounts—accountants act.

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Allum), that Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Dewar: It's my pleasure to put a few comments on the record regarding Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act.

Mr. Speaker, across Canada, accountants are merging together into a new chartered professional accountant designation, or CPA. This will replace the three types of accountants that currently work across Canada: chartered accountants, certified management accountants and certified general accountants.

Mr. Speaker, across—in provinces across Canada, the accounting profession is requesting legislators to introduce legislation that will introduce the CPA designation and merge together the regulators for accountants. For Manitoba, Bill 9 responds to that request and will see three—7,000 CAs, CMAs and CGAs operate under three separate regulate—self-regulatory bodies will be united together as CPAs under a single self-regulatory body established to oversee the profession.

This will simplify and streamline accountants' services for Manitoba with a single type of accountant. It will also ensure accountants in Manitoba continue to meet national professional standards. Our government has also ensured Bill 9 responds to advice we've received this summer through a public consultation process from

those who use or offer accounting services, including bookkeepers, small business, non-profit organizations, charities and organizations in smaller rural and northern communities.

Historically the accounting designations have been governed by their own self-regulatory acts. These—the new act will replace four existing accounting acts, including The Chartered Accountants Act, The Certified Management Accountants Act, The Certified General Accountants Act and The Certified Public Accountants Act. These acts will be repealed on the—under the proclamation of the new act.

This bill follows the creation of the Chartered Professional Accountants Act of Canada and is consistent with merger initiatives taking place in provinces all across Canada. The merger has received support from members of the three existing professional accounting bodies. When this bill is proclaimed, the 7,000 members in good standing with one of the three professional accounting bodies will automatically become members of CPA Manitoba.

CPA Manitoba will be required to carry out its duties in a manner that serves the public interest, ensuring that all professional accountants in Manitoba meet common educational requirements and standards. Bill 9 ensures that responsibilities and authorities of CPA Manitoba are consistent with other self-regulatory bodies in Manitoba, including for registered members a code of professional conduct, professional—excuse me, professional representation on the board and a 'disciplinary' process.

* (15:20)

A new component of Manitoba's accounting legislation is now—will now be—will now regulate the public accounting services. The bill defines public accountant services, which includes accounting audits, reviews and notices to readers, with financial statements that will be used by a third party, all performed in accordance with the CPA Canada Handbook.

It will also restrict undertaking audits and reviews to only registered CPAs operating with a permit who have the training to perform work in accordance with CPA Canada standards. As a result of public consultations held earlier this year, a number of measures have been designed into the legislation to assure that reserve public accountant

services will not harm the Manitoba economy. Compiling financial statements will not be restricted, which means bookkeepers and other financial service workers can continue to offer this service. Further exemptions are included, such as those who are offering public accounting services as a volunteer. Exemptions can also be granted to those already offering public accounting services before this bill becomes law. Most financial services, including compiling financial statements, basic bookkeeping, preparing tax returns are not restricted now or Bill 9, which means anyone can continue to offer these services.

This approach strikes the right balance between ensuring professional accountants are held to a national standard and protecting the public interest by ensuring small-business charities and non-profit organizations are not negatively affected by restrictions on public accounting services.

Mr. Speaker, it is our hope that this bill will be passed in early spring to ensure accountants will have time to finalize the bylaws and establish CPA Manitoba and CPA designation in time for their inaugural graduating class of CPAs expected in the fall of 2015.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak to Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act, and following my good friend the Minister of Finance and member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) speaking on this bill.

The fact of the matter is there'll be a lot of happy people in the country and probably happy accountants too, but certainly happy people in the province to learn of this legislation because I'm sure that many, many people in the House here will recognize a time in their lives when they've been forced to deal with finding an accountant and—only to find that the type of accountant they're looking for is not the right one. And I can think of a number of instances, more recently, even the civic election, when we were out looking for an accountant for our candidate, our local candidate, we had to specifically look at what exactly was required, what sort of accountant was required and then make some phone calls and find out whether the accountant we were interested in had that particular designation or not.

Also, for example, the real estate trust accounts and so on, they require a certain type of accountant, and it's a minefield looking through trying to find the proper accountant that fits. So this, I think, is going to be good for the public. It's going to leave the

public a little less confused and in the past, and I think it's going to be good for the accountants too. And I note the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) pointed out some possibilities where there could be some conflicts here and how there is a resolution in advance of those conflicts. For example, currently there's a number of people who are doing financial statements for non-profits and other organizations who do not have the designations, and that will not be affected by this legislation. In fact, compiling financial statements will not be restricted, which means bookkeepers and other financial services workers can continue to offer the service.

There is further exemptions included, such as those offering public accounting services such as volunteers or in academia. The most financial services including compiling financial statements and including basic bookkeeping and especially the preparation of tax returns are not restricted now, nor will they under Bill 9, which means that anybody can continue to offer these services. And everyone knows that there are a lot of income tax services that spring up every tax season to offer service to the public, and they should be rest assured that they will not be affected in any way in their—what they've been doing in the past.

Mr. Speaker, this approach strikes the right balance between ensuring professional accountants are held to national standards and protecting the public interest by ensuring small businesses, charities, non-profits are not negatively affected by the restrictions on public accounting services.

So, Mr. Speaker, this bill is certainly supported by the profession and, I think, will be widely supported by the public, and so I'd encourage the members of the House to move this along and pass this legislation.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 5—The Police Services Amendment Act
(First Nation Safety Officers)**

Mr. Speaker: We will now proceed to call Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers).

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 5, The Police

Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance, that Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I—well, perhaps I'll send this back to the minister, and then he has to table the statement by His Honour.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, I'll try that again.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Water Stewardship, that Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable minister.

It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the contents of the bill, and the message is tabled.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to speak to this bill, to build on the work of the member from Minto, my immediate predecessor, and to continue to promote Manitoba's place as the most progressive government in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends The Police Services Act to enable First Nations to enter into an agreement with Manitoba, Canada, and the local policing authority to establish First Nations Safety Officer programs in their communities. This bill sets out the framework required for these programs.

Mr. Speaker, as announced in the Throne Speech, Manitoba is committed to working with First Nations to address public safety concerns resulting from the federal government's unilateral decision to

eliminate the Band Constable Program effective March 31, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we were very upset over the federal decision and the deadline, but none of us on this side of the House were prepared to simply stand by and do nothing. The deadline and unilateral termination of the program necessitated an immediate legislative solution on the part of this government, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're putting in place the first building block to a new First Nations public safety partnership in Manitoba.

Sadly, the federal government has made it their business to balance their budget on the backs of Manitobans. First, we were faced with historic cuts to legal aid. Once a 50-50 split between the province and the federal government, Manitoba now pays 77 per cent of that program.

* (15:30)

Mr. Speaker, the First Nations policing program has been around since October 2006, and yet there has been a freeze in federal funding for any First Nation policing initiatives since.

The Drug Treatment Court has been an incredibly successful program. It's been operating for nine years, 84 per cent of the folks who go through that program are successful. The federal government has given us no indication that they can-intend to continue that program and, in fact, it is said to expire in March 2015. We're still waiting for confirmation, official confirmation from the minister-federal Minister of Justice about whether he intends to continue that very essential program.

This program, The Police Services Amendment Act relating to First Nations safety officers, reflects feedback from First Nation leaders for a program that will respond to the unique needs of First Nation communities. I had the honour to speak with the grand chief of AMC, the grand chief from MKO, the grand chief from SCO, prior to tabling the bill to indicate that we will be tabling the bill in the House. All were pleased that the government of Manitoba were stepping forward. All were pleased to get on with the business of negotiating agreements going forward as this is a simply-framework legislation that we're introducing today.

