

Third Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

Vol. LXI No. 42B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 14, 2009

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
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RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 14, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Crocus Investment Fund

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The 2007 provincial election did not clear the NDP government of any negligence with regard to the Crocus Fund fiasco.

The government needs to uncover the whole truth as to what ultimately led to over 33,000 Crocus shareholders to lose tens of millions of dollars.

The provincial auditor's report, the Manitoba Securities Commission's investigation, the RCMP investigation, the involvement of revenue Canada and our courts, collectively, will not answer the questions that must be answered in regard to the Crocus Fund fiasco.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to co-operate in uncovering the truth in why the government did not act on what it knew and to consider calling a public inquiry on the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by S. Little, G. Qually, G. Andrews and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

Neepawa, Gladstone, Ste. Rose, McCreary— Family Doctors

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition.

Access to a family doctor is vital to good primary health care. Patients depend on their family

doctors for many things, including their routine health-care needs, preventative care and referrals for diagnostic tests and appointments with specialists.

Mr. Speaker, family doctors in Neepawa, Gladstone and Ste. Rose are unable to accept new patients. The nearby community of McCreary has not had a doctor available to take patients in months.

Without a family doctor, residents of this large geographical area have no option but to look for a family doctor in communities as far away as Brandon and Winnipeg.

Residents of these communities are suffering because of the provincial government's continuing failure to effectively address the shortage of doctors in rural Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider prioritizing the needs of these communities by ensuring they have access to a family doctor.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider promptly increasing the use of nurse practitioners in these communities in order to improve access to quality health care.

This petition is signed by Cody Mulligan, Irene Sellman, Jeannette Butterfield and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Jake Fehr, Susan Seymour, Murray Seymour and many, many others.

Traffic Signal Installation—PTH 15 and Highway 206

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) stated that traffic volumes at the intersection of PTH 15 and Highway 206 in Dugald exceed those needed to warrant the installation of traffic signals.

Every school day, up to a thousand students travel through this intersection in Dugald where the lack of traffic signals puts their safety at risk.

Thousands of vehicles travel daily through this intersection in Dugald where the lack of traffic signals puts at risk the safety of these citizens.

In 2008, there was a 300 percent increase in accidents at this intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate installation of traffic signals at the intersection of PTH 15 and Highway 206 in Dugald.

To request that the Minister of Transportation recognize the value of the lives and well-being of the students and citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by Curtis Buley, Hank Thelinissen, Art Emery and many, many other Manitobans.

Photo Radar

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

It is important to protect the safety of construction workers who are on the job by having reduced speeds in construction zones when workers are present.

The provincial government handed out tickets to thousands of Manitobans who were driving the regular posted speed limit in construction zones when there were no construction workers present.

A Manitoba court has ruled that the reduced speed zones in construction areas were intended to protect workers and that the tickets that were given where no construction workers were present were invalid.

The provincial government has decided not to collect unpaid fines given to motorists who were ticketed driving the normal posted speed limit when no construction workers were present.

The provincial government is refusing to refund money to many hardworking, law-abiding Manitobans who had already paid the fines for driving the regular speed limit in a construction zone when no workers were present.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Attorney General (Mr. Chomiak) consider refunding all monies collected from photo radar tickets given to motorists driving the regular posted speed limit in construction zones where no workers were present.

This petition is signed by Margaret Germain, Christine Dixon, Dave Carlson and many more Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Public Accounts Third Report

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Third Report—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on May 13, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Department of Conservation's Management of the Environmental Livestock Program dated October 2007
- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Province's Management of Contaminated Sites and Landfills dated October 2007

Committee Membership

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- Mr. DEWAR
- Ms. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. MAGUIRE
- Ms. SELBY
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Mrs. STEFANSON

Officials Speaking on Record

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General
- Mr. Donald Cook, Deputy Minister of Conservation
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Department of Conservation's Management of the Environmental Livestock Program dated October 2007

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Province's Management of Contaminated Sites and Landfills dated October 2007

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Charles and Eleanor Boehr who are the parents of our page, Travis Boehr.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Photo Radar Tickets Construction Zones

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this government's mismanagement of the photo revenue program has created a photo revenue fiasco. Yesterday, Melanie Lawrence, a law-abiding single mother who was led to believe that the government would be refunding the wrongly issued ticket to her, was shocked to find the Attorney General (Mr. Chomiak) announcing yesterday that he would not be refunding her her money. She was even more shocked at the reason that he gave, the reason that the Attorney General found it too much work, too much work to muster the energy to refund the money that rightfully belongs to Melanie Lawrence.

Mr. Speaker, if Melanie Lawrence has been asked to give more than 20 hours of her life to deal with this issue, a single mother, why can't the Attorney General muster the energy to give her her money back?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would point out, I was interested to check *Hansard* about the location of the photo radar site, and I noticed it was on Lagimodiere Boulevard, a construction site I passed a number of times. I had the ability to consult with my own family. I travelled along that road a number of times, maybe 50 to 100 times last summer at various times, various days, and we all recall seeing a posted sign in terms of reducing speed.

The members opposite said yesterday there was no posted speed limit sign, no signs at the site. I recall seeing signs as I entered into that construction site 50 times. My family member remembers it. Other people remember it.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important to note that the speed limit does go down for construction sites. It goes down for both the construction workers

and motorists alike. That's the reason why the speed is reduced for all of us.

The police, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said, have put this out in various press releases, including in the beginning of May last year, and not only for construction workers, as the members opposite are trying to twist in the public arena; it was also for the safety of motorists. It's in police press releases.

The chief of police has been contradicted by the Leader of the Opposition in a scrum yesterday. He misspoke what the chief of police said yesterday in his scrum. I think he should again apologize to the chief of police, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:40)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has just called Melanie a liar. If he had listened to what she said, the photo revenue ticket that she was issued was on Lagimodiere and Capston Road by the Mint, not the location that the Premier is referring to.

Mr. Speaker, the construction site had been dismantled. There were no signs present. She has 20 photographs to back up her position.

Will he stand up today and apologize to Melanie Lawrence for calling her a liar in this House, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out—and I travel all along Lagimodiere Boulevard.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some decorum. We all want to hear the questions and the answers. Let's have some decorum.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition stated that the chief of police stated that the issue was only dealing with construction workers at a construction site.

On May 5, 2008, the chief of police and the Police Service of Winnipeg advised motorists to use vigilance in construction zones. They indicate that work zones and road safety is vital for workers and motorists alike.

Mr. Speaker, they also go on to say: Particular attention must be given to reduce speeds in order to ensure the safe travel of all motorists as well as construction workers who are present in a zone. They further go on to say on May 29, I believe—and I'll get

the release. A similar statement is made in terms of both the safety of motorists and the safety of construction workers is subject to the issues of protection. The quote is: "Particular attention must be given to reduce speeds in order to ensure safe travel for all motorists as well as construction workers."

That's not what he said the chief of police said yesterday. These press releases totally contradict what the Leader of the Opposition has stated, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, what the court found in these cases was that innocent people were issued tickets by his government, and now they refuse to refund the money to those innocent people. That is what the court said.

Now, I know the Attorney General has now adopted a reverse onus position in terms of criminal justice in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. He says that people are guilty unless they can prove themselves innocent. But, the Premier, as he does every time he's on the wrong side of an issue, launches nasty, sleazy, personal attacks on individual Manitobans just as he did just now with Melanie Lawrence.

Will he do the honourable thing? Will he apologize today to Melanie Lawrence and the thousands of other Manitobans?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I find it reprehensible that the Leader of the Opposition would—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some decorum.

Mr. Doer: I find it reprehensible that the Leader of the Opposition would quote the chief of police yesterday inaccurately. I'm not going to accuse him of being sleazy. I'm not going to use that kind of Tory language. But the fact of the matter is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable First Minister.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would point out that the statement made in the scrum by the Leader of the Opposition is contradicted by two press releases issued by the chief of police. Is the member opposite going to apologize to Chief McCaskill?

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that, yes, we have chosen the side to be on, the law and order of this province. We have chosen a side to be on and

that's with the Winnipeg city police. We have chosen—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some order, please. Please. You might not agree with the questions or the answers, but the person that has the floor has to be heard, and I have to hear in case of a breach of a rule. I'm asking for decorum in this House.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When a leader of the opposition makes a statement and puts words in the chief of police's mouth publicly on the record—and we have the tape—and it's contradicted by press releases, that's a serious issue of a leader of the opposition going after the most senior police officer in the city of Winnipeg. So, yes—

An Honourable Member: Give me a break. You're pathetic.

An Honourable Member: You're desperate.

Mr. Doer: Well, the public will rule on that issue as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We've only gone a few minutes and I've had to stand and ask for order at least half a dozen times. This is time for questions and answers. You might not agree with them, with the questions or the answers, but we have to be able to hear them.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would also point out—and we have chosen a side to be on, the police, the law, the City of Winnipeg that asked for photo radar. We've chosen a side to be on, with the police, yes, and we know sometimes that makes people angry. Nobody likes to get a ticket. I don't like getting a ticket. Nobody likes to get a ticket, but we think that the argument made by the City of Winnipeg, that it's better to deploy police officers using technology to prevent crime and enforce the Criminal Code across our city, we think that that logic that has been initiated by the City and implemented by the police—yes, we support that. We'll take our hits from the Leader of the Opposition. He can pander. The mighty Conservative Party can be the mighty pandering party all it wants.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that the chief of police said at yesterday's press conference that—I believe a technicality, if you look at the specific issue—if you had police officers in these zones using hand-held radar it would be speeding.

The police have said it's better not to have police officers in these zones using hand-held radar. They have said it's better to use the technology so police can be deployed in other places.

That's simply the issue. The City initiates it. We support it, the police support it, and we'll be with the police officers on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

Photo Radar Tickets Construction Zones

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine, Noreen [*phonetic*], a single mother of two, was hit with a \$195 photo revenue ticket while travelling under the posted speed limit in a construction zone when no workers were present.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the Minister of Justice respect the court ruling? Why won't he give Noreen [*phonetic*] her money back?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated before, the court has ruled that if you're speeding in a construction zone, you're guilty. The court made a ruling with respect to a particular case where the court said that if there were no construction workers present in that case, you were not guilty. The Crown appealed that, because that is wrong in law. We'll appeal it again, by the way. I should indicate that we changed the regulation to make it clear.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Crown dropped the cases and stayed the charges on evidentiary issues because they were told that in some cases there was no end sign on the construction.

It was an evidentiary issue. It wasn't an issue of law. The law says that it's an offence, as the police chief says, to speed in a construction zone.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the court ruled that these types of tickets should not have been issued in the first place. I quote Noreen [*phonetic*] when she says: I am a single mother of two, and that \$195 really hit hard, especially since I just had my second child in March and was on maternity leave at the time.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the Minister of Justice respect the court ruling? Why won't he give Noreen [*phonetic*] her money back?

* (13:50)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the members are choosing to disregard what the court said or they're deliberately misinterpreting the law.

Mr. Speaker, the court and the law is very clear with respect to photo radar. In fact, the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik)—when we brought in this legislation, the members opposite approved it, said we should expand it. They said it should be enhanced.

We said it will be limited to construction sites, school zones and red light cameras in the interest of safety, Mr. Speaker. We continue that. We think it's important for safety. We'd rather err on the side of safety and the law than be politically correct and have someone get—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of Manitobans who have written to us with similar stories to that of Noreen [*phonetic*].

Mr. Speaker, the court has ruled on this. Why won't the government give the hundreds of Manitobans, like Noreen [*phonetic*], like Melanie, and many, many others their money back?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the law has authorized the City of Winnipeg to use photo radar in order to promote safety on the roads, safety issues that exist in construction zones when workers are present, but that is not the only situation. Safety issues can arise if lanes are narrowed, equipment is present, the road surface is uneven and so on. Drivers are alerted to safety issues in construction zones and elsewhere by signs indicating they are entering a construction zone.

That is the law as interpreted by the Department of Justice. That is the law that is interpreted by the court. That is the law that is in effect in Manitoba, and members are being politically—the once mighty Conservative Party is rising up in this Legislature and rising in all its might to deal with speeding tickets.

Photo Radar Tickets Construction Zones

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine, Monique, says she got a ticket in a photo revenue zone where no construction workers were present. Her speed was 74 kilometres in a normally 80-kilometre zone. The court has stated there is to be a speed reduction when workers are present, but no workers were present so Monique was not breaking the law.

Why is she being penalized by this government? Will the minister give Monique her money back?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): In the press release put out May 23, by the City of Winnipeg police on behalf of the City of Winnipeg, and I quote what the law is—and if the member is relying on the interpretation of the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), watch out. But the quote is: Particular attention must be given to reduce speeds in order to ensure the safe travel of all motorists, as well as construction workers, who may be present in the area.

That is the law. That is the law as it exists. In fact, the Crown appealed it and the Crown would appeal any case, and, in fact, most cases have been decided in that favour. In fact, thousands of cases have been decided in that favour. There was one appeal that was wrongly stated. The Crown appealed on evidentiary issues. We dropped it. The Crown will appeal it because they have the duty to enforce the correct interpretation.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, Monique did not pay the fine, believing that that would be an admission of guilt. Now she has a collection agency calling her and telling her if she doesn't pay by tomorrow, they're going to come and get her truck.

Is this how the NDP treat law-abiding citizens of Manitoba? Will he suspend that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, when we asked the City of Winnipeg about the possibility of a rebate, the City of Winnipeg said it will cost the City of Winnipeg \$10 million to rebate tickets, and in law, Province, you have no right to have those tickets rebated, firstly.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the laws that have been in place forever are that if you do not pay on a ticket and you are in default of the court, that is a serious matter, to be in default of the court. Whether or not you agree with the law, our responsibility is to follow the law. It would be imprudent of me not to follow the law or to follow the advice of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) who not only stated the law incorrectly but incorrectly misquoted the chief of police of the City of Winnipeg.

