

Fifth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES

and

PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

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.
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.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	N.D.P.
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STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	
<i>Vacant</i>	Lac du Bonnet	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 9, 2011

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

PTH 5—Reducing Speed Limit

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Concerns continue to be raised about a number of motor vehicle accidents at the intersection of PTH No. 5 and PR No. 276 and at the intersection of PTH 5 and PR No. 68.

The Rural Municipality of Ste. Rose and the Town of Ste. Rose have both raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about the current speed limits on that portion of PTH No. 5 in the vicinity of Ste. Rose du Lac.

Other stakeholders, including the Ste. Rose General Hospital, Ste. Rose and Laurier fire departments, East Parkland Medical Group and the Ste. Rose and District Community Resource Council, have also suggested that lowering the current 100-kilometre-an-hour speed limit on a portion of PTH 5 may help reduce the potential for collisions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider the importance of reducing the speed limit on PTH 5 to 80 kilometres an hour in the vicinity of the town of Ste. Rose from the west side of the Turtle River Bridge to the south side of the access to the Ste. Rose Auction Mart to help better protect motorist safety.

This petition is signed by R. Delaurier, R. LaBelle, F.I. Catheway 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.

Oak Lake—Flood Protection Measures

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Already affected by high spring moisture levels in 2011, Oak Lake has also been inundated by record flooding from the Pipestone Creek.

Flood protection measures for homes, cottages and shoreline around Oak Lake had to be reinforced this spring as a result of water being held back.

The Oak Lake dike and dam system was breached this spring.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider reconstructing the entire Oak Lake dam and dike system.

To urge the provincial government to consider a compensation program that supports the costs homeowners at Oak Lake beach have endured due to this spring's flooding.

To request the provincial government to consider creating a task force comprised of government officials and local persons to examine future flood protection strategies for the area and how to address them.

And this petition is signed by B. Karnes, D. Pangman, C. Corbett, K. Corbett and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Auto Theft—Court Order Breaches

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

On December 11th, 2009, in Winnipeg, Zdzislaw Andrzejczak was killed when the car that he was driving collided with a stolen vehicle.

The death of Mr. Andrzejczak, a husband and a father, along with too many other deaths and injuries involving stolen vehicles, was a preventable tragedy.

Many of those accused in fatalities involving stolen vehicles were previously known to police and identified as chronic and high-risk car thieves who had court orders against them.

Chronic car thieves pose a risk to the safety of all Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all court orders for car thieves are vigorously monitored and enforced.

And to request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all breaches of court orders on car thieves are reported to police and vigorously prosecuted.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by M. Litinsky, R. Klassen, J. Busch and thousands of other concerned Manitobans.

Bipole III—Cost to Manitoba Families

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been directed by the provincial government to construct its next high voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba.

This will cost each family of four in Manitoba \$11,748 more than an east-side route, which is also shorter and more reliable.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to build Bipole III transmission line on the shorter and more reliable east side of Lake Winnipeg in order to save each Manitoba family of four \$11,748.

And this petition is signed by G. Young, L. Mueller, D. Malloy and many, many more fine Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development Fourth Report

Mr. Speaker: Committee reports. Committee reports. Committee reports. Committee reports.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): Sorry, I'm being distracted. I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development. *[interjection]* What about him? Check the court—

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 8, 2011 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Cooperatives Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coopératives*
- **Bill (No. 30)** – *The Change of Name Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom*
- **Bill (No. 35)** – *The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Cell Phone Contracts)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats de téléphonie cellulaire)*
- **Bill (No. 36)** – *The Adult Abuse Registry Act and Amendments to The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act/Loi sur le registre des mauvais traitements infligés aux adultes et modifications concernant la Loi sur les personnes vulnérables ayant une déficience mentale*
- **Bill (No. 39)** – *The Grieving Families Protection Act (Various Acts Amended)/Loi sur la protection des familles en deuil (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)*

- **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Condominium Act and Amendments Respecting Condominium Conversions (Various Acts Amended)/Loi sur les condominiums et modifications législatives en matière de conversion en condominium*
- **Bill (No. 41)** – *The Liquor Control Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools*
- **Bill (No. 43)** – *The Real Property Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CALDWELL
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH
- Mrs. MITCHELSON
- Ms. MCGIFFORD
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. REID
- Mr. SCHULER
- Mr. WIEBE

Your Committee elected Mr. REID as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Ms. KORZENIOWSKI as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Cooperatives Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coopératives*:

Vera Goussaert, Manitoba Cooperative Association
 Danny Gendron, CDEM
 Russ Rothney, Neechi Foods Co-Op Ltd.