Expanding and promoting public safety has and continues to be a top priority of this government, Mr. Speaker. Since 1999 we have funded 300 additional police personnel from across the province, adding

57 personnel in First Nation communities, including 14 Dakota Ojibway police officers and 43 First Nations community policing officers. The First Nation safety officer program that would be established by this bill, builds on our reputation of investing in First Nation policing and public safety initiatives representing a national first in First Nation policing and Aboriginal justice programing.

The amendments before the House ensure flexibility so that each individual program developed under the act can be tailored to the specific needs identified by the particular First Nation. Mr. Speaker, the bill begins by outlining the purpose of First Nation safety officers which is to work in collaboration with local police to enhance public safety in First Nations. Their role will include implementing crime prevention strategies and initiatives, connecting persons in need with social service and community resources and maintaining a visible presence within the community. Based on consultations with each participating First Nation, First Nation safety officers may also enforce band bylaws and specific provincial statutes identified by regulation. If authorized, First Nation safety officers may also assist the local police service with non-criminal matters. The bill also clearly states that First Nation safety officers have peace officer status when enforcing political-provincial statutes.

Each First Nation safety officer program must be based on an agreement between a First Nation or entity representing a group of First Nations, the local policing authority, the government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada. The agreement will address the operation of the program, including management, financing, the direction and supervision of First Nation safety officers and the relationship between the local policing authority and the First Nation safety officers and, finally, the process for dealing with complaints.

Under the bill, First Nation safety officers will be First Nation employees. First Nations will appoint First Nation safety officers and will be responsible for ensuring that they perform their duties and exercise their powers in a proper manner. First Nations will also be liable for the actions of their First Nation safety officers. Rules outlining qualifications, training, duties, equipment and uniforms will also be prescribed in regulation.

Mr. Speaker, amendments in this bill expand on our government's commitment to enhancing public safety in every community, whether it be in an urban,

rural or First Nation. First Nation safety officer programs uphold the fundamental principles enshrined in The Police Services Act and will be another public safety initiative that is responsive to the needs of Manitoba's First Nation communities.

These amendments are necessary because of the federal government's unilateral decision to eliminate the Band Constable Program in March 2015. Given this deadline and the real public safety consequences which flow from it, I look forward to the support of every member of this House in expediting passage of this important legislation so that we can work towards implementation of this urgently needed First Nations safety officer program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having the opportunity to speak to the minister about this legislation. I know that there's going to be a theme this afternoon about urgency and the desire to pass bills. I want the members to know that we don't—on this side of the House, we don't pass bills the way they pass—or the way they select their leader, haphazardly and without any sort of set rules or definitions. We actually review legislation and then we go forward and we talk to people about it. We bring it to stakeholders. We actually consult with people. I know that's a—that's quite the concept for the members opposite.

It's important to remember, Mr. Speaker, that—I'm going to just pick a date, and let's assume we came back to session on March 1st—that would mean that there would be a total of four hours allotted in nine months for debate on bills from this government—four hours of debate on bills over nine months. Now, I know, maybe for the government, that's hard work. I know the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), when he's not trying to get to Ottawa and being unsuccessful in that, he's—he thinks that that's a lot of work, you know, working four hours in nine months.

We will do what people would expect us to do on legislation: look at it, review it, have a discussion with some of the stakeholders and, maybe, maybe if the government, once they finish storming the castle this weekend and over the months ahead, on their leadership, maybe they'll actually call the House back in a decent time in the spring, and then we can go ahead and have the discussion on this and other pieces of legislation.

But, when you only are willing as a government to sit and debate legislation for four hours in nine months, don't try to say that you've done anything in terms of a democratic process. And if that's going to be the theme for the rest of these bills, then I welcome the Government House Leader (Mr. Ashton) to recall this House on Monday, which I don't think that he's going to do. But four hours in nine months is not an acceptable way to run a government or to run a province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It's a pleasure to listen to the Justice critic for the Progressive Conservative Party speak on this bill and not say one word about the protection of public safety in First Nations communities. I say shame on the member for Steinbach.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are entitled to be safe in their homes and in their communities, and providing public safety across this province may look different in different communities. It looks different in the city of Winnipeg or other urban centres, in rural communities and also in First Nations communities, and we know that it is a great challenge to provide service, to provide public safety in remote First Nations, many of which, I'll let the members opposite know, are not even connected to an all-weather road network.

And since 1969—since 1969, Mr. Speaker—there has been a band constable program in existence in this province, a program created by the federal government to provide for band constables trained to standards set by the federal government, trained by individuals acceptable to the federal government and paid for by the federal government, providing this first line of public safety in First Nations communities. That has continued from 1969 until, without any notice, the federal Minister of Public Safety, by a letter sent to me early this year and to First Nations across the province, said that program would be terminated, effective March 31st, 2015. Shame on the federal government for not caring about public safety in First Nations. They talk a lot about law, but they sure don't talk anything about order.

And, Mr. Speaker, these individuals who are band constables do not have an easy job. There is no question about that. Many of the communities do have challenges, have stresses, and these individuals are far removed from the closest RCMP detachment. Many times, it is the band constables who are called upon to break up situations where domestic violence

may be taking place. It is these individuals who may be breaking up a house party and pouring out illegal liquor to prevent chaos and damage from happening to those communities. It may even be these band constables who are pulling intoxicated youth out of a snowbank, saving their feet or even saving their life.

* (15:40)

And, Mr. Speaker, that program has gone on for 45 years, and it's only this current Conservative government in Ottawa that has decided, unilaterally, to terminate this program. And I would have thought the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) would have said something about it in his opportunity to speak on this bill, but, unfortunately, he chooses to play partisan games.

We are concerned with protecting people in First Nations communities, and that's why this Minister of Justice (Mr. Allum) has introduced this legislation and is working with First Nations and the RCMP to make sure that in light of what the federal government has done, that we are doing our best to protect First Nations people. Because even though the federal government may not see it this way, they are Manitobans and they are Canadians and they're entitled to the protection that they deserve.

So, with this unhappy situation that's been thrust upon Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Oh, you've got an unhappy situation, all right.

Mr. Swan: Well, I know the member for Steinbach still thinks this is a funny issue. I don't find the federal government taking on northern people to be funny at all. And, Mr. Speaker, we will make the best out of this situation, and we will work with First Nations people and leaders in those communities to come up with community safety officers that will continue to play a part in preventing crime as best we can, to try and work with other agencies, with other groups to try to prevent chaos and crime from happening in these communities.

And I'm sorry that the members of the opposition don't get it, but, you know what, we've had a little bit of talk of dissent in this Legislature, but what we know, Mr. Speaker, is if you're a Conservative, you had better not open your mouth and question anything that's done by the federal government. And it's a shame that these members of the Conservative caucus will not stand up for Manitobans; they'll sit down because they've been told to by Stephen Harper and the Conservatives.

So I support this bill. I know every member of the Legislature that is a New Democrat supports this bill. I would suggest the member for Steinbach listen and get onside.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Goertzen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I'm confused because, on one hand, the minister is saying how important this bill is, but, on the other hand, he quit Cabinet as the Minister of Justice instead of actually sticking around and having to introduce.