They're going on a political vengeance issue, Mr. Speaker, when they've got no issues to raise about poverty, about taxation, about budgets. They're running on this.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that there's any law that says you can't rebate.

Monique was within the court ruling. She did nothing wrong, yet she's been issued a fine and is now being bullied by a collection agency.

Why does the Minister of Justice continue to wreak injustice on law-abiding Manitobans?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, can you remember the last campaign when the only thing the Conservatives ran on was crime, and the Leader of the Opposition said he would hire 150 crime fighters? Well, you know what? We've paid over \$10 million to the expanded city of Winnipeg police force and Brandon that members opposite have voted against.

The once mighty law-and-order party have voted against the expansion of the police services. Not only that, but the mighty law-and-order party over there, they want the city of Winnipeg police chief to do what they say and to take off photo radar and have police officers there with photo guns and not chasing down the criminals and not reducing auto theft by 60 percent. I think it says a lot.

Out-of-Province Purchases Sales Tax

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Well, Mr. Speaker, it becomes a very interesting day in this province. Very seriously, on this matter, it's a sad day in this province when the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province begins to imply that innocent Manitobans are liars.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): On a point of order, the statement made by the member is out of order in terms of words that are used in this House. Secondly, in fact I said, I looked and saw a posted speed limit on Lagimodiere. That's what I said, and I was referring to my own experience, so I would—you know, I know these members want to put words in people's mouths, but I think (a) it's out of order and, (b) it's inaccurate, Mr. Speaker.

I'd ask you to rule them as out of order.

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on the same—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind members that points of order and matters of privilege are very serious matters, and I have to make a ruling. Once I get the information I need, I will have to make a ruling so I need to hear every word that is spoken.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on the same point of order.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has suggested that the Member for Russell referred to another member of the House as a liar. What, in fact, he was referring to was the suggestion made by the Premier earlier that an innocent Manitoban was dishonest and not telling the truth about a situation relating to her photo radar ticket, an allegation that he has, to date, refused to apologize for to her.

We're not asking for an apology aimed at us, Mr. Speaker. We're asking for an apology to Melanie Lawrence for the fact that the Premier implied strongly that she was a dishonest Manitoban. That was really the issue.

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite can't mount a case, so they're trying to use someone else. They're trying to insert into the proceedings third party statements and imply statements that members have made so that they can try to make a political point. That's not parliamentary. That's not proper.

You know, Mr. Speaker, they have to stand by their own words. They ought not to change the meaning of words to imply. That's what the Member for Russell is doing. That's what the Premier is referring to, and that's what the Leader of the Opposition always tries to do to deflect attention from his own words, his own stand and his own integrity in this House.

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

* (14:00)

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, and very briefly, I heard the words of the Member for Russell and he certainly wasn't calling the Premier a liar. I don't think that he implied that. I don't think the Leader of the Official Opposition would ever imply that the Premier was a liar in this House.

The fact remains that all members are honourable members, as you have pointed out many times in this House, and we certainly have respect for each other. But there is a difference between calling a member in the House a liar versus saying that the member of the House is calling someone else a liar.

It's not a problem in this House, Mr. Speaker. That is not a point of order, and it certainly is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable First Minister, I was listening very carefully, and what I heard was the reference to not the member, but a reference—[interjection] Order. It was not a reference to a member, because in this House all members are honourable members, and using the word "liar" in any circumstance is skating on very dangerous ground. So I would pick my words very, very, very carefully because they could be misconstrued.

I also remind members that words might be deemed parliamentary by one Speaker and not parliamentary by another Speaker. The use of a word that is disruptive to the House also would be out of order. That's also in our rules. So I would pick and choose my words very, very, very carefully.

So I have to rule right now. In this instance, because I heard there being a reference to not a member of the House, but even making reference to people in the public I would be very, very careful.

I'll clarify once more. What I'm ruling on is what I heard: "is." "Is" the First Minister calling so-and-so a liar? That's what I heard, and that's what I have to rule on, is what I heard.

Also, it should remind the House why it's very important that we have decorum so I can hear the words very, very, very clearly here.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly respect your ruling and will try to guide myself by your ruling.

Mr. Speaker, residents on the west side of the province are also being subjected to a tax grab by this government. Residents who purchase appliances in Saskatchewan and come back to Manitoba are responsible to declare these items and to pay taxes on them, and they do.

But, Mr. Speaker, this triggers an audit, and the tax people from the Province are now asking consumers to also declare consumable items such as detergents, toothpaste, shampoos and clothing. These items have taxes, the PST, paid for in the province where they are purchased.

I want to ask the government if this is now a new policy of this government, to start double taxing consumers who purchase consumable items in another jurisdiction and then bring it back to the province of Manitoba.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to bring forward the particulars, and I will undertake to have them specifically examined and give him a concrete answer based on the material evidence that he puts in front of me.

So the short answer is show me the evidence. I'll have it examined, and I'll give him a concrete answer, and we'll resolve the matter.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, this isn't just one individual in the province. These are numbers of people who have had this experience, and it obviously has become a change in policy by this government.

So, therefore, I want to ask this government whether or not Manitobans who purchase consumable items—even clothing like this—out of province are now going to be forced to pay the tax in the province they purchased these goods in and then pay a double tax in Manitoba, as has now been forced on Manitobans by the tax people from the minister's office.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we don't actually patrol the borders between provinces, so I am not clear what the member is talking about. But if the member has some concrete information about any individual that's an example of what he alleges to be a larger group of individuals that have been mistreated, I would be happy to receive that information. I will have our tax officials look into it, and I will report back to the House or to him or any combination of the two about the specifics. But he's got to actually put concrete information on the record.

He indicated, just now, that a member from another province, who pays tax in another province, is being taxed on a consumable item when he brings it back to this province. We don't patrol the borders between provinces. We only have border patrols by the federal government between the United States

and Canada. That's the only border patrol that I'm aware of.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the tax I'm referring to is the provincial sales tax.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba residents who go to Saskatchewan and purchase consumable items pay the tax in Saskatchewan and people from Saskatchewan who come to Manitoba pay our tax here in Manitoba. When they return back to their home province they are not expected to pay a tax on those consumable items, but Manitobans who are being audited by the minister's own staff are now being told that they must pay the Manitoba provincial sales tax on consumable items that have been purchased outside of this province.

I want to know whether or not this is now a policy of this minister and this government.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, he hasn't been very concrete on the consumable items he's talking about. I mean, there's a difference between a very expensive item, a small item. The member should just simply put the facts on the record. Give us just one concrete example that he's concerned about, one simple concrete example. We will have it reviewed, and I will give the member and the House a response if he's willing to put some practical material, concrete information, on the record instead of blowing smoke.

St. Boniface Hospital Critical Incident Report

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, my constituents Amanda and Reagan Herd lost their infant son Kiernan a year and a half ago at the St. Boniface Hospital. His death was deemed a critical incident, but the parents are still waiting for answers from the Minister of Health.

I'd like to quote from a letter the minister and I both received, and I'll table that letter: Not one time has any person clearly and concisely answered the question about actually what happened that night nor have they stepped up and righted the wrong, fully accepting responsibility, taking accountability for what happened. We were always told his death was a system error. This is a life we are talking about, not a computer malfunction. We have been told the information is privileged and when and whom it is privileged, I get no response.

Why has the Minister of Health repeatedly refused to provide the parents with this critical information?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of meeting with the individuals that the member is speaking of. Indeed, they suffered a terrible tragedy in their lives, an unimaginable tragedy of losing a child, a baby, and work has been done with the regional health authorities, with the hospital, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, to provide as much information as possible to these individuals. We have told them that we're going to continue to work with them.

The existence of critical incident legislation enables the system to investigate such situations, giving families and individuals the facts while at the same time protecting individuals in the system who will come forward to testify.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, this family just needs answers from this minister.

Mr. Speaker, this death was deemed a critical incident. Obviously, something went very, very wrong. These parents are grieving and all they want, and I quote, is to be able to peer upon our own eyes the record that states what actually occurred that night. When asking Minister Oswald about this, she stated that she did not even record while—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The use of a member's name is out of order in this House. When directing another member, please use the minister's portfolio or their titles, or other members by their constituency, even if quoting from a letter.

Mr. Eichler: The Regional Health Authorities Act clearly states that the parents are entitled to the facts that actually occurred with respect to the critical incident. Instead, those parents have been told that the death of their little boy is a system error.

Will the minister commit to making sure that these parents get all the facts from her department without any further delay?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, again, this family has endured a terrible tragedy in the loss of the child, and according to the legislation that all members of this House voted in favour of, one of the first kinds of legislation of its kind in the nation, the family is entitled to know the facts of what happened during their case.

There are elements of the investigation, such as opinions and testimony from health-care workers, to which individuals are not privy. This is, of course, to avoid any sort of chilling effect on health-care

professionals that would otherwise not come forward. So that's why that part of the legislation exists as it is.

It is my belief, Mr. Speaker, that this family that has endured such a terrible loss needs to have as much information as they're entitled to, and we're going to work with them to ensure that they get it.

* (14:10)

Provincial Parks Park Pass Costs

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, more than a week ago in Estimates, the Minister of Conservation indicated that even though the entry into our provincial parks is free this year that taxpayer dollars were wasted on printing of park passes.

I'm wondering if the minister could indicate for me, today, how much money was wasted on the printing of these park passes this year.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): I guess I shouldn't be surprised that with such a positive announcement, the Tories would try to find a way to make it negative, Mr. Speaker. It very much fits into a pattern. This side of the House looks to do things that the people of Manitoba want to have happen. That side looks for ways to put up obstacles.

Very clearly, Mr. Speaker, I indicated in Estimates that I will find that number for my friend across the way, and I still endeavour to do that.

Mrs. Stefanson: It may be free to get into the parks, Mr. Speaker, but the Minister of Conservation has increased the fees for camping in the parks now to backfill that. So I think the minister may want to be a little bit careful how he handles that situation.

Mr. Speaker, if it's free to enter our parks, then why did the government waste taxpayer dollars printing passes that will never be used? How much money was spent on the printing of those passes?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, the member needs to remember the actual announcement that we made. Because we're going through a little bit of an economic downturn, for two years we're going to have in place free park entry to our parks. At that time, down the road, if we need to use these park passes, we can use them again. It's not a waste as my friend across the way tries to imply. We can reuse those park passes.

I just wish that our opposition would get a little bit more positive, a little bit more optimistic about Manitobans in the summer. Manitobans can go out and have some fun this summer. We're going to do it, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I guess the Minister of Conservation is saying that it's free to get in, but there's an extra surcharge to get out.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Minister of Conservation get these passes printed? Did he forget to call the printer? What happened? How much taxpayer dollars were wasted on the printing of park passes when it's free to get in the park?

Mr. Struthers: I'll put up our approach to improving accessibility to our parks any day against what the opposition has talked about, Mr. Speaker.

We've held the line on camping fees this year. That makes it more accessible for people.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable minister has the floor.

Mr. Struthers: —and we've removed commercial logging from 80 of 81 parks, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to make valuable investments into park infrastructure year after year.

The only thing green about the park entry position of members opposite is they're green with envy.

Correctional Facilities Incarceration of Mentally Disabled Persons

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the NDP government, when they were asked about the leaky roofs at the Forks Market, claimed that they were being looked after and yet with yesterday's rain they were as leaky as a sieve.

The NDP government has claimed to have a Justice Department which stands for fairness and justice, and yet that claim was shattered yesterday when the minister said he would be neither fair nor just to those who were caught unfairly by his cash-grabbing photo radar.

The NDP claims to treat those with mental disabilities well, and yet Tuesday this week the Ombudsman released a report expressing concern over excessive incarceration by this government of those with mental disabilities.

Why is the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) holding people with mental disabilities in jail when they don't need to be there?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, I know, is feigning indignation, but he's the one that cut 39 percent out of Canada's social transfers in the 1995 budget.

We're not perfect, but every year we've invested more money in social services. We've invested more money in mental health services, and I think everybody's got a record. He's got one.

I'm proud of the Minister of Justice's record in investing money for mental health services here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this is Mental Health Month. This is a month when we, as a province, should be paying close attention to those with mental illnesses or mental disabilities. Yet we have a government, an NDP government in our province, which is engaging in prolonged incarceration of those with mental illness or mental disabilities because there's no place for them to go when they're released.

Where are the basic rights of people with mental disabilities in this province? I ask the Minister of Justice: How many people is the government holding in prisons when they have a mental health disability, when they needn't be there?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of surprised at the way the member's framed that question. I thought that there was a general consensus in this House that we understood that one of the deficiencies of the criminal law system is the fact that people involved with mental health and addictions are caught up in the criminal justice system, and that we're all committed.

Mr. Speaker, that's why we have FASD programs at Headingley. That's why we have FASD co-ordinators. That's why we put in place the PACT program that was never in place, the Community Places program. That's one of the reasons why I quit law, doing criminal law. That's one of the reasons that mental health has become a priority for every member of this Chamber. We can't move that overnight.

But it is a significant issue, and we will admit and everybody in this Chamber knows that the line between criminal law and mental health or addictions

is a very fine line and that people should not be in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, while I'm glad the present Minister of Justice at least realizes the problem, the first time I asked this question of the former Minister of Justice, he said there was hardly anybody in jail who had any mental health problem. I'm glad we're moving in the right direction.

But there is a problem, and the Ombudsman was very clear in her report. The government is holding people with mental health or mental disability issues in jail when they shouldn't be in jail.