We don't cut and run like this minister of justice does, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Steve Ashton (Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I must admit I missed part of what the Opposition House Leader was talking about. He talked about quitting. I wonder if he's talking about his leader, the Leader of the Opposition who's quit more levels of politics and more positions than anything. But I suspect either way, whether he was talking about the Leader of the Opposition or not, he knows and you know that was not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Steinbach, I did not hear a reference to a particular point of order or rule that had been breached, and so I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order. And the matters that were discussed during the point of order perhaps would be better left to the debate of the House itself. So, respectfully, there is no point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Now we'll return to the business at hand, debating of the bill, and the honourable member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm—I don't want to have any part of this brouhaha, but what I do want to do is put on the record my support for Bill 5 and the importance of this bill for some of the communities in my constituency, and I'm talking about Tadoule, Lac Brochet, Brochet, South Indian Lake, Nelson House, Black Sturgeon and Pukatawagan region.

All these regions were left in the cold when the federal government said they were not going to support the Band Constable Program. They were wondering what's going to happen. It takes a while for the RCMP to get to some of these communities; it might take two or three days. And so the importance of having the community safety officers is very important to these communities. So I'm glad our government stepped up and realized the importance of this and is running a program to make sure that things are co-ordinated and looked after in these communities.

I think also what we have to look at is—and the member from Minto pointed it out, how the—our opposition members here have been quiet about the federal cuts in our province, but, like I say, with a program like this, they talk about—and the member from Seine River mentioned it yesterday, about acceptance, about love and yet, you know what, they're the party of me. We're the party of we. They're the party of me. And it's very, very important that we stand up for all Manitobans. We stand up for all Manitobans, the ones in the North, the ones in the south, west, east, not just where your own community is. So I think it's very important that you realize that we're standing up for all Manitobans, and this bill, Bill 5, recognizes the stance we have in our party with the First Nations and how we'll work together in making a great future for them.

The First Nations program would be established by this bill, builds on the reputation, investing in First Nations policing and public safety initiatives. This is important. The bill outlines the purpose of the First Nations safety officers, which is to work with local police to enhance public safety. Their role will include—and again this is so important—implementing crime prevention strategies and initiatives, connecting persons in need with social services and community resources and maintaining a visible presence within the community.

You got to realize that some of these communities are as big as, let's say, Carman—okay?—and they don't have an RCMP office there. Some do; some don't. So, when you have communities the size of 1,500 to 3,000 people that don't have community officers, things can get out of hand. And so, when the federal government stopped the program, it's like—you know what?—we only care about a certain segment of the population. You people in the North, forget it. And that's why this bill is so important and it recognized the importance of our province—of our

province and the NDP standing up for the people of the North.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me put in a few words on the record. Thanks.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a little bit about this bill, which is important to the safety and the well-being of many First Nations communities.

I think it's important to set on the record, first of all, that there are some pretty good traditions and pretty good abilities in First Nations police force. The DOTC police force has a pretty good record, not without, you know, blemishes and some problems. But, quite frankly, it has stood up and worked well in a number of different communities, and I think it's generally perceived that having people in the community having the responsibility to look after policing in the communities is a—has been a very positive step.

And so that—we should look at the importance of this legislation, which sets up a—something which is similar to the cadet corps in Winnipeg in First Nations communities where they would like it. And this is a circumstance where we should be supportive of the first—sorry—we should be supportive of First Nations communities. And we also need at this juncture—given that the funding for and the operation of the current program will end March 31st, we need to be in a position that this bill is passed by March 31st.

It is surprising, in fact, that with the number of pieces of urgent legislation that this government—that are needed—that this government chose to bring us back on November the 20th instead of when I called for, which was in September, so that we wouldn't have to be in a panic or a rush—the—with dealing with legislation like this. You know, it's extraordinary that the government seemingly has brought this in at the very last minute—has allocated one day—one afternoon for discussion of an item which is as important as this.

And then, today, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) wouldn't even say when we're going to come back. We don't even know—we don't even know—whether we're going to come back before March 31st. We should've had this planned properly. There—this at least, presumably, should be able to get past second reading, but I—you know, with the kind of operation that the NDP government is running, I—you know, I

think it's probably unlikely that it'll even get past second reading today.

* (15:50)

You know, there are those of us who would be ready to sit next week and try to move along some of the things which are pretty important. You know, among those being bills dealing with, you know, preventing the problems of zebra mussels from spreading, which clearly we should have been back in September for—*[interjection]* Well, I mean, I'm just offering to the government that I'm ready to come back if they would like, if they're serious about being able to make sure that this is in place by March 31st.

You know, I, for one, am ready to be here and I just want to make sure that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Allum) is aware of that, that he has at least one person in the opposition who's ready to co-operate and move this forward. And there may be others. I don't know.

But, certainly, you know, the importance—this bill emphasizes the importance of having sittings in the fall which are long enough to deal with legislation and move legislation like this further along and get it through second readings so that we can then have—while we're not in session, we could have the committee meetings and have hearings and give people time to come in and lots of notice and then we could do the third reading when we come back in March. That would be a logical way to handle this.

And, certainly, when you have legislation like this, which has a very clear timeline and a need to make sure that there is a legal framework for safety and for security in First Nations communities, there should be no hesitation on the part of any MLA to be ready to help out and make sure that this is looked at and scrutinized, that it's actually what is the very best that we can put forward, in terms of legislation, and that we have people from the First Nations communities who've got experience in policing in First Nations communities to talk to us about the importance of this bill at committee stage. And I think that it would provide for some members an important education on the role of policing in First Nations communities and what First Nations communities themselves are doing because I think that that would be something that, you know, many, many members aren't as fully aware as they could be about what's happening in First Nations communities and why this is so important.

So, Mr. Speaker, having risen to talk in particular about the importance of moving this forward so it can be scrutinized carefully at committee stage, having talked about the importance of organizing the affairs of the Legislature so that we're able to operate in a reasonable fashion and that we're able to have sessions which are long enough and complete the business of the House, those are the major points that I wanted to make.

And I look forward to continuing discussion on this and other measures as we proceed through the rest of the afternoon, and whatever happens on Monday or next week, if it happens at all.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Martin), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 8—The Conservation Officers Act

Mr. Speaker: We move on to debate of Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable—the Attorney General (Mr. Allum) that Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act; Loi sur les agents de conservation, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General, that Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act, be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, Bill 8 will, for the first time, officially and formally recognize the Conservation Officers Service of Manitoba and will provide its officers the authority to protect natural resources and the environment as well as the safety of its citizens.

The Conservation Officers Service represents the third largest armed law enforcement agency in this province. Historically, known as game wardens or forest rangers or fisheries officers, and, of course,

natural resource officers, conservation officers have since evolved into a modern law enforcement officer force whose role now extends far beyond hunting and fishing issues to ensure compliance with a variety of provincial and federal statutes, including, of course, park safety and security.

Bill 8 will officially change the designated title of natural resource officer to conservation officer. I understand that about 35 years ago the Manitoba park ranger service was amalgamated with the Manitoba conservation officer service. At that time they became entitled natural resource officers.

But, Mr. Speaker, the public really never got around to that name change. All these years later officers have asked, and we have listened to their request, that the name change be made. It fits and it's our assertion that the conservation officer designation must now stay. I will certainly welcome back the conservation officer. Indeed, that would be consistent with most other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation also enables the setting in law of standards and training requirements needed to be a conservation officer, and the bill also includes provisions for the establishment of a code of conduct. The code of conduct will be developed in consultation with the Manitoba natural resource officer association as well as the union, a code of conduct to deal with such issues as discreditable conduct, including discrimination, for example, or harassment, complaint suppression, profane language, neglect of duty, it could deal with uniform and other dress standards, vehicle operation, equipment issues, for example.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation also enables a formal complaints process, and we have to recognize that, historically, complaints about the conduct of conservation officers were dealt with the same as a complaint about any other departmental staff person. But we know that the public rightfully holds conservation officers to a higher standard. This legislative scheme will facilitate, then, a complaint first of all, of course, to the regional office, so it can be dealt with locally at a first instance, then to the newly recognized chief conservation officer, and then to an outside review by the Department of Justice. And, of course, there's always the option of the complainant taking a matter to the Ombudsman as well. I should just add that Justice will have other oversight powers as well.

Conservation officers enforce all resource-based legislation relating to wildlife, forestry, parks, Crown

lands, and wildfires. They find poachers, issue summons, conduct investigations and testify in court. As the service evolved over time, changes include the establishment of a special investigations unit, the canine unit, and advanced recruitment and in-service training.

There is a need that the enforcement powers of conservation officers as peace officers be expressly provided by law and clearly articulated to reflect their specific function. Mr. Speaker, this bill formally recognizes conservation officers as law enforcement officers with the power—powers of police officers. It provides the authority for officers to enforce provisions of the Criminal Code and other provincial laws in the course of their duties as conservation officers.

Mr. Speaker, conservation officers need to apply the Criminal Code or other provincial laws, for example, The Highway Traffic Act or liquor and gaming legislation when their application is in regards to laying charges for things related to resource law enforcement or for public safety, for example, the provisions relating to public mischief, assaulting a peace officer, or evading a peace officer or failing to stop.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker, the bill would provide certainty that conservation officers have the required enforcement authority to deal with issues that may arise in the course of carrying out their conservation duties. It ensures officers have the authority to deal with issues of public mischief, assault, firearms offences, such as careless use or improper storage, and impaired driving. All of these actions increase both officer and public safety.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important that our peace officers, who, of course, are exposed to armed lawbreakers in the course of their responsibility for enforcing the laws regarding hunting, for example, deserve our full respect. They deserve to be protected by clear law so they can deliver their enforcement duties without fear or questioning about their authority. We have to recognize that the times are changing as it affects conservation officers. For example, the Charter now requires us to constantly rethink how well we can meet the risk of legal challenges. We know that natural resource officers are—or natural resources, of course, are always under pressure, and we need no ambiguities when it comes to the powers of those who protect Mother Earth and her bounty.

And, of course, there's going to be a lot more at stake for would-be poachers in the year ahead as the new restitution scheme, indeed, Canada's first restitution scheme, comes into force. As well, Mr. Speaker, our enforcement action is on the upswing. Our prosecutions, according to our annual reports, are up 29 per cent over the last decade, and, indeed, so far this year, even with respect to spotlighting, I understand that 18 charges have—in the works. That, Mr. Speaker, reminds us of one example of a dangerous encounter.

So, Mr. Speaker, the RCMP have historically been a partner with Manitoba Conservation and resource enforcement and public safety, and they support the confirmation of our officer authority.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Bill 8 outlines what conservation officers want, what the public expects and, as well, what the RCMP supports. I'm very pleased that the bill will ensure that the 119 protected NRO positions that comprise this important public service have the authority to fully protect and conserve this province's natural environments and the people who go out to enjoy them.

I look forward to all-party support for this legislation and the support of all parties in moving it along. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I move, seconded by the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that debate now be adjourned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Steinbach, seconded by honourable member for—whom? I missed that—*[interjection]*—the honourable member for Brandon West, that debate be adjourned. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

We now move on to second reading of Bill 7, The Public Schools Amendment Act. *[interjection]*

**Bill 2—The Public Schools Amendment Act
(Small Classes for K to 3)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move on to second reading of Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3).

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Caldwell), that Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3); Loi modifiant la Loi sur

les écoles publiques (faible effectif des classes), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Bjornson: I'm very pleased that we have the opportunity to discuss Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act, small class sizes, in the Chamber today. This will mean an amendment to The Public Schools Act that would require that 90 per cent of kindergarten and grades 1-to-3 classes within the school division or school district have 20 or fewer pupils and classes with K-to-3 pupils are not permitted to exceed 23 students. And this would be effective on July 1st of 2017.

In 2011, we introduced and committed to reducing class sizes in the K-to-3 system in public schools. We want our kids to get the strongest possible start so they have opportunities to go on to post-secondary education and good jobs. We also know how important early years learning is for laying a strong foundation in math, reading and writing. And smaller class sizes means that students will have the foundation they need to be lifelong learners and to excel at whatever career path that they choose. And certainly, as an educator, I really appreciate what this will mean for our teachers and for our students.

I do recall having an elective class in—I guess it was world issues, if I'm not mistaken, where I had 46 students in my class and I know that they certainly didn't get a lot—the individual attention that they might have needed in that particular environment. It's a really challenging environment when you have that many students.

I heard one of my colleagues from the floor heckle that it was a teacher; actually, it was the budget cuts from the opposition during the '90s, when we had fewer teachers working in the school system but the school population was growing. So if he wants to go there, I'd more than be happy to do that.

But we are here to talk about our vision for education, which includes reducing the class sizes in the K-to-3 area. And, by introducing this legislation, we're giving teachers more time, one-to-one time, with their students, helping them get off to a strong start, as I mentioned. Teachers themselves notice a direct connection between smaller classes and student behaviour. They also noticed that—we also say that in the fall of 2013, the Manitoba Teachers'

Society surveyed a number of its members on a variety of workplace issues and 90 per cent of the K-to-3 teachers surveyed indicated that this had made a positive impact on student engagement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So right in the middle of our smaller classes initiative and I'm thrilled at the progress that we've made so far. Our continued commitment for smaller classes is clear and when you look at our record, significant investments in capital and the fact that we've hired over 300 teachers to address this commitment, 100 new teachers this year alone. So there are now 353 more K-to-3 classes than there were when this initiative started. And 90 per cent of classes have 23 or fewer students; 64 per cent meet our target of 20 students or less and this is up from 48 per cent when we first started. We also dramatically increased the number of classes with 20 students or less to 50 per cent and, as part of our commitment we're expanding schools and building new classrooms across the province to create more space for smaller classes. And, since the start of this initiative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've invested \$29 million to create and renovate 49 classes and creating an estimated 270 jobs in that process. So these classrooms are in addition to investments that we're already making to build and renovate schools, adding new gyms, renovating and building new science labs and shop classes in schools across Manitoba.

We know there's more to be done and we'll continue to work with our education partners to make this happen and to implement the new legislation. We've worked closely with our major partners in education, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, the Manitoba School Boards Association, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, Manitoba Association of School Business Officials for their leadership and continued support for the smaller class size initiative. And together these organizations make up the provincial oversight committee, which'll work closely with staff in the Department of Education and Advanced Learning. They provided us with a valuable insight into the implementation of smaller classes and developed excellent recommendations to make these smaller classes a practical and workable initiative.

So I'd like to also to thank the educators who've been supportive of this initiative and are working every day to help our students build skills so they

can grow up in Manitoba to get good jobs and raise their families here. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very important piece of our legislation in ensuring quality and improving opportunities for our children in our schools. It builds on our record of investing in, and not cutting, our public education funding. It builds on our commitment to put more teachers in the classroom and expand our schools and more students are now finishing high school.