Why is the government doing this? This is Mental Health Month. Where are the basic rights of those with mental health issues or mental disability issues? Where are those basic rights in this province?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Well, Mr. Speaker, there's two points I want to make.

First of all, this government has increased the investment in community living for those Manitobans living with mental disabilities by 223 percent, Mr. Speaker. We're serving 1,400 more people in the community. Having said that, there is work under way that's in the same Ombudsman's report about the efforts between Justice, Family Services and Health to ensure that those with complex needs have a place to go.

But I'll say this to the member opposite, here's an old saying I just made up: When you stand up for something, maybe it's good to have something to stand on, because it's this same member in the federal Cabinet that cut the funding for housing in Manitoba. Right across the country, public housing funding came to an end under that member's participation in the federal government, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, governments were moving to get people with mental illness and mental disabilities living outside of institutions.

You should have something to stand up on, sir. You don't have any leg to stand on. You have no credibility.

Nursing Profession Training Spaces

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, nurses are a vital part of our health-care system, members of the health-care community that we value and cherish, so much so that we've had to invest so much time and energy in hiring and training to make

up for the cuts made to nursing staff by the previous government. I was proud to be part of that training process as a part of the Joint Baccalaureate Nursing program, and I'm also proud to be a part of a government that in '07-08 committed to expanding nurses' training by 100 seats and increasing graduate nursing by seven seats by 2011.

Could the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy please advise us of the progress made to date on fulfilling that commitment to nurses?

* (14:20)

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased yesterday to join with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), as we announced \$1.2 million to fund an additional 74 spaces for nurse training about Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, when we put these 74 seats along together with the 50 seats announced in '08-09, we will have exceeded our promise of 100 seats by 24. We will have funded 124 seats, and we will have done this two years ahead of schedule in '09 as opposed to 2011.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore, the training will take place across the province in Brandon, in Winnipeg, in the north, at University of Manitoba, at Red River College. I am pleased to say that since we've been in power we've doubled the number of training positions for nurses, and there are now 2,034 more nurses in Manitoba.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba School-Based Programs

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): This NDP government has totally dropped the ball on addictions programming.

A year ago, I asked the Minister of Healthy Living why the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba couldn't provide a school-based program in the community of Elton. AFM said that binge drinking among high school students is on the rise. In fact, there's a higher rate of high school binge drinking in Manitoba than the national average.

Can the Minister of Healthy Living explain why, a year later, the NDP government still has a moratorium on AFM school-based programs?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Mr. Speaker, the investments that we've made around mental health and addictions are record

amounts in this province. We have more work to do but we continue to work with all of our partners.

We work with schools, with service providers, what we're doing with Addictions Foundation of Manitoba through their providing services around prevention and education to providing treatment services and continuing to do a very good job in our province. We do provide school-based services and we will continue.

Treatment Wait Times

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, that's quite the answer.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that the moratorium continues to be in place. There's still a moratorium on school-based programming. This moratorium on school-based programming isn't the only way this NDP government has failed Manitobans with addictions.

I have received a letter from a woman in my constituency who points out that unless a constituent is able to travel to towns or cities with an AFM office, addictions treatment is simply not available, and even when patients can afford to travel, they face long wait times for treatment.

Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years, the average wait time for residential treatment in Brandon has been anywhere between 32 days all the way up to 108 days.

When is the Minister of Healthy Living going to stand up for Manitobans with addictions and make sure services are available when they are needed?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Mr. Speaker, since 1999, this government has been standing up for people with mental health and addictions services. Our record proves it. You can see the results by the supports that we provide to the addictions agencies across Manitoba, by the investments we have made for mental health clinicians through the regional health authorities. That is making a difference.

Most importantly, the clinician initiatives we take very seriously, the Healthy Schools initiatives, which provides that information around addictions services. We have, as a department, come together with the addictions-serving agencies and the self-help groups and have defined a five-point plan

for addictions services, and we will continue to implement that plan and move this file forward.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Before we move on to members' statements, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us Mr. Jerry Storie, who's the former Member for Flin Flon.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Canada-Israel Relations 60th Anniversary

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, this past Monday, May 11, 2009, marked the 60th anniversary of Canada-Israel diplomatic relations.

This anniversary is an important one for Canada, as the relationship in history between the two countries stretches back to the beginning of the establishment of the Israeli state. Canada was one of the 33 countries who voted for the establishment of the Israeli state on November 29, 1947, at the United Nations and recognized the State of Israel upon its founding in 1948. The two countries established formal diplomatic relations on May 11, 1949.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the relationship has continued to grow and flourish. It is multifaceted and includes political, economic, social, cultural, legal and academic relations. It includes a free trade agreement, a joint industrial R&D fund and bilateral co-operation in many fields including agricultural research, water treatment, internal security, legal co-operation and countless relations between universities and cultural exchanges.

Furthermore, Israel is Canada's fourth largest merchandise export market in the Middle East and North Africa. Bilateral merchandise trade has more than tripled since the 12-year-old free trade agreement's implementation in 1997. Canada exports everything from machinery, paper, plastics, wood and aluminum to Israel and imports pharmaceutical products, electrical machinery, precious stones and metals and optical equipment.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has signed onto its own agreements with Israel. Our Department of Water Stewardship is currently collaborating with Israeli experts to promote more efficient water use,

providing scholarships for wetlands restoration, water conservation and water re-use. There are approximately 20,000 Canadian citizens living in Israel, and many Canadians have family there.

Mr. Speaker, the Israeli community, both in Manitoba and Canada, play the central role in the preservation and strengthening of the relationship in Canada. People are the underlying strength between the Canada-Israel relationship. These ties give rise to the significant co-operation between our two countries.

To commemorate this important milestone, 2009 will bear witness to a number of diplomatic, cultural and academic events in Canada and Israel. Looking back on a solid relationship over the past 60 years, we look forward to many more years of diplomatic relations to come. Thank you.

Collaborating for Your Health Conference

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I rise today to tell the members of the House about a recent conference that took place in Brandon's Keystone Centre to celebrate healthy aging in Manitoba. For the second year in a row, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba put on a dynamic event, called Collaborating for Your Health: Healthy Aging, to celebrate aging and educate Manitobans about what it means to age well.

The conference featured a wide variety of information booths, panel discussions and keynote speakers as well as fun physical exercise to promote the healthy aging of Manitoba senior citizens. More than 200 people took part in the day's activities, which included belly dancing and Nintendo Wii games.

Because we believe in the importance of healthy aging and the potential benefits of events such as this for all Manitobans, our caucus was honoured to be able to lend support by sponsoring a healthy nutrition break at the conference.

The event also corresponded with Nursing Week, which continues this week across the province and the nation to recognize the dedicated women and men who diligently serve the public, including our aging population, through their nursing professions.

As the number of aging Manitobans and Canadians continues to increase significantly, it is important to recognize the benefits of healthy aging for all of society. I would like to thank the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba for their

initiative and forethought in putting together this event. I would also like to thank the many hardworking volunteers who contributed to its success. Let us all continue to celebrate the privilege of aging as a community, while striving to help one another remain active and healthy in the process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bernie Wolfe Community School Fundraiser

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, on May 9, I attended Bernie Wolfe Community School's 12-hour Swing-a-Thon. The event was held to raise funds for a new school play structure.

To raise money for the new structure, participants took turns swinging with two swings going for 12 hours straight. To keep children and their families entertained, there was also a petting zoo, inflatable bouncers, a balloon artist, carnival games, face painting, relay races, a dunk tank and a bike safety rodeo put on by MPI. At the end, the Swing-a-Thon successfully raised \$13,000 which, combined with money previously raised, allowed the school to meet their fundraising goal.

I would like to thank Lisa Webinger for her tremendous leadership and building a team with Teresa Cripps and Cathy Chiborak, a team of very capable members like both of them from the Bernie Wolfe Parent Advisory Council, and for all their hard work in organizing this event. I would like to recognize Debbie Kutzan and Bev Early, the two parents who regularly commit to helping out at the school. I'd also like to thank Daryl Barber of Scotiabank for his help with the Swing-a-Thon. Finally, many businesses and organizations helped raise funds, including Cathay House, Curve 94.3, Giant Tiger, the Optimist Club, Scotiabank, Terracon developers, Wyatt Insurance and City Councillor Russ Wyatt.

Mr. Speaker, I had a lot of fun at this particular event. It's great to see not just parents but the whole community coming together to do something positive for the children in their neighbourhood. It's my hope that this kind of community involvement will become more widespread across the city and our province.

I congratulate and thank the parents, residents, teachers, principal, vice-principal and their staff for their help in making this great community school justify the name it holds, Bernie Wolfe Community School. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:30)

Gladys Taylor Cook

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): I rise today to commemorate the life of Gladys Taylor Cook, a remarkable lady in my constituency who passed away on Saturday, May 9, 2009.

I witnessed an outpouring of love and respect at her funeral service yesterday with the RCMP and sheriff honour guards in attendance. The Venerable Norman Collier performed the service and delivered a eulogy which shared a wonderful woman's life that brought the many gathered to tears and to laughter.

Gladys Taylor Cook was born in a tent on the Sioux Valley Reserve west of Brandon. She was given the Dakota name, Topah-hde-win, meaning four steps, representing the four directions of the sacred circle of life in the Dakota Nation.

Gladys had a difficult life growing up. She spent a childhood attending residential school, a victim of abuse. She moved to South Dakota as a teenager and married a man who became a violent alcoholic abuser. Gladys moved her children back to Canada to start life anew and was able to find love and healing for her family.

Gladys, with her life's experience motivating her, spent much of her adult life volunteering her time to help those in distress, Mr. Speaker. She was greatly involved in Al-Anon, and worked for the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program in Portage la Prairie, counselling people about the dangers of substance abuse. Gladys was an active member of the Anglican Church, the Youth Justice Committee, the Quest Group Home for Girls, the women's correctional centre, the Agassiz Youth Centre and as a director of Winnipeg's St. Norbert Foundation for substance abusers.

For these involvements and so much more, Gladys has received numerous recognitions for her dedication to serving those in need. She received the Governor General's Award for promoting women's rights. She was awarded Canada's 125 medal for commitment to her people, her community and her country, and most recently, she was inducted into the Order of Manitoba. We will continue to benefit from her public service as a women's correctional facility consultation committee member which is guiding this province's future development in justice.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport (Mr. Robinson), the Anglican Church and myself had recently submitted a nomination for Gladys's induction into the Order of Canada, an honour that recognized the influences she had over so many lives.

As a Dakota elder, her traditional memorial service will be held later today.

Mr. Speaker, she is and will always be a positive role model in the First Nations community and for all Manitobans. Her life demonstrated the way for all others to follow: kindness, honesty, truth and sharing.

Mr. Speaker and members of this House, please join with me in commemorating the memory of Gladys Taylor Cook and let us recognize the many lessons that she has taught us through her life. The world is indeed a better place today because of Gladys. Thank you.

Kanwal Brar

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I rise today to recognize an outstanding youth in our community. Kanwal Brar of Winnipeg was honoured last month for his volunteer contributions with the United Way and for his volunteer leadership in developing the Winnipeg Interdisciplinary Student-Run Health Clinic, also known as the WISH Clinic.

On April 22, 2009, Kanwal Brar was recognized for this outstanding work with a 2009 Premier's Volunteer Service Award. These awards are in co-operation with Volunteer Manitoba and are meant to honour the efforts and dedication of outstanding volunteers throughout the province. Two individuals received the award in this year's youth category and Kanwal Brar was one of them.

Kanwal has displayed outstanding compassion and dedication to the community. He has been a volunteer with the United Way since 2002. He first joined the Shaw United Way Youth Connections Council as a high school student. He went on to become the first chair of United Way's Youth Relations Council, the youth-led volunteer group responsible for their overall youth engagement strategy. He has been described as a natural leader by Eric Friesen, United Way's Director of Engagement, who nominated Kanwal for the Volunteer Service Award.

Kanwal is currently in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. He and a few of his fellow health sciences students worked together to open a student-run health clinic in Winnipeg's Point Douglas community. The WISH Clinic will bring together post-secondary students and mentors from a broad range of health disciplines. The interdisciplinary nature of the clinic will enable the students to offer comprehensive services to patients, while at the same time give the students the opportunity to develop their clinical and interpersonal communication skills and to learn more about inner city issues and social needs.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating Kanwal on his Volunteer Service Award and to thank him for his dedication toward building a healthy Manitoba community. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there will be several announcements both from myself and the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) as we proceed through the afternoon. I can indicate, in terms of orders of bills for today, that could you please call Bill 30, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2009; followed by Bill 26, The Apprenticeship and Certification Act; followed by second reading of Bill 18, The Regulated Health Professions Act; Bill 13, The Medical Amendment Act; Bill 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act; and Bill 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act, in that order.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the order of business will be that we'll resume debate on second reading in this order. We'll start out with Bill 30. When that's completed, we'll go to 26, and then, if completed, we'll go to second readings of Bill 18, 13, 28 and 32.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 30—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2009

Mr. Speaker: So I'm now going to call resume debate on Bill 30, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2009, standing in the

name of the honourable Member for Morris, who has eight minutes remaining.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do think it's important to speak to this Bill 30, because I think what we're doing here, with this bill, is single-handedly giving the Finance Minister complete rein and power over what is going to happen with the next three budgets, and whether or not he will actually pay down the debt in this province or whether he will just want to spend the money on his own pet projects.

What happened here, just to review, is last year this government brought in Bill 38, the unbalanced budget legislation, which basically tore apart the balanced budget and didn't require this government to balance the books.