* (16:10)

Our graduation rate is now 85 per cent, that's a 14 per cent increase from the 71 per cent graduation rate in 2002. And we've invested nearly \$1 billion to build or replace over 30 schools, to renovate schools, gyms, classrooms and science labs. And we're now investing \$30 million to upgrade shops classrooms with the latest technologies, and there are a lot of great things happening, and I really look forward to the opportunity to tour many of these schools and see first-hand some of the great things that are happening in our schools, including the recent announcement at R.B. Russell where we committed to expand and renovate their capital to support their carpentry, welding, landscaping and small-engine repair shops, as example.

So, with those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm absolutely delighted to be speaking to this bill here in the Chamber. I think it's a clear indication of our commitment to public education, a clear indication of what happens when you work with the stakeholders and come up with a plan that will best meet the needs of our students, and I'm very proud to be a part of a government that supports this initiative to ensure that our students have the best possible start in education as they can with this initiative to reduce the class sizes and allow teachers to have more sustained contact with individual students in our schools.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I move, seconded by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 7—The Public Schools Amendment Act
(Protecting Child Care Space in Schools)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I now call second reading of Bill 7, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools).

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Caldwell), that Bill 7, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (superficie réservée aux garderies dans les écoles), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Bjornson: I'm delighted to speak to Bill 7, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools).

This is a very important initiative where we have actually heard from many of our partners and stakeholders in the field that they would like some clarity on this matter, because we have invested in renovations of a number of school spaces to create appropriate child-care spaces in schools. Of course, we also brought in regulations that required every new school built to include new child-care space in that construction, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So what we're doing today with this legislation is providing some clarity, because there have been, on occasion, rarely the case but often enough, that we've had stakeholders say, can we have some clear guidelines with respect to what happens if we have educational needs for space in this school that is currently occupied by daycare and what can we do to work out the need for that space. Well, this is what this particular legislation does; it provides that clarity. We have had situations where the school board—or where the daycare wanted to move as well, and we just want to make sure that those spaces are maintained.

As you may know or likely know, we've added over 14,000 daycare spaces in the province of Manitoba—or child-care spaces, I should say, in the province of Manitoba since we've been in office. Our Throne Speech spoke to the notion of universally accessible child care in the province of Manitoba, and that's a good vision to have and this is part of that vision.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Right now there are currently over 300 daycares that are co-located in schools, and this is a wonderful opportunity for those children who come in as infants, in some cases, and transition through the early child-care educator system right into that very institution that they will call their school. So they

come in from early child-care infant labs through to kindergarten and into the early and middle years school. In some cases they're in high schools, but we see this as a wonderful opportunity for students who may be single moms to bring their child to the daycare centre, and it also provides opportunities for students who are considering a career in early childhood education to actually have some practicum time within the daycare right in their very own school.

And I know some school divisions have taken it upon themselves to have this initiative working with early child-care workers to provide that training opportunity for students who are thinking of a career in early child-care initiatives, or, pardon me, in early child-care centres.

Now what makes it attractive, of course, is the fact that we've increased the wages for early child-care workers, and we've introduced a pension for early child-care workers. And, while we've done that, we've done it by keeping it the most affordable child care in Canada next to Quebec, which is highly subsidized, but we keep it the most—second most affordable. And here's a tremendous example of how systems work together with the Education Department, with early childhood educators in the post-secondary stream, and also with Child and Family Services, to license these daycares.

So what we do with this bill, under the bill, school boards and child-care providers will work together to address space needs for the child-care centres. So, if the school board and child-care provider agree to reduce spaces, this must be done in writing and approved in writing by the minister. And, if a school board wants to move a program within a school, appropriate notice must be provided. If a school board and child-care provider agree to move the program from one school to another, they may do so, and if the school board wants to move the child-care provider to a different school but the child-care provider disagrees, the minister will make the final determination.

So, again, it's our efforts as government to protect our investment in early child-care spaces, and it's our effort as government to ensure that it's a step towards universally accessible child care.

So I'm very pleased to put those few words on the record today for Bill 7, and I would hope that we could move this committee and have the public approve this as—and full support from the opposition, as we have had tremendous support from

the stakeholders who are very interested in seeing this legislation come to fruition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 3—The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 3, The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act.

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak), that The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Robison: Well, very briefly, Mr. Speaker, since its completion in 1968, the Red River Floodway has saved Manitobans billions of dollars in flood damage. During the 1997 flood of the century, the capacity of the original floodway was pushed to the limit, as we all know.

Mr. Speaker, the east-side road project has also resulted in over 600 job opportunities for east-side residents, and over \$80 million has been invested in local First Nations in that region of the province. And this is an area of Manitoba that is not ordinarily accessible to the remainder of the world and, for the most part, has been an area of Manitoba that has no road accessibility and the only way you can get in there is by plane.

What we have done in arranging to ensure that there is a road built in that region of the province—and let me say as well that the current cut of where the all-weather road is going to be, 70 per cent of that area is on an existing road cut for the winter road system that has been there for generations now, I will say, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:20)

We've built, in the last couple of years, four new bridges, and approximately 43 kilometres of new

road have been constructed on the road from PR 304 to the Berens River First Nation.

So we have also had the opportunity of attending on November 14th—a very historic day for the residents of Bloodvein First Nation because we finished a first portion of the all-weather road system between Hollow Water and the Bloodvein community. And, with the completion of that portion of the road, residents of Bloodvein can now, for the first time ever, travel by road throughout the year to the rest of the province of Manitoba, so we are very much grateful for that opportunity.

Now, in returning the floodway responsibilities and obligation to the government, what this amendment does is clarifies that government will assume all assets, responsibilities and liabilities associated with the expanded floodway, including becoming a proponent in the proposal filed under the environmental act to seek a licence to 'expand'—expand the floodway.

In the same light, this amendment also provides for authority for government to regulate the use of the floodway lands, ongoing operation and maintenance of the floodway, and it'll rest within the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation.

This legislation also puts greater emphasis on building the all-season road network on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, working in partnership with First Nations, creating jobs and opportunities for Manitobans that live in remote locations.

This amendment clarifies the Crown agency's mandate by removing reference to the floodway. The Crown agency revised mandate will be to construct and maintain the east-side road, ensure the construction and maintenance of the east-side road are carried out in a manner that provides increased benefits and also maximizes the benefits of the east-side road.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the innovation and hard work that has been demonstrated by the Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority, particularly their CEO, Mr. Ernie Gilroy, a prominent Manitoban, along with his staff, as well as the leadership and community members of the east-side First Nations, including Chief Roland Hamilton and Chief Jackie Everett, who were at that opening of the first portion of the all-weather road system.

I believe together we are changing the lives of many Manitobans, the people that live on the east side, because I believe that these leaders are creating opportunities and jobs while providing communities with year-round access—something that may be taken for granted in other parts of our province.

So it is my hope that the members of this House can see how important this legislation is, and I would recommend this legislation in the House. I know we had the opportunity of briefing the honourable member for Agassiz, and I know he's excited about this initiative, as I am and as this government is.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks and thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I move, seconded by the member from Charleswood, that the debate on Bill 3 now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 11—The Public Health Amendment Act
(Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning
Equipment and Other Amendments)**

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 11, The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments).

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 11, The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique (utilisation interdite des appareils de bronzage par les enfants et autres modifications), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Just prior to recognizing the honourable Minister for Healthy Living, I'd like to ask the co-operation of honourable members of the House that, because the House will be adjourning and the Youth Parliament will be using this particular facilities later this month, I'm asking all honourable members to consider cleaning out their desks to make sure that there's no items in there that they may wish—that may have to worry about, and

that if they clean out their desk and use the blue bins on either side for their Hansards and the bills, if necessary; and, for larger items, there's recycle bins in the room across the hall. So I'm asking—now, I thank the honourable Minister of Healthy Living, and I'm sorry for the interruption.

Ms. Crothers: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to this important bill.

No parent wants their child put at risk for developing cancer. Between 50 and 90 per cent of skin cancers are caused by sun UV exposure, which means that more than half of skin cancers can be prevented. It is estimated that one in seven Canadians will develop some form of skin cancer in their lifetime, making it the most common type of cancer in the country. And studies have shown that use of artificial tanning equipment before the age of 35 is associated with a significant increase in the risk of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer. That's why Bill 11 is so important.

In 2012, we brought in rules requiring parental consent for minors to use tanning beds. We also required those 16 and younger to have a parent present at tanning salons. Those are positive steps, but the time has come to go even further and ban the use of tanning beds for those under 18.

There are a number of important partners who worked with us to bring this legislation forward, and I would like to recognize them. Erin Crawford, Senior Director, Public Issues and Community Engagement for the Canadian Cancer Society, she called Bill 11 really important legislation; it has the power to change the things that are considered normal behaviour for kids. Dr. Megan Cooney, a pediatric resident at Children's Hospital, said, this is the type of effort that saves lives. I know all of the pediatric residents at HSC are very supportive of this legislation and have been passionate advocates for it. Together with these groups we continue working towards a cancer-free Manitoba, an issue that I'm sure the members opposite would like to support us in.

In developing this bill, Mr. Speaker, we have also consulted with industry. The Joint Canadian Tanning Association, which represents many commercial tanning operators in Manitoba, has been supportive of our efforts and also of similar legislation in other jurisdictions. Indeed, they recently implemented a policy requiring their

members to no longer allow teens to use tanning beds in their establishments.

Bill 11 would make it even across the board, ensuring that no tanning operation in Manitoba will allow minors to put themselves at risk of skin cancer. The bill would also prohibit advertising and marketing aimed at children. That means they won't be able to advertise in teen magazines, use cartoon-like or other images that could appeal directly to young people, encourage young people to get a tan for grad and so forth.

I could say just about anything right now.

We have seen such marketing tactics appear in other jurisdictions such as in New Brunswick where a tanning salon advertised in a high school year book.

An Honourable Member: They don't care.

Ms. Crothers: The bill—apparently.

The bill also requires tanning operations to provide protective eyewear for all customers ensuring proper protection for adults who choose to visit a tanning salon. In addition to all these measures, we're also going to look closely at the issue of user-operated tanning equipment. Coin-operated or, more recently, swipe-card operated machines in gyms and other facilities can pose a risk to users as they don't provide any oversight. There is no provision for controlling or monitoring to ensure that such equipment is used according to guidelines, and someone could theoretically tan themselves for hours, greatly increasing risk to their health.

Our government is also committed to working with partners like the Canadian Cancer Society to expand strategies and initiatives to promote sun safety, including increasing public awareness and education as well as the promotion of shade in outdoor recreational areas, something that's very important for children.

* (16:30)

Bill 11 is part of a larger strategy to improve cancer prevention and treatment in our province. The Province is investing nearly \$250,000, for example, in smoking cessation projects in partnership with the RHAs. These are some of the things we're doing to prevent cancer. And why do we put so much effort

and money into preventing cancer? Why do we bring forward legislation like Bill 11 and the many other important bills we've brought into force?

An Honourable Member: Why?

Ms. Crothers: You're listening. The answer is obvious. We know what a terrible toll cancer takes on individuals and families. It can rob us of our quality of life; it can shorten our life; and it can take our loved ones away from it—from us. And I can attest to this, as my mother-in-law actually passed away from cancer about a year and a half ago. And I can tell you that it's a very frightening disease. She was diagnosed in cancer—in October with cancer, and she was gone in December. So this is pretty serious stuff.

Every family has been touched by cancer. That's why we're building the best system in the country to deliver the fastest screening, diagnosis and treatment. According to the Canadian Cancer Society and the Public Health Agency of Canada, our survival rate for cancer has increased nearly 10 per cent since the 1990s. We have more to do, but we are headed in the right direction.

We're making cancer wait times the shortest in the country, covering a hundred per cent of the costs of cancer drugs for patients at home. And our plan will reduce the time from when cancer's first suspected to the start of treatment, including all referrals, testing and diagnosis to two months or less. The plan, based on recommendations from the Canadian Cancer Society, commits over \$25 million to fight cancer by fully covering the cost of approved cancer treatment and support drugs for all patients, making all 16 of our rural chemotherapy locations into CancerCare hubs with expert staff who will co-ordinate improved faster care for rural patients, providing faster cancer screening and testing by hiring eight more pathologists and more cancer-testing co-ordinators, enhancing supports for Manitobans who want to quit smoking, like adding the smoking cessation aid, Champix, to the provincial drug-formulary. And, in 2011, we committed over \$70 million towards a new CancerCare building that will combine screening, care and cancer research all under one roof.

We are developing a rapid diagnostic network for cancer patients to better link and speed up diagnostic imaging and pathology. And, in 2013, we opened an urgent CancerCare clinic to give cancer

patients access to emergency care based on their specific needs while taking pressure off of ERs.

In closing, I'd like to thank all those who have shown support for this bill. I'm sure the members opposite will support the fact that what we're trying to do is prevent our children from developing cancer to having to use and access some of those important CancerCare supports that we have in place. Let's try and help avoid this situation by supporting this bill 'pleasening.' I'm confident it's the right step to help protect kids from the risk of cancer, because no child should be put at risk for the sake of a tan. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 6—The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), that Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act; Loi sur le Centre national de recherche pour la vérité et la réconciliation, be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: I rise today to bring an important piece of legislation to the House for a second reading. I wish to commend its contents to all my colleagues and encourage each member to support this legislation. This proposed bill will help Manitoba continue to play a role in the efforts to promote truth, healing and reconciliation amongst Canadians.

Nationally, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has gathered the stories and experiences, depicted the horrors and destructive nature of residential schools. We have listened with respect to the stories of these survivors. We honour the dignity and courage of each survivor in ensuring that the work started by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of listening to the hard truth begins true

healing and reconciliation. We support those future efforts with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the preamble of this bill provides context for the need for this legislation and our commitment to providing an appropriate framework for the operations of a unique entity that will house the records of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission once its mandate expires. This entity will be established at the University of Manitoba and known as the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

As the preamble to the legislation further notes, we should all reflect on the fact that all Manitobans are beneficiaries of the treaties with Aboriginal nations and share responsibility for promoting respect for those true—for those treaties and Aboriginal nations, culture, languages, communities and families. Aboriginal people have been subjected to a wide variety of human rights abuses since European contact, including abuses caused by residential school systems. For over 150 years, Aboriginal children were torn away from their families, their homes, their communities and their culture and sent to institutions called residential schools. They did not get to grow up with their parents, siblings, aunts, uncles or grandparents, nor did they grow up in their own community. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, we can all appreciate the hardship that that would be for each and every one of us in this building, but not only that, some have experienced that.

Some became victims of abuse and were subjected to experimentation. They were often forbidden and harshly punished for speaking their own language or for practising their culture and spiritual practices. Mr. Speaker, some of these children never returned home. Some parents never learned the fate of their children. The pain of that—the pain that this caused Aboriginal families and communities is 'unimaginable.'

Mr. Speaker, I ask all honourable members to think about the impact of the residential school system to reflect on a terrible time in our history as a country. It is truly horrifying.