Instead, all they have to do now is balance the operating budget every year and they can now, instead of having to balance the budget—operating budget every year, they can now balance their budget on a four-year rolling average using income from the Crown corporations.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, we did see the lack of support for this bill in committee and, in fact, many people came and spoke against this bill. I'm not surprised because they campaigned on keeping balanced budget legislation and then they come into office and they totally break that promise. As I said the last time, I did not see any campaign literature that said, elect the NDP and we will break the balanced budget legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, next thing they do is they bring in the budget, and they indicate that instead of paying the \$100-million payment against the debt as they had just passed in the law, that they would reduce that payment now, and they'd only make themselves pay \$20 million of that. That was just in the budget not that long ago. Then, just a few weeks after the budget, the Finance Minister brings in Bill 30, which now gives him the authority to determine how much, if at all, he will pay down the debt over the next several years.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I'd like to ask this minister whom he consulted with on this. Did Manitobans come to him and say, Mr. Minister, I think that we should allow the government not to pay any debt over the next three years? I just would have a hard time believing that there would be people coming to the minister and saying, please,

Mr. Minister, could you bring in a bill that doesn't allow the Province to pay down the debt for three years, and give yourself the power to do whatever you like with the money? I just don't think there's anybody out there that has done that.

I think, rather than rewriting the legislation in order to theoretically, as they call balancing the budget, that we would like the NDP to look at their wasteful spending practices, Mr. Speaker. Really, postponing debt payments into the future is like re-mortgaging your house, paying it over a longer period of time, but you don't have to pay as much now. But in the end, you still have to pay. And in the end, when the interest rates go up, you're going to have to pay more in debt servicing.

So all that's happening right now is you're taking money that you should be using to pay down the debt, shifting it into future generations, onto our children and grandchildren at a higher cost to them. Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou) said, it's like saying as a parent, you know, I don't want to be bothered paying for my house, so I'll leave you my house to my children. You know, you can pay for it; I don't want to pay for it, but you can pay for it.

Is that really what we want? Is that what we want? My parents wouldn't have done that to me. They didn't want to saddle me with debt. I don't want to saddle my children with debt, but that's what the agenda of this NDP government is, to allow themselves to spend the money now and saddle future generations of this province, our children, with the debt that they will still have to pay, Mr. Speaker.

Ordinary Manitobans know that we do have to— are obligated to pay our financial obligations, whether that's our own debt, that's our day-to-day obligations. We can't go and run up credit card bills and say to ourselves, oh, well, I'm not going to pay them. Well, maybe I'll pay them a little bit or maybe I won't pay them or maybe I'll pay them in three years.

I guess if you want to do that, in the end, you know, everybody in this room knows, that in the end, if you do that, you are going to be paying more because the debt doesn't go away, it compounds and it compounds with interest and it compounds at a higher interest, Mr. Speaker.

So what this minister is doing is totally irresponsible, by allowing himself free rein to decide whether he will pay down the debt or not, and

Mr. Speaker, that's wrong. That's fundamentally wrong to give himself the power to do that because he went to the public and said, elect me, and I will keep balanced budget legislation. And now, he comes into this House with a bill that says, no, I'm not going to keep that promise; in fact, I'm going to tear apart the balanced budget legislation, and I'm going to give myself power to decide if, at all, I want to pay down any debt.

I don't think that Manitobans would approve of that if they knew the extent of what powers this minister is trying to give himself here, Mr. Speaker.

What Bill 30 does is provide a legacy of debt into the future as I've already outlined. There are so many examples of wasteful spending that I can talk about, that this government—[interjection] Well, the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) says name them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about Spirited Energy, a waste of \$3 million. Let's talk about the west-side bipole for \$640 million. Let's talk about the enhanced driver's licence for \$13 million. Let's talk about \$300,000 going to B.C. for a bakery. I don't know. Let's talk about printed park passes that don't get used. Let's talk about bloated health-care bureaucracy. We don't even know all the cost to that. The list goes on.

The fact is this government is running up mismanaged spending. It's just like a credit card debt. They just keep piling on the debt and piling on the debt and then they say, oh, wait a minute, we can't pay this. We better bring in a bill that says, well, we don't have to pay it for the next three years, and then what? Along comes an election in 2011 and yes, guess what, Conservatives win. We're saddled with their debt, Mr. Speaker. That's the biggest problem I see in this bill. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 26—The Apprenticeship and Certification Act

Mr. Speaker: I now call Bill 26, The Apprenticeship and Certification Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who has 20 minutes remaining.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'm going to sum up quite briefly. In fact, this is a bill which we really should have had 10 years ago in

2000 and with appropriate apprenticeship certification training we have been short for quite some time of people in the skills trade in this province and it has been widely recognized that this needs to be addressed.

Clearly, this is a step forward. We would much like to have improved accountability in terms of a much better and prescriptive strategic plan, much better and more prescriptive annual report where we actually get results of what the government is doing and not just rhetoric or spin. I think it's very important for all of us that this act work well. We want to make sure that the results are actually delivered upon so that's why we want to be watching very carefully.

We will be listening to comments at the committee stage and certainly ready to listen very carefully to what people have to say. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, was wanting to add a few thoughts on the record in regard to Bill 26 as we anticipate that it will ultimately be going to committee and ultimately coming back for third reading and its passage.

The principle of apprenticeship and the need for it is, I think, widely appreciated and acknowledged. The first WHEREAS within the legislation makes a fairly clear statement by saying that highly skilled work force is vital to Manitoba's economic prosperity. I don't think anyone would question that, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:50)

What I'd like to highlight is, at least in good part, over the years sometimes we miss opportunities. We miss a great deal of economic opportunities when government is not able to make the right connections in terms of what the needs of the work force are and what the needs of the employees and how we best equip those employees to be able to meet the need of the jobs of the future. Really that's what apprenticeship is supposed to be all about. It's to get individuals that have the skill sets or the potential to develop certain skill sets trained in such a way that they'll be able to gain employment here in the province of Manitoba, and thereby contribute to the overall gross domestic product of our province. The more successful we are at doing that, I would ultimately argue, the better the lifestyle of all Manitobans will be, because in Canada and, in particular, in Manitoba, we're very reliant on a wide variety of different types of social programming that

is there today for us, Mr. Speaker, and, to a certain degree, I think, we could all be accused, at least in part, of sometimes taking that—some of those social programming programs that we have—for granted. We are, in fact, very fortunate to be able to have many of the different programs that we have that are there. In most part, those programs are paid through different forms of taxation or fees that governments of different levels will ultimately charge.

Well, Mr. Speaker, none of it would be possible if we were not able to be able to have the most important thing in terms of a social program, and that is a job for a Manitoban. Everyone, I would like to think, would acknowledge a good social program is a job. We want people to be employed, and where the economy and where the province hurts is when we have jobs that are there, but we don't have anyone here in the province that is able to fill those jobs.

Equally, it hurts when we have unemployed Manitobans that don't necessarily have the skills to be able to fill those jobs that are here. We lose out in two ways: one, of the employee not being able to work, and thereby getting an income, and through that income being able to cultivate the economy—as one of my friends would always refer to the importance of the cultivation of the economy. The other drawback is those jobs. So, on the one hand—those jobs that go unfilled. So, on the one hand, we have unemployed people, and on the other hand we have jobs that are in the economy that are unfilled because there's just no one there that has the skill sets to be able to deal with it.

Well, we approach it in different ways. How do we best address both of those issues? That is a challenge: that government has to adjust its priorities and determine, well, what is important for the government? What industries do they want to focus some attention on?

There are times in which some industries create hundreds going into the thousands of jobs here in the province of Manitoba, and when you think of the future, the future is actually very encouraging for some of those industries. When I say encouraging, I'm talking about continual future growth of opportunities in those industries.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

On the other hand, we have some industries that the likelihood of huge prosperity, at least in the short term, really isn't there. In fact, one of the industries,

which I thought is very an interesting industry to follow, is likely our garment industry.

You know, at one time the garment industry was a fairly vibrant industry. I think it really picked up in and around that World War II, and then a couple of decades later Winnipeg then started to really expand in the garment industry. Manitoba—the Manitobans—there were not enough people living in Manitoba in order to fill those jobs that were prepared to work within that industry. So what we did is we went abroad in order to fill those positions. Quite frankly, Manitoba has benefited immensely by doing that. We had a choice, right? We could either leave those positions vacant and then, eventually, they will just disappear, or, we could try to train individuals to fill those jobs, or quite often, we will look abroad, outside of our country, outside of Manitoba, and bring people in.

Well, for the garment industry, back then, that's what we did. We looked abroad and we brought people in, in order to support that industry at the time, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well, what ended up happening, and I know many individuals that came from abroad, focus was given, in particular '68 to '72, where we literally had hundreds of individuals coming from the Philippines, filling those vital and important jobs. You'll find that, even once those immigrants came to our province, they were able to sponsor and fill many other jobs through family members that were also in there—or I should say that were available in the province of Manitoba, thereby expanding our manufacturing industry in particular.

So the garment industry really started to take off and then, in fact, in the mid-'90s, we were at a crisis situation again where garment workers were in high demand. We needed to get more garment workers. At that time, I think, we were around 6,000 within that industry, the manufacturing industry. Then what ended up happening is there was another recruitment drive that, in part, went, again, outside of Canada, where we were able to sustain additional economic activity and growth in the province. In fact, our garment industry, from what I understand, peaked somewhere around 8,000 to 10,000. Well, in the last number of years, and largely because of trade policies, the garment industry has taken a very steep nosedive and I believe now it's an industry that employs a thousand, and one questions in terms of what is the potential going into the future.

So you have industries like the garment industry. You have industries that are like our aerospace

industry. Winnipeg has a history of producing aerospace engineers and mechanics, you name it, dealing with our aerospace industry. This is an industry where it's now been in Manitoba for decades. It's very healthy today, and the future of that industry is looking very promising into the future.

Well, again, if you take a look at that particular industry, you will find that we still do rely, in good part, on people from outside the province of Manitoba in order to fill many of those positions, Madam Deputy Speaker. Yet, on the other hand, we still have many Manitobans that are looking for good quality jobs within that particular industry. We have individuals that immigrate to our province that have the skills that could fill many of those types of jobs going, again, into the future, because it's an industry that does have great potential in terms of growth.

Well, this is where I believe a proactive government dealing with apprenticeship can really make a difference in identifying those industries and looking at the skills that many immigrants bring to our province in getting those skills acknowledged and accredited so that they're able to fill many of those jobs that are there. Equally, it's important that the government look in terms of what's being taught in our educational facilities.

*(15:00)

You know, Tec-Voc is an absolutely wonderful high school that always amazes me in terms of the degree to which they reach out into the business community and other communities, including labour, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they, as much as possible, are in touch with the types of jobs that are going to be there and are going to be important to the student body at Tec-Voc. It's always great to go to the Tec-Voc graduation ceremonies where you will see different business interests and teachers get involved in bursary programs to encourage and promote individuals to enter into many of those industries that are going to be in high demand in terms of jobs well into the future.

It's that sort of co-ordination that's very important. On the one hand, recognizing the skills, talents and abilities of immigrants that come to our province. On the other hand, it's ensuring that the courses and education that we're providing in our high schools, are, in fact, setting people up—high schools I should say and colleges and universities, that we're equipping these people with an education and the skill sets that are going to be in high demand going into the future. I think that's absolutely

critically important because as that very WHEREAS says, it's vital to Manitoba's economic prosperity.

I think that you would find that there's many economists that will tell you that Manitoba has lost many opportunities. We've lost opportunities because we haven't been able to meet the demands of many of the employers in terms of a staff that's necessary in order for them to continue to grow and to continue to reach foreign markets or even local markets here. Some of those jobs have been lost permanently. You need to have employment and people within the province of Manitoba that have the skill sets to be able to fill those jobs. The longer those jobs that are in high demand go unfilled, the greater the likelihood that we could ultimately lose those jobs and we see that.

One of the things I think kind of differ myself from the Premier (Mr. Doer) was I remember back in the '90s how the Premier would often talk about some jobs as just being—and I believe it was call centre jobs, we were getting lots of call centre jobs and he didn't mean it in a positive way. I've always believed that Manitoba is big enough to be able to handle a wide variety of jobs and all jobs contribute to the economic prosperity of our province, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's important that we give the attention that is deserved and warranted to all sectors of our economy.

There are all sorts of potential training programs that could be developed to encourage individuals to be able to seek career-type of jobs and many of those jobs today that might not be perceived as career jobs, can, in fact, become career jobs if, in fact, you're prepared to provide the type of training that is necessary to allow for certain skills and skill sets to be developed.

The legislation makes reference to the Red Seal Program. That's a program that I think works exceptionally well. The concept is phenomenal. It allows greater mobility of individuals that have expertise.

A very good friend of mine is a cook for the military, Madam Deputy Speaker. She's just a fabulous cook, the best sticky buns you could ever have. Just a wonderful, wonderful cook. I can tell you I've had the opportunity to kind of, on the sidelines, watch, in terms of how she was able to acquire her Red Seal. By acquiring her Red Seal, the opportunity for her to be able to go between

provinces and to continue on in her career has been greatly enhanced as a result.

I say that because I believe that it is important that as provincial legislators, in particular the minister responsible for this particular bill, has a responsibility to negotiate with other provincial counterparts and the appropriate federal minister, and try to work out agreements wherever possible to ensure that there is mobility of expertise and training, you know, the skill sets that are developed here in the province of Manitoba are recognized and valued in other provincial jurisdictions. That's what I like about the Red Seal Program.

I don't know to what degree there is perfect harmony across the country in terms of some of those health-care professionals. I would like to see that there's always room for improvement, whether it's a medical doctor, registered nurse, B.N., L.P.N., whatever different types of professionals that are out there, lab technologists. There's a litany of different types of professions and technicians within the health-care field, and we should be exploring other jurisdictions and looking at trying to, you know, ease any sort of restrictions that could prevent someone from being able to take their skills and practise that skill in other jurisdictions.