One of the primary objectives of the residential school system was to remove and isolate Aboriginal children from the influence of their homes, families and traditions and culture. The goal was to assimilate them into a dominant culture based on the assumption that Aboriginal culture and spiritual beliefs were inferior or primitive. Mr. Speaker, this

policy of assimilation was wrong and caused great harm. Generations of Aboriginal people all over Canada still struggle with the long-lasting and far-reaching effects of residential schools.

In response to the urgent need to right these wrongs, Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established as part of the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It is a significant national undertaking to bring about truth, healing and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandate is to acknowledge the events of the past and work towards a stronger and healthier future, to promote public awareness and to educate Canadians of the residential school era, on its system—of its impact.

With hope to guide and inspire a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect, the commission collected statements and documents of former students, their families, communities and other interested parties. Most of these statements and documents were shared to a broader audience for the very first time. They dispel myths and educate Canadians about this painful part of our Canadian history.

Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was also tasked with establishing a national research centre to house these important statements, documents and materials that were gathered during its five-year mandate. The requirement that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission establish a national research centre is included in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement of 2007. The commission is authorized to ensure the preservation of all records it collects and to ensure these records are accessible to the public in accordance with all applicable federal and provincial legislation.

Last year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission signed a historic agreement with the University of Manitoba which will see the university host a national research centre. Mr. Speaker, it is a prestigious honour that Manitoba will be home to the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. We, in turn, are honoured to provide the legislative framework the centre needs to take on the task of acquiring and holding on to these important documents and personal stories. While still respecting the privacy and dignity of those who shared their painful memories, this information will

be made available for survivors, their families, researchers and others to learn about residential schools.

*(16:40)

Mr. Speaker, this is a unique undertaking that requires legislation to recognize and support this very important ongoing work. The National Research Centre will use and preserve the commission's records to ensure the preservation of the archives and other materials related to residential schools and to the colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada; make the records accessible to former students, their families and communities, the general public, researchers and educators in accordance with the access of privacy legislation and any other applicable legislation; promote the engagement of the public regarding residential schools and other Aboriginal issues, including through fostering understanding and reconciliation.

As part of the transfer of these records to the National Research Centre, Manitoba is providing a legislative framework that ensures that adequate access and privacy legislation applies to the management of those records. The TRC collected records under federal access and privacy legislation, and this new legislation provides similar robust protection. The records to be held at the University of Manitoba will be subject to The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the personal health and information act, along with the proposed provisions included in this legislation. This legislation will empower the National Research Centre at the University of Manitoba to manage the records so that they are appropriately accessible to promote engagement in regard to residential schools and other issues related to the colonization of indigenous peoples while respecting and protecting the highly sensitive personal information in some of those records.

This legislation sets out a balanced privacy and access framework to guide the centre's efforts in managing the records collected by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ensures compliance with the terms of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It specifically recognizes the role of the centre in fulfilling its mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and honours the settlement agreement by continuing education, awareness, public and academic outreach and efforts to promote reconciliation.

Over the past year we have been working closely with the National Research Centre at the University of Manitoba and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on this endeavour. We have also consulted with the Government of Canada. Those efforts have led to the development of this legislation to fulfill this very important mandate. This legislation addresses proactive disclosure because the centre's mandate is to continue building awareness of the legacy of the residential school system, and disclosing records will tell the story and illustrate the impact residential schools—of residential schools, therefore, continuing the important conversation and reconciliation effort.

At the same time, this legislation will compel the centre to ensure that consideration has been given to the protection of privacy when disclosure is made in the public interest. Mr. Speaker, this legislation will ensure that people have the right to quickly access their own information that they provided, at no charge. The right of access of a relative is also broader to allow family members to trace or find family to understand their history and begin to heal. The provisions of this bill will cover the records of the National Research Centre only. The centre will ensure that custody of these important records is managed appropriately and appropriate safeguards and controls in order to protect the legacy of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The National Research Centre will be located on the University of Manitoba campus and will house thousands of video- and audio-recorded statements from survivors and other affected—others affected by the schools and their legacy, millions of archival documents and photographs from the governments of Canada—Government of Canada and the Canadian church entities, works of art, artifacts and other expressions of reconciliation presented at Truth and Reconciliation Commission events and research collected and prepared by the commission.

The University of Manitoba is an ideal location for these records. It is committed to indigenous achievement and making Manitoba a centre of excellence for indigenous education and research. This institution has a reputation of encouraging debate and discussion around the understanding of human rights, peace and justice and respect for others. They are committed to meaningful survivor and community engagement as well as local, regional and national partnerships. The University of Manitoba has a proven track record for a solid

governance model, world-class archival expertise and facilities, privacy and access expertise, public education and awareness and financial stability.

Manitoba is also well positioned to hold these records. It is located in the heart of Canada and is the home of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Sadly, many residential schools were located right here in Manitoba. We have the largest per capita population of Aboriginal people in the country, and there's a need for continued healing and reconciliation right here in our community—the National Research Centre and the records it holds for them and their future generations.

I would like to recognize the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the University of Manitoba. Thanks to their efforts, Manitobans and Canadians everywhere will have a resource so that the painful legacy of residential schools is not forgotten but rather educates and promotes reconciliation with Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

Finally, I would like to recognize and thank the survivors of the residential school system for their courage and resilience in coming forward and sharing their painful memories. It is through these accounts that we learn the truth and begin the path to reconciliation. We are committed to honouring their courage and, through the university and the National Research Centre, their records will be treated with the utmost respect and dignity for generations of Manitobans and Canadians to come.

As I noted at the beginning, it's my sincere hope that all the members of the House can see how important this proposed legislation is to Manitobans and Canadians. We can collectively continue to work that—started with Canada's apology, then led to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its valuable work. Former Premier Gary Doer similarly apologized on behalf of Manitoba for the Province's role in the residential school era.

This is now an opportunity for all of us to do our part and continue the efforts of truth and reconciliation and healing, and I recommend this legislation to the House. And I would ask that this legislation, above all any legislation like this coming forward, should be supported unanimously by this House. This, I believe, is such an important legislation—we bring a lot of pieces of legislation forward to this Chamber, but this is one—this is one—

that I believe deserves unanimous—unanimous—approval and should be looked upon in that light. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a member of the government who's in a little bit of a hurry. This legislation is so important that it needs some discussion.

I rise to speak to this legislation, to speak in support of this legislation, because I think we should all be proud to have a National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation here in Manitoba. I want to recognize the important work that has been done by the commissioners, Justice Murray Sinclair, commissioner Dr. Marie Wilson and commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild, as well as the important role that Dr. David Barnard and others have played at the University of Manitoba in bringing this to a reality.

I think it's important to note that this centre will come out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission itself came out of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, which resolved the lawsuits which has been started against the Government of Canada and the churches that ran the schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been a very historic commission. And I think that some understanding of this commission and its role and the task that it had can be had from the statement that Murray Sinclair made at the time that there was an agreement to host the National Research Centre on residential schools at the University of Manitoba.

He said, in trying to understand or help people understand what happened at the residential schools: Imagine what it would be like if one day, without your knowledge, without your consent, without your participation, representatives of the government came to your house and started to take away your little children. Imagine what it would be like today for those of you who are in this room if they came and started to take away your grandchildren. And, in doing that, they let it be known to you that they were going to stop them from speaking your language. They were going to stop them from learning your culture. They were going to stop them from seeing you because they didn't trust you would be able to raise them properly.