By doing that, it's not saying that we're trying to encourage Manitobans to leave our province and go to other provinces. More like, it's about allowing and enabling health-care professionals and other individuals the ability to choose Manitoba. You know, in the ideal world, I would like to think that, if we're aggressive enough, Manitoba is in a position that it can compete in Canada.

I know that we need to improve a great deal on many different fronts, but having said that, I believe that, ultimately, Manitoba is the best place in the country to live and it has many different benefits. But, to me, life in good part is about relationships and being able to build upon relationships and how you're able to do that. If you look at our lifestyle of affordable housing to the number of Manitobans that have things like cottages and things of that nature, things that other provinces cannot compete with us.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe if we use those natural benefits of being in the province of Manitoba and, through that appeal, that we would have more people wanting to come to our province. That's why, you know, when we look and we hear about apprenticeship training and Red Seal-type of programs that there is a great deal of benefit to our

province to, as much as possible, push for national standards. I look forward to seeing more national standards being accepted and supported.

I think it would be wrong for me to sit down without commenting on an issue that is very, very important to me personally. I've made reference to this issue in the past. I've already somewhat highlighted it when I spoke or just even a few minutes ago. I want to re-emphasize it because it's an issue that comes up in my office a great deal, and that is the issue of foreign credentials. I believe that the government needs to work a whole lot harder in terms of recognizing the skills and credentials that people from foreign lands bring to our province.

*(15:10)

One of the things that always somewhat amazed me was one story when I was out doing some shopping on St. James. I was looking for a couch at the time, and I was talking to one of the salespeople there. He had indicated to me that he was actually a doctor, a medical doctor. He had delivered hundreds of babies in India. At the time, I believe, that we were actually having to transport pregnant moms from Brandon to Winnipeg. Yet, on the other hand, we had someone that was in the furniture industry that was a pediatrician in India. When he was told everything that he was going to have to do in order to get his credentials realized, he figured he'd be better off just to go as a businessman, and I don't think there's anything that the government could have done to have convinced him otherwise, other than changing the system.

I think it's because, quite often, there are barriers that are unfairly put in place in many ways. As a result, it demonstrates a genuine lack of respect for many of the individuals that are here, living in our province, that have skills and have credentials that would enable them to become more full participants in our economy in a way which they were actually trained from their homelands. I think that we do a disservice by not doing more to protect their ability to be able to practice what they had trained for and received education for.

I put that up as a challenge to government. Here we are talking about apprenticeship and the importance of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is meant to employ people in an area which they are seeking to get educated and develop skill sets. Well, in good part, we need to start acknowledging many of the skill sets that people do bring to our province,

which we fail in doing so, and quite often give more lip service to it than anything else.

Suffice to say, there are some fairly significant changes to Bill 26. We anticipate that there will likely be some presentations as we go into the committee. I know the ability to designate, now, occupations, to set certification is one of those issues that I do have some concerns in regard to. There are other aspects of the bill which, over the next couple of weeks, we hope to be able to talk about a little bit more and see what the government might have to say.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to say a few words, and I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that Bill 26, The Apprenticeship and Certification Act, be adjourned.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry, could you just repeat that? I didn't catch the last part of it.

Mr. Pedersen: I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa, that Bill 26, The Apprenticeship and Certification Act, now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 18—The Regulated Health Professions Act

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I move, seconded by the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 18, The Regulated Health Professions Act; Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

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

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of this bill, and the message has been tabled.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, The Regulated Health Professions Act is an updated, modern piece of legislation to ensure health professions in Manitoba are governed by consistent, standardized regulations with an enhanced focus on patient safety and accountability. The laws which regulate health professions need to better serve the public and to

provide a more modern framework for the work of health professionals. More responsive legislative framework is necessary to support initiatives concerning patient safety, health human resource management, labour mobility and fair access to registration.

Mr. Speaker, The Regulated Health Professions Act is the result of over two years of consultation with the regulated health professions and a public consultation process undertaken earlier this year. The primary goal of the regulated health professions is to better serve and protect the public interest. It will replace the 21 existing stand-alone health profession statutes; continue self-governance for health professions; ensure all regulatory bodies establish standards of practice, codes of ethics and competency standards to further strengthen patient safety; create consistent and fair complaints and disciplinary processes across all colleges; increase public representation on the boards of self-governing professions; improve patient safety by regulating a broader scope of clinical procedures, ensuring that they are only performed by qualified providers; improve patient choice by safely maximizing the scope of practice for all health professions and reducing barriers to the interdisciplinary practice; provide increased and consistent accountability between the regulatory bodies and the government; establish a process to review requests from unregulated professions that wish to become self-governing; and facilitate changes to regulated health profession governance in a more streamlined and timely manner.

I encourage all members of this House to support this bill as we move forward to modernize and enhance health care in the province of Manitoba.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to put a few comments on the record in respect to Bill 18. We are, first of all, let me say, generally supportive of this legislation, though I'm going to put a few concerns on the record.

This legislation will replace legislation covering chiropractors, dentists, dental hygienists, denturists, licensed practical nurses, people with Manitoba Speech and Hearing, The Medical Act for physicians, The Medical Laboratory Technologists Act, The Midwifery Act, The Naturopathic Act, The Occupational Therapists Act, The Opticians Act, The Optometry Act, The Pharmaceutical Act, The Physiotherapists Act, The Podiatrists Act, The

Psychologists Registration Act, the dietitians, nurses, psychiatric nurses and, of course, respiratory therapists.

* (15:20)

It's clearly an effort which has taken some time, and I think the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) should be complimented on the effort that it has taken and those who have been involved. I would, at the same time, say that there is a lot of work that went into this, and I think we should recognize that.

The areas where I have the most concern with respect to this act is the approach, and I think that where we need to head in the future and should have gone further along this line is in the realm of moving toward an act which will look primarily at where people have done wrong and have an act which will look primarily and develop best practices, make sure that people are moving forward to achieve on a continuing basis with continuing education, the highest standards of excellence that are possible.

I think it's clear that Manitobans should benefit from, they should have professions working at the highest possible calibre, and that the quality of health care delivered by any of these professions, that we should've had in this bill, in my view, some measures which would have, not only identified best practices as vital, but moved us step-by-step in the direction of not only establishing but making sure that people throughout the province are engaged in and using best practices.

It's true that this legislation will put a framework in which all the colleges are expected to establish standards. This is an area which in the past standards have been that you passed the medical licensing, standards have been that you've engaged, for example, in medicine in some continuing medical education on an ongoing basis.

But we need to be able to take this further and benefit. For example, there are investigations which occur on a regular basis in any of these professions, and those investigations will find areas where there are opportunities for improvement, areas perhaps where problems have occurred, errors have happened. What we need to make sure is that we learn from the mistakes, from the problems, from the errors. The whole goal of improving is to be able to learn from what has happened and put in place processes, put in place best practices, which will enable us to operate a system which doesn't make

errors and have problems to the same extent that it does currently.

I believe that people in professions are happiest when they know that they are, and they're supported in, using the best practices which are available. Sadly, for a whole variety of reasons, this hasn't always happened. Sometimes there are areas where the government could have acted to facilitate the development, the use of best practices, but they have not engaged in the activities, whether it is using information technology, new equipment, approaches to managing wait lists, what have you, to get us to the point where we are having best practices.

There are efforts in other provinces, in other jurisdictions, other individual physicians or groups of physicians or a group of health practitioners, who are engaged in the development of and the use of best practices, for example, in the area of treatment of chronic diseases, best practices based on clear evidence of what works and what doesn't work.

Mr. Speaker, not all that long ago, there was a study of surgeons which showed that approximately 10 percent of the carotid endarterectomy studies, which were done on the prairies, were being done not under the optimum circumstances. That is, that they were being done where all the research evidence to date would suggest that they're more likely to do harm than good. Well, one of the basic tenets, surely, of practicing in health professions, whichever one we're dealing with, is that we should be engaged in activities which do more good than harm, and that we should not be engaged in activities which do more harm than good.

This is one of the clearly guiding principles. It is, though, in my view, a mistake not to have put best practices and the use of evidence to develop those best practices, fundamental components, of this legislation. Best practices is one of the major goals of this legislation.

I believe that, for example, that there should be, just as there has been here, a system for recognizing, putting on public display, on the Internet, where somebody with a profession—I think it's probably more done with the medical profession than others—where somebody has been censured, that is noted. But where somebody has been engaged in best practices and recognized for that, there is not the same sort of ability to make sure that people are credited for the positive things that they do.

I think this is something that all the professions would benefit from, that we should make sure there is a place in the same profile, physician profiles or nurse profiles, that will recognize the positive qualities of physicians, a positive recognition, the use of best practices, the exemplary results in the provision of care and so on.

It is interesting that there is a public Web site—I think it's called rate your doctor—in which people can write in and rate their doctor. Well, if we're not doing it through this kind of process which people are treated fairly and you know that you've got a standard approach, then we're going to have all sorts of other Internet rating going on. Not that there may not be some good things coming out of that, but I think that the lack of attention to this area has meant that you've got such efforts arising spontaneously. If we don't move in this area, we're likely to have Web sites for each of these professions: rate your chiropractor, rate your nurse, what have you.

I think let us move forward and think about how we are going to develop a system in which the best practices are really front and centre, and this is best practices not just in treatment of sickness, but it is best practices in terms of prevention of sickness, keeping people well, being able to know what works and what doesn't work not only at the level of an individual health profession practitioner but also at a community level. If in some circumstances that involves—and in perhaps many circumstances that involves health professionals working together, that can be part of what we record and advance in terms of the use of best practices in achieving good results.

* (15:30)

I think it's very important that we are assessing effectiveness of what we're doing. Jane Jacobs, in one of her books, expressed concerns about professions and professions regulating themselves like guilds many centuries ago, maybe not all that many centuries ago. But the problem here is that we need to be ever-moving forward and that we can't lack the ability, we can't just focus on the problems. We must be looking forward in terms of the best practices and establishing competency as is done here. It could be used as a window to move towards looking at best practices, but I would say that the situation is that we need to move beyond some minimum standards of competence and more toward looking at how we can move people toward best practices and reward people for engaging in best practices.

I think that the section in this act—let me speak about this for a little bit—which deals with the processes and the results of investigations. One of the results of the investigations, I believe, that should be here, but really is not in any way adequately put down, is that where there are investigations from any of the professions which suggest that there are problems which can be improved, that there are processes which can be corrected, that that information should flow to the Health Professions Advisory Council as a natural part and expectation of the processes covered under this act; and that the Health Professions Advisory Council should have a mandate to look not just at new professions, or assessing new professions coming in, but should have a mandate which is a broader mandate looking at how you can develop standards, best practices across all professions, and get people working together, and ensure that the information which is coming in is used in a way that's going to provide continuous and steady improvement to everything that we do.

There are issues in here, which I think that the Health Professions Advisory Council could also comment on. They relate to issues not only of competency for individual professions, but I think an assessment from the Health Professions Advisory Council of how we look at people in different professions practising to the extent to which they are competent.

Not all medicine, clearly, is the same. People become more competent in certain areas than in others. This applies to whatever area. Nurses may specialize and know how to look after people in the intensive care unit, but not be experienced in home care, and so on. Clearly, part of this is establishing the—making sure that people who move from one part of nursing to another or one part of a medical area to another, that they have the appropriate upgrading or are able to demonstrate that they're ready and competent to practise as their practice may change.

I think that it is important. I have heard this from the licensed practical nurses, that you're able to look at areas of competence and to bring people, as knowledge, as ability, as technology changes, to be able to practise to the level of their competence so that, in fact, the overall group, as a group of health professions, we are practising the best that we possibly can, and we're doing it in an effective way using, as I've said, best practices and working toward development of best practices.

These are, I think, issues which should concern us all, that what we should be doing in legislation here and as we look at this legislation moving forward to committee, we should be taking a careful look at how we can include, incorporate and advance the use of best practices across all professions.

I think that the ability to prevent medical problems, to keep people well, that we are still lacking in the sort of effort that is needed, lacking by some very considerable margin. Let me give an example of a situation with diabetes. We have, as is acknowledged, even by the provincial government, an epidemic of diabetes, and yet it's not, at this juncture, being adequately treated as an epidemic, even reporting it properly. Even when we're looking at what are the best ways of preventing the development of diabetes, although we know a considerable amount about nutrition and exercise, we don't know enough about how to apply this in a community setting so that we can substantially decrease the incidence of diabetes and substantially address the fact that, right now, this epidemic is literally running out of control because the government is not yet treating it as the epidemic it really is.

I give you another example, which is moving into the area of dental caries. Although we know, on an individual basis, a lot about preventing dental caries and what can be done, we know all too little at a community level, at an inner-city level, about what are the most effective ways. These may be cross-disciplinary approaches, in some instances, involving several professions. But we need to make sure that when we're looking at this act and bringing people together that they—for example, the Health Professions Advisory Council can look at how you bring together various professions to make a big difference in decreasing the incidence of dental caries in communities in northern Manitoba, in inner-city communities, whereas we all know it is way too high.

We could talk additionally in other areas. I've talked about, as another example, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Very costly, both in terms of the impact on individuals and in terms of government expenditures. Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity here to develop best practices in terms of prevention of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and to be able to cross-disciplinary areas in order to look at how we can have programs which work—not just in individual health professions' activities, but as a group of health professions—at best preventing the problem, the

major problems which result from fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

I think that there is an opportunity here. Hopefully, some of this will be realized over time, but certainly, one of the things that I think could have been here much more than it is, Mr. Speaker, is a focus in terms of, for example, the Health Professions Advisory Council in having a role in bringing people together to develop best practices across professions and to make sure that, as a province, we are doing everything possible that can be done to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders in our province and, of course, to detect them early and to make sure that the children are not only identified, but have the best possible opportunities as a result of the approaches that we're taking.