It is a sad legacy which we have to come to terms with, and that, of course, is why we had the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission and why now we have this centre to be established, the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Residential schools were in existence for 150 years or approximately that. It is not the residue, the aftermath of those residential schools. It's not something that's going to be solved overnight. And it is, clearly, something that we need to learn from and reconcile the problems that arose from the time in the—of the residential school system. And many of those issues are still very much with us.

* (16:50)

Justice Murray Sinclair talked about the fact that we have to start talking to and about Aboriginal people in a more respectful manner. That involves changing the way we educate our children. It involves changing the way we govern this country. It involves changing the way that we are Canadians. It involves recognizing what Canada is all about. This National Research Centre is to be a constant reminder to all Canadians about the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadians, all Canadians, and it is, in fact, a working national memory of what's happened.

I, in the working with and helping and dealing with people primarily who've been involved in child and family services who have been residual impacts of the residential school system, I remember talking to one mother who had had her children threatened to be taken away from her. And she related her experience that when she was very young she was put into a tiny hole under the floor and she had to stay there whenever there were people who came by who were threatening to take her away from her family. And this experience of being put in a tiny hole below the floor where she could hide, left a residue, a residue of fear not only that she would be taken away, but that sometime her children would be taken away. The sad part of this story is that many, many years later, fortunately, for a number of months only, but very tragically, her children were taken away, and that was a searing experience. She has her children back and things are moving along at this juncture, but it puts in context the relationship between what happened with the residential school system and, in a sense, what is happening with child and family services even today and how people perceive child and family services.

I was, not long ago, in Nelson House and the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, and there, was

privileged to be able to attend a demonstration which was of the current government's model, which was a box where children and elders tend to be at the side, at the periphery, and the traditional model of governance in First Nations communities which was a circle, and at the very centre of that circle were children. And so the tragedy of taking children away from a community, who should be at the very centre of that community and the very future of that community, came loudly from this demonstration and the importance that we need to make sure that we are putting children back in the centre of the community and that we are creating strong communities, which have tremendous supports for families and for children, so the children don't have to be taken away by Child and Family Services in the numbers that they are now and, hopefully, very few if we manage the supports and improve the supports as we should be doing.

I think that it is very important that we understand what has happened to communities as a result of taking children away for the residential school system, and that is one of the very significant and very important reasons for this centre.

I'd like, at this juncture, to recognize the role that President David Barnard has played, starting in October 2011, when he provided an apology to the survivors of residential schools at a national event in Halifax. He built the bridges, and then when there was a request for proposals to host this National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, he made sure that the University of Manitoba put forward a really excellent proposal.

And, as Judge Murray Sinclair said, the proposal that was received from the University of Manitoba was head and shoulders above some of the other proposals that were received, because it talked about the importance of establishing this as a national centre, not just about Manitoba, not just about western Canada—a national research centre for residential schools, which is truly about Canada and the story of Canada and the story of Aboriginal people in Canada.

The National Research Centre, as Justice Murray Sinclair has outlined, will have a number of important roles. It will have the role of being a memory of what happened in residential schools, of being—having material which is available to help survivors and families and others understand what happened. But it is also, and I quote Justice Sinclair when he says: We've asked the National Research

Centre to assist Aboriginal peoples in the exercise of their rights under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, because that United Nations declaration, in our view, was a sound framework for reconciliation in this country. And I commend to you—all of you—particularly those of you who are students here at this centre of learning to familiarize yourself with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples because it will be at the forefront of all discussions between First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and the governments of this country for years and generations to come.

Justice Sinclair talked about the National Research Centre being more than just about residential schools, but relating to all issues around Aboriginal history and Aboriginal people in this country. He pointed out that there's been more information written in the last five years about the state of affairs of Aboriginal people than was written in the previous 100. This will be a subject for many individuals and people to write and to communicate and share information. It will no doubt be important in scholarly work as well as in work by the general media to bring attention to what the situation has been in Canada and to bring about the reconciliation which is the long-term goal.

We have to recognize that truth and establishing the truth, which is the first step, is a difficult task, but the reconciliation is yet a harder task and that this centre will play a very important role in that process.

So I would conclude with a tribute to Justice Murray Sinclair for the work that he has done. I believe it is significant that he was involved in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and had the opportunity to meet and talk with Aboriginal people all over Manitoba and to learn many things, which, I think, led up to this Truth and Reconciliation Commission work and have led up to what will be housed and what will be the important role of the national centre for research and for truth and reconciliation.

I'd like also to pay tribute to the work that commissioner Dr. Marie Wilson has done. She's a very well-known journalist who's played an important role with the CBC in northern Canada. She was, in many, many ways, a pioneer, launching, for instance, the first daily television news service for northern Canada. She developed the Arctic Winter Games, the True North Concert Series, the CBC North Awards, and had a role—is an associate board member of what was to become APTN.

I also want to pay tribute to Chief Wilton Littlechild, who had a very important role on—as a commissioner and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a highly respected lawyer—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) will have 16 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 2014

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Annual Review, 2013	
		Allum	371
Bill 13–The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas)		Ministerial Statements	
Caldwell	367	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women	
Bill 4–The Farm and Food Awareness Act		Irvin-Ross	371
Kostyshyn	367	Driedger	371
Bill 205–The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)		Gerrard	372
Driedger	367	Oral Questions	
Bill 14–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts)		Children in Care	
Lemieux	368	Wishart; Irvin-Ross	373
Bill 207–The Delivery of Goods and Provision of Services in Winnipeg Outside the Perimeter Act		Affordable Housing Units	
Gaudreau	368	Mitchelson; Irvin-Ross	373
Bill 206–The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Employer Advisers)		University College of the North	
Smook	368	Ewasko; Ashton	374
Petitions		Education Property Tax Credit	
Grace Hospital Emergency Room Upgrade and Expansion		Graydon; Dewar	375
Driedger	369	Graydon; Bjornson	375
Election Request		Mining Industry	
Graydon	369	Cullen; Chomiak	375
Beausejour District Hospital–Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability		NDP Caucus	
Ewasko	370	Goertzen; Ashton	376
Highway 10 North and 3rd Street North in Swan River–Traffic Signals		Legislative Session	
Briese	370	Gerrard; Selinger	377
Tabling of Reports		Consumer Protection Initiatives	
Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, Annual Report, 2013-2014		Wiebe; Lemieux	377
Crothers	371	NDP Leadership	
Civil Service Superannuation Board, Actuarial Valuation Report, December 31, 2013		Pallister; Selinger	378
Dewar	371	Members' Statements	
		They're the Taxmen	
		Graydon	381
		Ebola Prevention–Recognition of Volunteers	
		Melnick	381
		Don Kroeker	
		Friesen	382
		World Ultimate Club Championships	
		Altemeyer	382
		Remembering Clair Murray	
		Caldwell	383

Grievances

Gerrard	384
Goertzen	385

ORDERS OF THE DAY*(Continued)***GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****Second Readings**

Bill 9—The Chartered Professional Accountants Act

Dewar	388
Maloway	389

Bill 5—The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers)

Allum	390
Goertzen	392
Swan	392
Pettersen	393
Gerrard	394

Bill 8—The Conservation Officers Act

Mackintosh	395
------------	-----

Bill 2—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3)

Bjornson	397
----------	-----

Bill 7—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools)

Bjornson	399
----------	-----

Bill 3—The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act

Robinson	400
----------	-----

Bill 11—The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments)

Crothers	401
----------	-----

Bill 6—The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act

Lemieux	403
Gerrard	405

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

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