I mentioned specifically the area of prevention because it is an area which, certainly under this government, has been very difficult in terms of advancing. It's been very difficult to even get proper province-wide reporting of such an important condition as the fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, as this government has just steadfastly refused to support province-wide reporting.

*(15:40)

So there is a lot to do. There is a lot that can be done in terms of this act and we should, I think, have had an act which was a little bit more forward thinking than the one we have at the moment in that it's looking at how we develop and move towards, establish and continually advance the use of best practices in our province.

Now, there is one area of this act which, I suspect, is going to be quite controversial. That is one of the measures which deals with the pharmacists. It requires or talks about all council members regulations. This is section 210 of the act: A regulation made by the council under section 82 or 220 does not come into force unless it is approved by a majority of the members (a) present and voting at a general meeting; or (b) voting in a mail vote or other method of voting conducted in accordance with the by-laws.

I've already been approached by groups of people within the pharmacist community who have very, very different and very strongly held opinions on this particular clause. It is a clause which is different than the other health professions which don't have this clause. One can ask the question in two ways: Should this clause not be present for the

pharmacists, or should this clause be extended to the other professions?

But I think that I look forward to meeting with the groups who are very strongly and passionately of the view on one side or other. It certainly was an area that was strongly debated when the pharmacist act came into being. I'm sure we're going to have some fairly strong presentations. I think all of us should be listening carefully to those presentations as we move toward a final decision on whether that clause stays where it is now, whether there are changes there or in any of the other acts.

I would make one other comment. I've brought this up not only with respect to this act, but in other areas, and that deals with the section which deals with liability. This section includes a waiver of liability for almost all circumstances. This is a waiver of liability for anything that was done in good faith. In my view, and we have argued this before, that this should have included not just good faith that is a requirement but that there should remain liability for gross incompetence. There are conditions where there must be the appropriate checks and balances and, in our view, health professions, if there were ever such instances where there was gross incompetence, should be held liable for that, so that people should not be above being accountable. It is our view that that would be a desirable change to be made in improving this act.

With those comments, as I've acknowledged, this is a weighty piece of work and a lot of good work in this act. We will support it, but I think that it could have taken some further steps. Perhaps, when we are at the committee stage or report stage, we will be looking at some amendments to take this a step or two further than it has gone at the moment.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 13—The Medical Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We will now move on to Bill 13, The Medical Amendment Act.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 13, The Medical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi médicale, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, Bill 13 will amend The Medical Act to allow the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba to register students enrolled in the University of Manitoba Physician Assistant Education Program, at the Faculty of Medicine. Students will be registered as associate members and governed by the college's high standards for medical professionalism.

Manitoba is the first Canadian jurisdiction to implement a graduate-level physician assistant education program. There are currently 12 students in the two-year program, and they are expected to graduate in 2010. They will be able to provide a wide range of procedures, including conducting patient exams, ordering diagnostic tests, undertaking minor procedures and prescribing needed medications and treatments. Manitoba's Physician Assistant Program is creating a new annual stream of highly trained health professionals, improving care by allowing physicians to focus on more complex patient needs. I strongly recommend the speedy passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to comment briefly on Bill 13, The Medical Amendment Act. I see this as a positive development to provide for the training and acknowledge what is now happening and providing for registry for physicians' assistants. I think that it is, in fact, important to have a situation where we are putting in place the ability to provide the appropriate regulations and that the—where we've got physicians' assistants who are able to do certain procedures, trained to do them appropriately and in many circumstances—in most circumstances, from what I gather—will be doing them under reasonably close supervision by physicians, that this is a positive move and a positive step forward. I've already said in my remarks on Bill 18 that we should allow people—in fact, develop the processes so that people can practise a health profession to the level at which they are competent. I think that this is one of those instances where it is quite a reasonable thing to do, and we'll look forward to how it works.

I think the establishment of the educational register to provide for the regulation of residents and medical students is also a reasonable step forward. I look forward to some of the comments that we may hear at the committee stage. One of the things which is missing in these changes, which I believe would have been desirable, would be the requirement to

have a report to the Chamber in two or three or four years, and then perhaps in eight or 10 years, just about what is happening, what is the outcome, how the physicians' assistants program is working, how the physicians' assistants are contributing to the clinical practice.

I think that when we're introducing changes like this, sometimes we move into the change, feeling that it's a good idea, but we don't always adequately evaluate and assess whether this is an overall beneficial contribution, whether there are more or fewer errors, whether we are achieving greater delivery of best practices. All these sorts of things should be reported periodically, perhaps every five years, so that we have some ongoing feedback on what is working, whether in fact this is a good change. I think that sometimes, when we're moving in the direction of change, we do this with good intentions, but we don't always take a careful look back and make sure that what we have done after the fact is, in fact, working properly.

* (15:50)

I would suggest to the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) that she look at the possibility of including something like—whether it's a report in a few years, or a report every five years on the progress of this to the Chamber so that members of the Legislature will have the concrete information that we should have to assess whether, in fact, this program is working or is not.

We've seen all too often in the past governments bring in programs but not provide the kind of assessment. When we look at them in years afterwards, some worked really well, and some don't work at all even though all of them may have had some good intentions to start with. I think that this is a fair comment, and it should not be accepted critically but should be accepted constructively in terms of trying to make sure that we move the province forward in the delivery of health care.

With those few comments, I'm going to conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to add some comments on this issue. I know it's sometimes very shocking to the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), better known as my favourite mosquito.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that government has actually done a good job, I guess to a certain degree, of recognizing the value of

assigning a position known as the physician's assistant. It's interesting in terms of who it is that they're thinking about in terms of filling those positions. I decided to comment on the bill because for the last number of years I've had discussions with foreign-trained doctors, some of them that did get their credentials actually recognized here and, in fact, are practising medicine in the province of Manitoba, others that have not, but have felt greatly frustrated with the government and even doctors that were trained here in the province of Manitoba and took their post-graduate studies here.

One of the things that I brought up was what about the possibility and, again, I like to think sometimes outside of the box, something somewhat foreign to the government, but I think is important to do. I would make the suggestion that what we would do is why not have physician assistants work along with doctors that come from abroad? The response that I received to that was actually fairly encouraging. I was quite encouraged. If the Minister of Health was listening to what some of those foreign doctors are saying, I suspect that she would actually be more aggressive in trying to deal with the issues that they're having to overcome.

I've talked to foreign-trained doctors from the Ukraine, from India and from the Philippines. Those are the three, right offhand that I can think of, and all of which were very clear in expressing just how difficult it is to get their credentials recognized. On the other hand, we have this huge demand for doctors throughout the province of Manitoba, and I question to the degree in which the government is actually addressing that issue.

I know that there are certain exams, and I've had the opportunity, as I say, to sit down with a number of foreign-trained doctors. There are a number of exams that they have to take and it's in a set period of time, in terms of writing the exams, and if they pass the exams, as a good number of them do, then the real challenge is finding the internship, which is very, very limited and exceptionally difficult to find.

I have sat in community centres, where I've had groupings as high as 10 to 15 foreign-trained doctors, all expressing the same sorts of frustration. To date, I can't recall what the government has actually done to address the issue. I know that, at times, they will give lip service, in terms of, well, we're having rapid evaluations for foreign-trained doctors. But I've never really seen, directly, the benefits. I've never had someone come to me, and say, I'm a

foreign-trained doctor, and in the last nine years this particular government program has assisted me greatly.

Just recently, I received a document that made reference to the Human Rights Commission, and I don't know—[*interjection*] Okay.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition House Leader has an announcement to make, and maybe if I can just allow him to make the announcement, then I'll continue on.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I have to make the announcement before 4 o'clock, according to the rules.

I'd like to table the list of ministers to be called for concurrence for Tuesday, May 19: the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), who will be questioned concurrently.

Mr. Speaker: It's been announced that for Tuesday, May 19, for concurrence, the request is for the Minister of Health, the Premier and the Minister of Family Services and Housing.

The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Monday, May 25, at 6 p.m., to consider annual reports of Elections Manitoba for the years ended December 31, 2003, including the conduct of the 38th Provincial General Election June 3, 2003; December 31, 2004, including the conduct of the Minto and Turtle Mountain by-elections June 22 and June 29, 2004; December 31, 2005, including the conduct of the Fort Whyte by-election December 13, 2005; December 31, 2006; and December 31, 2007, including the conduct of the 39th Provincial General Election, May 22, 2007.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Monday, May 25, at 6 p.m., to consider annual reports of Elections Manitoba for the years ending December 31, 2003, including the conduct of the

38th Provincial General Election June 3, 2003; December 31, 2004, including the conduct of the Minto and Turtle Mountain by-elections June 22 and June 29, 2004; December 31, 2005, including the conduct of the Fort Whyte by-election December 13, 2005; December 31, 2006; and December 31, 2007, including the conduct of the 39th Provincial General Election, May 22, 2007.

The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to announce that the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, meeting on May 27, 2009, the following witnesses are being asked to appear before the committee regarding the Auditor General's Report, Follow-Up of Report Recommendations – A Review, dated July 2005: the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak); Mr. Jeff Schnoor, deputy minister of Justice; the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh); Mr. Martin Billinkoff, deputy minister of Family Services and Housing.

Also, the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), and Ms. Diane Gray, deputy minister of Finance, who were previously requested as witnesses, will not be required for the meeting.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker: It's been announced that for the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, meeting on May 27, 2009, the following witnesses are being asked to appear before the committee regarding the Auditor General's Report, Follow-Up of Report Recommendations – A Review, dated July 2005: the honourable Minister of Justice; Mr. Jeff Schnoor, deputy minister of Justice; the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing; Mr. Martin Billinkoff, deputy minister of Family Services and Housing.

Also the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and Ms. Diane Gray, deputy minister of Finance, who were previously requested as witnesses, will not be required for this meeting.

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to thank the honourable Member for Inkster for having the patience to allow us to do some House business.

The honourable Member for Inkster, to continue, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm actually glad that I was able to hear that the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) is going to be coming to concurrence on Monday.

In fact, what I would like to do—

An Honourable Member: Don't come Monday.

Mr. Lamoureux: Tuesday. I'm sorry. Tuesday. Monday's the holiday. She'll be here on Tuesday.

Just before sitting down, I had made reference to, I couldn't recall exactly what it is that the government has actually done in regard to try to make the system better for foreign doctors that are living in the province of Manitoba.

So I trust, and I hope, that I'll get the opportunity. I know the Minister of Health is in very high demand, when it comes to questions inside the Chamber. If I do get the opportunity, one of the questions—and the minister can maybe kind of take it as notice of sorts so that maybe she would be able to provide kind of a precise answer to the question, is: Could she explain to me precisely what the government has done in the last nine years that has expedited the process of recognizing foreign-trained doctors that are living in the province of Manitoba?

I'm sure she'll be able to come up with something to say on it, and I look forward to it because what I am told is you have this process of a couple of exams that you have to go through, and those are timed exams, certain times of the year. Then there's the internship that you have to go through, amongst other things. From, again, what I understand, is that the time period and the potential cost is fairly significant. I would be very interested in knowing in the last nine years, how many foreign, accredited doctors have been recognized, in total, from three countries in particular: Ukraine, India and the Philippines.

So, I think it would be wonderful for her to be able to provide that. And who knows? Maybe, like the Leader of the Liberal Party, I might be able to give her a compliment, but I'll wait and see. I suspect and I hope that she will come up with some good news. If it's not good news, what I'd like to do is make a suggestion to the Minister of Health.

At the beginning, I talked about sometimes it's important to get out of the box and think about how we could improve the system. I would suggest to the Minister of Health that she does need to look at the possibilities of having foreign-trained doctors being

able to be employed, working side by side with the practising physicians, and if, in fact, something of that would be doable, and to what degree the Minister of Health would be open to that. I would appreciate to hear her comments on that particular issue also.

Mr. Speaker, I know I was hoping to speak on hopefully a couple more bills yet, so I'll leave my comments on that particular bill with that. I look forward to Tuesday in hopes that the minister will be able to answer that question, and I'll get the chance to ask more questions because I would like to have a follow-up discussion on the discussion we had in her office last night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 28—The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), that Bill 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les détectives privés et les gardiens de sécurité, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this bill contains amendments to the legislation regulating the security industry that is consistent with regulatory changes across the country. A new licensing process will require individuals, rather than employers, to apply for and obtain a licence that would be valid for periods of one, two, or three years, and remain in effect if a licensee changes employers.

This would decrease costs for the individuals and employers and enhance labour mobility for the security industry. Also, it would take the onus off of the employers to do that. While employers of private investigators and security guards will no longer be responsible for obtaining individual licences, they are required to employ only licensed individuals. A public registry that provides non-personnel information for licensed individuals will be created and will allow employers to confirm the licence status of an individual without delay.

In the lead up, Mr. Speaker, to the previous bill, the experience has shown there has been some issue with respect to that which we think can be accommodated by these changes. Notably, the registration process and the confirmation of licensure status.

New reporting requirements would be introduced to ensure the department has current information including information regarding criminal charges and/or convictions for all regulated parties. Ensuring compliance with the act and regulations is essential, and amendments that establish the authority and responsibility of inspectors will improve oversight of the industry through inspections and audits, Mr. Speaker.

With those few comments, I offer the bill to the House as an amendment to a bill that was previously brought forward, and through some experience and through changes that are across the country, will now update and make our bill more functional. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly on this legislation. This bill will make some changes to The Private Investigators and Security Guards Act. I believe the move to register and have the individuals licensed is an appropriate one, and I think that's a step forward. This certainly will mean a change, but it means that it will put the accountability, as it were, on the individuals to be licensed. The requirements, in terms of employers, then, to register is also a good thing. Reporting, that is, by the employee, the person who is licensed to provide private investigators or security guards to register as a security guard employer shall in the prescribed manner at the prescribed times report to the registrar the hiring or termination of employment of a private investigator or security guard.

I think that this will improve standards. I've talked to individuals within the industry, and sometimes in the past, individuals have been hired to do security work, but it's not been—the work that they've done is security work, but they've not necessarily been hired specifically as security guards. I think this is a move which will improve the way that the industry works and improve the security.

I think all of us are cognizant of the problems related to security in today's world. Anybody who travels certainly sees the changes that have happened in terms of security at airports. Steadily, we are, of course, all aware of changes that have happened in

our own Legislature in terms of how we manage security. So it is a good thing that we are moving forward on this act, and we're certainly ready in principle to support this legislation, believing that one of the things that we need to have is processes which will not only provide for licensing but provide for the ability to move beyond licensing to looking in due course at how we make improvements and ensure that the people who are licensed meet high standards that we can all feel secure as the result of the presence of security guards in the area.

*(16:10)

I'm going to make one more comment. There is one section which we would not agree with the minister on. The minister has said very specifically that he doesn't want any action or proceeding brought against him—of course, he's included the registrar and inspector or others acting under the authority of the act—for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith in the exercise or intended exercise of a power of duty under the act. We believe that this liability is too broad, that people who have, you know, shown gross incompetence, gross dereliction of duty, should be accountable. We know that the NDP don't like to have accountability. We've seen that many, many times. But we in the Liberal Party are strong believers in the importance of accountability and we believe that's a change that needs to be made in this act.

With those comments, I will sit down and let my colleague speak.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a number of thoughts that I'd like to share with the House in regard to Bill 28.

You know, it's an industry, security guards, that has really blossomed and grown over the last number of years. You have—*[interjection]* And so has crime. What a coincidence.

Mr. Speaker, if we take a look at the need for security guards, it has increased, and significantly. I remember an incident that—actually, even before I get into that particular incident, to talk in general, you know, Portage Place and the concept of Portage Place. Before Portage Place was even built, you had a number of visionaries, individuals who had some good thoughts in terms of what it is that we could be doing with north Portage. One of the things was, well, let's develop—and it actually panned out—let's develop, through a tripartite agreement, a shopping centre that would include multifaceted opportunities

of entertainment to participate and office buildings attached to it, along with a critical inner-city development of sorts. That vision ultimately turned into reality and we saw Portage Place. One of the reasons for it was to address the issue of security. They wanted to be able to feel that by improving the neighbourhood in that general vicinity by building this, and providing opportunity and changing the face of Portage Avenue, would change the issue of crime in that immediate area.

Well, it didn't necessarily work as to plan. We do have a wonderful facility there, and I still applaud those that were involved in coming up with the Portage Place model. It has had a wonderful impact, but one of the things—and the reason why I bring it up is one of the things that I have noticed is the amount of security guards that are now in Portage Place. There is a great difference between the number of security guards today then there was, you know, six, seven, eight years ago. My father used to actually live in the Portage Place complex and I would go there quite often with my kids to visit, and we always felt safe. You know, I might be wrong. I can't recall seeing security guards, at least not being visible. Maybe they were out and about, but they just weren't visible.

Well, you know, a few weeks ago, I was over at Portage Place, and I do go there periodically. One of the things that really strikes me is the amount of security, the private security, that is there, and it stands out. You'll walk in there, you'll see the big kiosk, and you'll see security guards walking down or walking throughout the mall. In one sense, it's good because people do want to have a sense of security, a secure feeling, but, in another sense, it's very telling in terms of what's it's taking for us to be able to provide that sense of security to the shoppers.

I think that that is what really highlights a huge difference, and here Portage Place is still this wonderful development. In fact, it's even getting better. We have halls through the skywalk system. Winnipeg is a winter city. It's nice to be able to have a complex of that nature, and I suspect that the future for it will continue to be there in a very positive way.

But, for all intents and purposes, with regard to Bill 28, it's about the security issue, and we have seen an increase, or at least it would appear that there has been a fairly dramatic increase, in the amounts of different forms of crime, from assault to some more petty crimes, that have taken place in some of our malls. The owners of these facilities are responding,

and the way they're responding is that they're hiring more and more security guards.

As I say, I'm not convinced that that is a good thing. I suspect that it's not necessarily a good thing. It is good that we do what we can to provide that sense of security for shoppers and those that are just looking around. But it's unfortunate that we have to go to the degree that we are going today in a number of facilities in order to be able to accomplish that sense of security for Manitobans, and, in good part, also for the shop owners, the individuals that are providing the economic opportunity of jobs and creating that atmosphere for things for people to do, because it's more than just stores. You could talk about the MTS Centre; you could talk about the movie theatre; you could talk about IMAX; other live theatre that's held there.

So we have seen an increase.

Another place that I've seen an increase is at our universities. I used to attend the University of Winnipeg, and never saw security back then. Again, maybe I was just naive to it. I don't know. I just never really saw security at the University of Winnipeg. There might have been some security that was there.

An Honourable Member: They were following you, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: I won't repeat that one. But I had the privilege of going down to the university, as my daughter has now been accepted to the University of Winnipeg. As every parent, we're very proud of our children when they reach certain stages in life, and this is one of them.

But one of the things that surprised me, again, was the security inside the University of Winnipeg. I didn't quite expect to see the amount that I did. Now, it's not to mean that I haven't been to the university. I've been to the university on numerous occasions between my departure and my more recent visit with my daughter. Having said that, there has been an increase in the amount of security at our universities.

* (16:20)

Well, then, you can look at our communities. Again, I would go back to the last number of years where we have seen an increase of those patrol cars, and they're just security firms that have patrol written on them. What they are is they're mobile security; they're driving around, through the industrial parks and other areas, just to ensure that things appear to

be looking normal and that there are no illegal activities that are occurring.

Well, in fairness to the government, I know that that's been happening for quite a while. I don't know if there's been an increase per se in that form of security patrol, but it is there. So, whether it's public institutions or private institutions or facilities, we have seen an increase. I think, having said that, there should be no surprise when I say that in the industry as a whole the numbers of people have actually increased dramatically over the last number of years.

I was doing what many of us do at times when we're afforded the opportunity to do some research on the Internet. We quite often Google search things, and I found an interesting site about security guards that was on from the federal government. It's talking in terms of the occupation of being a security guard. One of the things that I thought was interesting was back in 2004, and, again, we're talking across Canada, that there were 102,700 workers employed in these occupations. Now, it's occupations that would include security patrol and related occupations, but again it just emphasizes the size of the industry. When we look at the industry in the province of Manitoba, you know we're going well into the hundreds of individuals that we're talking about, and it takes many different forms.

There is a need for government to be involved. We have situations from the past, in particular with drinking establishments where there have been issues surrounding security or bouncers, as they've been often referred to, and the need for us to come up with standards and feel comfortable that there's a certain element of training that's now taking place. You know, the other day I was—actually, probably the other week—talking to an individual about the Yellow Pages, and a couple of things came out in that discussion. One was, look 25 years ago in the Yellow Pages and compare it today and look under the computers. You'll see the huge change in the number of pages that are dedicated towards computers and computer technology.

Another issue that came up was the issue of security, and there does seem to be more and more space being given to the issue of security, because it is in higher demand, the number of homes that are being encouraged to participate in security prevention, Mr. Speaker. As a result, whether it's those hotels, or we can go back to those facilities, both public and private, there is this growing demand. Because of that growing demand, we see

that there is a need to bring in different forms of legislation. Now, this isn't the original legislation; this is a change to original legislation. I know that other provinces have, in fact, already moved on legislation of this nature, both for security guards and private eyes. Manitoba is not necessarily leading the pack, but we might not necessarily be at the back of the pack either. It's good to see that we have this particular legislation in front of us.

The Leader of the Liberal Party points out an issue in terms of negligence, and there needs to be more accountability. Using legislation to prevent accountability can sometimes shed a bad shadow over what could be a more positive piece of legislation. I think that we recognize that sometimes mistakes happen, but when there is gross negligence, there should be some accountability for that. That's why I appreciated what it is that the Leader of the Liberal Party put on the record just prior me standing, Mr. Speaker.

I know that, as an industry seems to develop and grow, there are certain expectations that are changed. At one point, if someone wanted a security guard, they can just kind of point a finger to someone. If the person looked big enough, that might be the qualifying criterion; the person was hired. Today, we're seeing more and more skill sets that are being brought into the whole profession of security guards.

I think that, in time, we'll see that reflected in the wage that is being paid to security people. Again, this I got through the Government of Canada's Web site: in terms of hourly wages that are set—and this is just an average—of \$12.53 for security guards, which is well—I would suggest to you not necessarily well, but definitely below what the national average of \$18.07 is. And it even gives a further breakdown in terms of ages; it tends to be the people that are making the most are in between that 25 and 54 age bracket. I suspect that there's probably correlation to the pay in terms of the type of security and the entry point that you might be going into and so forth.

I raise that because I do believe that we are seeing an industry that is starting to mature more and, as a result, it becomes more established and there's more need for legislatures across Canada—even in the federal government—to make note of the industry and do what we can to protect the integrity of the industry.

It also does highlight another issue, an issue which we often talk about, and that is the issue of crime, Mr. Speaker. Let there be no doubt that what's

feeding this growth within the security industry is, in fact, the issue of crime.

To that end, I have been involved in a very direct way in dealing with youth crime; not committing crime, but with working with youth that quite often fall on the wrong side of the law. That's in the form of alternative measures with the youth justice committee. Just in the last past year, I decided to step down as a chair of the justice committee—I actually stepped down from the committee—because, like many other members of justice committees, you feel frustrated with the way in which government tends not to support the value of justice committees. They do that in different ways and I want to highlight one way which I think that a lot of people—I know a lot of my constituents—feel very, very offensive. That is that we seem to marginalize the small, what some would call petty crime.

I would ultimately argue that wherever there is a crime that is committed that there needs to be a consequence to a crime. We differ with the government on that issue, Mr. Speaker. If a youth decides to steal something from a Wal-Mart store, there should be a consequence to that particular action. More often than not, we're not seeing any consequence of any significance for a youth that commits that. In most part, that crime isn't even measured today. We have no sense in terms of the number of individuals that are actually committing that. At one time in the justice committee, I can tell you, I would deal with a number of cases of theft under or shoplifting—if I can put it that way—every year. In recent years, that's just not the case. They just don't appear, very rarely appear before a justice committee. The government can say, well, it's the Young Offenders Act or the changes that were made to the Young Offenders Act. Well, that's not necessarily a valid argument because we all know that the Department of Justice, the Minister of Justice, can easily change that and ensure that there is, in fact, a consequence to those crimes.

* (16:30)

Having said that, I just want to emphasize why it is that the industry has grown. Given that the growth has occurred, there is a need to be able to come up with legislation of this nature which will ultimately, I believe, assist the industry in the long run. We just hope that the management of it and the regulations that we put into place as a result where it's deemed necessary will be of great benefit to the industry as a whole.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 32—The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): On behalf of the Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sports (Mr. Robinson), seconded by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), I move that Bill 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act, 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 has been moved by the honourable Minister of Healthy Living, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act, 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 the message has been tabled.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'm pleased to introduce the second reading of The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act. Bill 32 replaces and modernizes the act that establishes the Centre culturel franco-manitobain. The centre responds to the cultural needs of Manitoba's French-language community by providing cultural programs, services to artists and arts organizations, and by maintaining the facility known to many of us as the CCFM. The CCFM has many cultural groups that contribute to the cultural and artistic vitality of the franco-manitobain community. Modernizing the act will enable the corporation to take advantage of the best business practices enjoyed by similar facilities in the Crown corporation sector.

Many of the changes in the new act are minor in terms of impact and include current legislative language as well as renumbering of existing provisions. Among the provisions the act will include modernization of the existing act to increase accountability and better enable the corporation to operate more effectively and efficiently.

The increasing the board size to a maximum of 12 members: at least half of the members appointed to the board by the Lieutenant-Governor must be appointed from the list of nominees from the Société

franco-manitobain. The Société franco-manitobain and the Centre culturel franco-manitobain will undertake a consultation process to identify potential board members. Amendments allow for the remuneration of board members. Currently, board members are reimbursed only for out-of-pocket expenses.

This new act will strengthen the corporation's ability to fulfil its continuing mission to present, promote, foster and sponsor cultural and artistic activities in the French language for all Manitobans. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Monsieur le Président, je voudrais prononcer quelques mots au sujet du Projet de loi 32, la Loi sur le Centre culturel franco-manitobain. Ce centre culturel est très, très important pour les Franco-manitobains, et j'ai souvent eu l'occasion de le visiter pour des événements artistiques et musicaux, ainsi que pour des expositions de peinture dans la galerie d'art de temps en temps. C'est très bien pour la visibilité des artistes franco-manitobains.

J'y suis allé plusieurs fois pour des conférences, et pour des événements politiques avec Ronald Duhamel et Raymond Simard, entre autres.

C'est un centre culturel où j'ai aussi eu l'occasion de rencontrer beaucoup de gens, par exemple des immigrants du Congo qui parlent effectivement français et qui participent aux activités du centre. Ce centre est maintenant un centre culturel non seulement pour les Franco-manitobains, mais aussi pour l'ensemble de la Francophonie, dont les membres nous arrivent ici au Manitoba de pays tels que le Congo. C'est un centre très important, je pense, pour la continuation de langue, pour la culture et pour les activités des Franco-manitobains.

J'y ai été de temps en temps pour la fête de notre pays, la fête du Canada, le 1^{er} Juillet, et c'est une occasion avec beaucoup de festivités, de célébrations et de joie de vivre. J'y ai été en été pour le festival Folklorama, pour visiter non seulement le pavillon franco-manitobain, mais aussi de temps en temps d'autres pavillons. J'y ai visité le pavillon des Caraïbes, et j'ai même participé de temps en temps aux activités de ce pavillon.

Je voudrais discuter de certaines sections de cette loi. En ce qui concerne la section portant sur le rapport annuel, je dois dire qu'il est très important que nous ayons un rapport annuel pour expliquer à tout le monde la nature des activités et des

événements qui ont lieu au Centre culturel franco-manitobain.

Je veux également parler aussi du paragraphe 21 b), qui donne aux membres du conseil la possibilité de recevoir un nouveau mandat conformément à celle-ci. Dans de nombreuses organisations, il y a une limite au nombre de mandats qu'on peut recevoir, et j'ai découvert, lors de ma participation à divers conseils, qu'il est bon d'avoir la possibilité de limiter le nombre de mandats possibles à deux ou trois : on a ainsi un roulement qui permet de trouver la meilleure combinaison possible pour le conseil, et renouveler les membres de temps à autre est très bénéfique. Et je suggère que le gouvernement voie à la possibilité d'instaurer une limite au nombre de mandats qu'une personne peut recevoir.

Je veux également parler de l'article 20, qui traite de l'immunité. Mon collègue parle de temps en temps de question d'immunité et de responsabilité, et pour nous, c'est une question de reddition de comptes. Il faut avoir le meilleur langage possible en ce qui concerne la reddition de comptes, et pas seulement ce qui est dans ce paragraphe. Pour le moment, on a un paragraphe qui dit, par exemple, que les membres du conseil ainsi que les dirigeants et les employés de la Société bénéficient de l'immunité pour les actes accomplis ou les omissions commises de bonne foi dans l'exercice effectif ou censé tel des attributions qui leur sont conférées sous le régime de la présente loi. L'expression « de bonne foi », c'est la seule exception ou la seule—

Translation

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about Bill 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act. This cultural centre is vitally important to Franco-Manitobans, and I have often had the opportunity to go there for various arts and music events, as well as exhibits in the art gallery from time to time. It is very good for the visibility of Franco-Manitoban artists.

I have attended a number of conferences there, and political events with Ronald Duhamel and Raymond Simard, among others.

I have also had an opportunity to meet many people there, including immigrants from the Congo who speak French and participate in activities at the centre. The CCFM has become a cultural centre not only for Franco-Manitobans, but also for Francophones from around the world, including

those who come here from places like the Congo. It is a very important centre, in my view, for the passing on of language and culture and for Franco-Manitoban activities.

I have also been there, from time to time, to celebrate our country's birthday, Canada Day, on July 1. It is a time of festivities, celebration and joie de vivre. I have been there in the summer during Folklorama, not only to visit the Franco-Manitoban pavilion, but also other pavilions from time to time. I have been to the Caribbean pavilion and have even taken part in activities at that pavilion on occasion.

There are a few sections of the act that I want to discuss. With respect to the section dealing with the annual report, I must say it is very important that we have an annual report so that everyone can see the kind of activities that take place at the centre.

I also want to speak about section 21(b), which states that board members may be re-appointed in accordance with this act. In many organizations, there is a limit to the number of terms that can be served. I have found through my participation on various boards that it is good to limit the number of terms to two or three: it allows for the rotation of members and optimizes the composition of the board; it also allows for new boards from time to time, which can be very beneficial. I would suggest that the government should consider limiting the number of terms that a person can serve.

I also want to speak to section 20, which deals with protection from liability. My colleague talks occasionally about liability and responsibility. For us it is a question of accountability. We need the clearest wording possible with regard to accountability and not just what is in that specific paragraph. What we have now is a paragraph that states that no action or proceeding may be brought against a member of the board or an officer or employee of the corporation for anything done, or omitted to be done, in good faith, in the exercise or intended exercise of a power or duty under this act. The expression "in good faith" is the only exception or the only—

English

—the only, sort of, refining phrase is it must be done in good faith. In our view, we should also include the possibility of liability where there is gross incompetence. I think that this is reasonable and most common-sense, well-meaning people would also agree that we should include gross

incompetence as an area where there should be liability.

Je demande au gouvernement de voir s'il est possible d'apporter des modifications afin d'assurer la meilleure reddition de comptes possible. Je voudrais terminer en disant que le Centre culturel franco-manitobain est très important, je pense—j'espère—pour tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative. Il est certainement très, très important pour les membres de la communauté franco-manitobaine, et j'espère que ce centre va continuer à être très dynamique pour de nombreuses années à venir, parce qu'il est essentiel pour nous, pour notre province et pour les gens de la communauté franco-manitobaine.

Translation

I ask the government to see whether changes can be made to ensure as much accountability as possible. I will end by saying that I believe or at least hope the Centre culturel franco-manitobain is very important to the members of this Legislative Assembly. It is certainly vital to the members of the Franco-Manitoban community, and I hope the centre will continue to thrive for many years to come because it plays a key role for us, for our province and for the Franco-Manitoban community.

* (16:40)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, I, too, want to be able to talk about Bill 32 and share with members a few thoughts in regard to cultural centres and just how critically important these cultural centres are to our province. Obviously, the Centre culturel franco-manitobain cultural centre is very special in the sense that it is one of our two founding nations. This particular centre is really one of the focal points for Manitoba's history in regard to the French, and this plays a leading role in terms of protecting and preserving the Francophone community in our province. We recognize the value of exactly what it is that they do.

I did go to the cultural centre's Web site, and I thought it would be, just to point out a quick history because I wasn't too sure of it. I'll just read virtually what they have written on the Web site in terms of its history, Mr. Speaker.

In 1898, the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary received this site from the Archbishop of St. Boniface and built the first St. Joseph's Academy.

The Oblate Fathers purchased the building in 1913 and it became the Le Juniorat de la Sainte-Famille. It was demolished in 1971 to permit the construction of the new Centre culturel franco-manitobain according to the plans of the architect Étienne Gaboury. The CCFM, a Manitoba Crown corporation, was incorporated in 1972 and opened its doors on January 25, 1974. Its mission statement, Mr. Speaker, states, quote: "The organization's objectives are to maintain, encourage, support and sponsor, by all available means, all types of French language, cultural activities and to make the French-Canadian culture accessible to all residents of the province."

Mr. Speaker, this particular centre and the role that the board has played over the years has been instrumental in it being able to achieve this particular mission statement. I believe that they have done exceptionally well over the years. I know I have the privilege of being able to serve with many MLAs, but one in particular, was the late Neil Gaudry. Neil was Franco-Manitoban first and foremost and expressed his love for his culture and heritage in a very real way. Many, I believe, within the Franco community have really done our province very proud by the commitment to this centre and the mission of that centre over the last number of years.

I was at M. Gaudry's house on a couple of occasions, and I can recall him talking about how important this particular facility was to the Franco community. Mr. Speaker, I never doubted the importance of that cultural centre and the role that individuals like Neil and others played in terms of its ultimate success and making Manitoba the province it is today. Now, I say that in the way in which I do because the principle of the legislation is something that we support because we believe in part it's being driven by the French community here in the province of Manitoba, in particular, the board and members and others that have invested so much time and so much energy in doing what it is that they've done.

My leader, who spoke in French and, I know, is a far, far, far better speaker in French than I am—I am that generation that kind of lost it; I know my father could speak French quite well as my ancestry goes along the French line. But I do appreciate the fact that the Leader of the Liberal Party chose to speak in French on this particular bill because I understand—you know, I haven't read the bill thoroughly—that even the board minutes in the meetings are done in

French, and that's intentionally done. So, if you're going to be a board member, you had better know how to speak French; otherwise, you're not going to be able to really communicate at that board level. I think that's a fairly important symbol, Mr. Speaker. I believe that is the case, and if that is the case, I think it's something that they should continue to work with.

I started off by saying the importance of cultural centres. I think that there's a lot that could be learned from the Francophone community in terms of the cultural centre that they have and how successful that centre has been.

We today live in a very multicultural society in every sense of the word, and we see more and more that there is a need for us to preserve and cherish those cultures that are coming to our province and, indeed, to our country. I remember in the '90s being the critic for Citizenship—or Culture and Heritage, at the time; we didn't have Citizenship attached to it, but Culture and Heritage, and it really afforded me the opportunity to get a better appreciation of what it meant to be a Canadian. Quite often, I would stand up and I would be asked to address a gathering of people, and I would talk about how important it is that we not forget about the countries which our ancestors come from. Whether I was speaking to members from the West Indies or Ukraine or of German background, Portuguese background, all of them, I would try to emphasize that point because, quite frankly, we are today who we are because we have a better appreciation of the people that have come to our province from all around the world.

One of the things that distinguishes us different than the United States is that we see ourselves as a mosaic, as a country of many different cultures. We have an appreciation of that, whereas in the United States there's this perception of the giant melting pot and you don't get the same sort of an appreciation of cultures, I would ultimately argue, as you would in Canada. I think that what we need to do is that we need to promote that and to encourage that. It needs to be brought into our educational system. We as a society will benefit more if we can have a better appreciation and a better tolerance of the ethnic diversity that our province actually has. There are many ways in which we can benefit by that, that go beyond even the social aspect of it. The economic benefit is overwhelming. We have connections throughout the world in which we are able to build

economic links like no other country in the world because of the make-up of our society. That's the economics.

* (16:50)

The social benefits, I would argue, far outweigh the economic benefits. I very much appreciate the fact that I represent an area of the city where more recent generations of immigrants have been able to make their life and to purchase their homes and to establish themselves, as has been the case for many immigrants over the 100-plus years that Manitoba's been in existence where typically immigration is best seen in Winnipeg's North End. I've seen the cultural diversity, and I know first-hand in terms of the degree in which we could all benefit if we learn to cherish it and to encourage it. We are seeing it.

In the last number of years, we have seen communities that have grown not only in size but in terms of infrastructure also, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't that long ago. It was within the year that I was at an event over at the Royal Crown in which there was a fundraiser for a new East Indian community centre located on Route 90. I know the Member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) was there on that particular evening also. It was a wonderful experience where we saw the community as a whole rally together in a unifying way and saying, look, we want to be able to develop a community centre of a first class nature. We're not talking a few hundred thousand dollars. We're talking about a few million dollars.

A building has been acquired that used to be a school. I don't know what the actual purchase price was, but I can tell you that at the end of the day that building's not even going to look like a school. The amount of changes that they're incorporating and the types of things that they're bringing into this facility are very impressive. At the end of the day, I believe what we're going to see is we're going to see an enriched East Indian community that's going to be better able to share its culture and its heritage with the community as a whole. By doing that, there's going to be a better appreciation of the value of the contributions of that particular community. When we see that happening, then we see more harmony within our society and a better ability for us to be able to reach out to other countries of the world, and, at the end of the day, the lifestyle will be that much better for all of us that live in the province of Manitoba.

When I see the numbers and I see what is actually happening—and that's one example; I will talk about a couple of others. This is a fairly recent one, Mr. Speaker. In one night, and I believe, I don't know if they've had more than two of the fundraising events; I was at two of them. But I suspect that you will see that in those two evenings they raised in excess of \$100,000, and I'm really underestimating it. I suspect it's a lot more than that. I know that their ambition was to raise into the millions of dollars, and I know that they've had some very large contributors. Just on those two nights, in terms of monies that were being generated as a result of those two events, it was in excess of \$100,000. It shows the passion and the sense of commitment that members of a community have in terms of wanting to preserve and share their culture and their heritage. I think as legislators, that we should be applauding that.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to visit other community centres. The Francophone community centre is one that I've been to on numerous occasions, but I believe most, if not all, members have been to that particular community facility. I would encourage members to get better experience in the other ethnic groups' community centres that are out there. Some of them are more established—*[interjection]* Oh, no, I mean it in a positive way. I mean, most, if you take a look at it—and a minister says, I'm making assumptions. I suspect that, out of 57 MLAs, 50-plus have probably been to the Francophone cultural centre. I don't know if we'd be able to say that in terms of every other cultural centre or the amount of numbers—and I could be wrong. If it is wrong, that's fine.

The point is that we need to encourage MLAs and others, Manitobans as a whole, to participate, to go out and see the investments in these cultural centres that are there. Some of these cultural centres have been there for many years. Over the summer, in Folklorama, my leader and I were at one of the German cultural centres. That's a cultural centre that has been there for many decades, and, you know, it's volunteers that in essence keep that particular facility running. The Portuguese centre, out on Notre Dame or on Wall, and there are other communities; the Filipino community has their cultural centre virtually right across the street from my constituency office. Well, there are many, many, and I realize I've limited my comments just to a few, but one could always talk about the Ukrainian community and the number of centres that they have, the Polish community.

There are so many cultural centres that are out there. They all contribute to our province in many different ways.

So, when we look at legislation of this nature, I believe it affords us the opportunity to talk about the benefits of our cultural centres and that we recognize that benefit by going out and supporting them, encouraging Manitobans to get a better appreciation of just who we are, our identity. Our identity is made up of world cultures and we need to get that better appreciation, Mr. Speaker.

Having said that, again I would extend my best wishes and give thanks to those individuals in particular with the Franco-Manitoba cultural centre for their efforts, Mr. Speaker, over the years in achieving their mission statement. I appreciate the opportunity, then, to be able to say a few words.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I move, seconded by the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that we adjourn debate on Bill 32.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Bonjour, Monsieur le Président. Pourriez-vous obtenir le consentement unanime de la Chambre pour dire qu'il est 17 h ?

Translation

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there's leave of the House to call it 5 'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. on Tuesday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 14, 2009

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