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 35)** – *The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Cell Phone Contracts)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats de téléphonie cellulaire)*:

Kelvin Shepherd, MTS Allstream
 Gloria Desorcy, Consumers Association of Canada - Manitoba Branch

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Condominium Act and Amendments Respecting Condominium Conversions (Various Acts Amended)/Loi sur les*

condominiums et modifications législatives en matière de conversion en condominium:

Mel Boisvert and Peter Squire (by leave), Winnipeg Realtors
 John Petrinka, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following seven presentations on **Bill (No. 41)** – *The Liquor Control Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools*:

Lanny McInnes, Retail Council of Canada
 Scott Jocelyn, Manitoba Restaurant & Food Services Association
 Mo Razik, Independent Specialty Wine Stores of Manitoba
 Dwayne Marling, Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association
 Jim Baker, Manitoba Hotel Association
 Marty Gold, Private Citizen
 Fred Curry, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 43)** – *The Real Property Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels*:

Wendy Rinella and Steven Offer (by leave), Title Insurance Industry Association of Canada

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Cooperatives Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coopératives*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 30)** – *The Change of Name Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 35)** – *The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Cell Phone Contracts)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats de téléphonie cellulaire)*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 36)** – *The Adult Abuse Registry Act and Amendments to The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act/Loi sur le registre des mauvais traitements infligés aux adultes et modifications concernant la Loi sur les*

personnes vulnérables ayant une déficience mentale

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 39)** – *The Grieving Families Protection Act (Various Acts Amended)/Loi sur la protection des familles en deuil (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Condominium Act and Amendments Respecting Condominium Conversions (Various Acts Amended)/Loi sur les condominiums et modifications législatives en matière de conversion en condominium*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 185(3)(b) of Schedule A of the Bill be amended by adding ", to the extent that the coverage is available at a reasonable cost" after "costs of construction".

- **Bill (No. 41)** – *The Liquor Control Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendment:

THAT the Bill be amended by adding the following after Clause 18:

18.1(1) Subsection 96.1(1) is amended by striking out everything before "may conduct" and substituting "If the commission becomes aware of concerns about security at a licensed premises, it".

18.1(2) Subsection 96.1(2) is amended by adding ", such as metal detectors, surveillance cameras or devices that scan or verify the identification provided by patrons," after "security equipment".

18.1(3) The following is added after subsection 96.1(2):

Privacy

96.1(2.1) When requiring a licensee to make changes to operations under subsection (2), the commission must have regard to privacy and it may require the licensee to take specified steps to protect the privacy of patrons and employees.

- **Bill (No. 43)** – *The Real Property Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendments:

THAT the proposed subsection 72(2), as set out in Clause 17 of the Bill, be amended by repealing clause (b) of the definition "transfer".

THAT Clause 17 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 72.5(3):

Other witnesses

72.5(3.1) In addition to the witnesses referred to in subsections (1) to (3), the district registrar may accept a transfer for registration that is witnessed by a person in a class of persons designated in the regulations.

THAT the proposed subsection 72.5(4), as set out in Clause 17 of the Bill, be amended by striking out "(3)" and substituting "(3.1)".

THAT the proposed clause 72.7(2)(c), as set out in Clause 17 of the Bill, be amended by adding "or another designated person on behalf of the financial institution".

THAT the proposed subsection 72.7(3), as set out in Clause 17 of the Bill, be amended in the English version by adding the following after clause (a):

(a.1) subsection 72.5(3.1) (other witnesses);

THAT Clause 44 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed clause 195(b.4):

(b.5) for the purpose of subsection 72.5(3.1), designating classes of persons as witnesses;

Mr. Reid: I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flooding and Ice Jams Update

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, even as initial river crests passed a few weeks ago, we made it clear that the 2011 flood flight was far from over. Our major lakes continue to rise to record crests, and the past weeks have brought four major rain storms in the Souris and Assiniboine River basins. The widespread and heavy rainstorms are having a major cumulative effect on water levels in areas already seeing record flooding here in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the United States.

Souris, Manitoba, Estevan, Saskatchewan, and Minot, North Dakota, all saw 300 per cent of normal rainfall in the month of May alone, and more rain has fallen since. With highly saturated soils, basically all of this water is flowing into rivers and streams and eventually into the Assiniboine River towards Portage.

The rain we're seeing has had a major impact on Assiniboine River levels, and the Portage Diversion has once again been pushed well beyond its designed capacity of 25,000 cfs. As of today, Portage Diversion flows are over 30,000 cfs and rising.

There is another major storm forecast to hit the Souris and Assiniboine River basins over the weekend and early next week. If this major storm takes place as forecast, the fifth in recent weeks, it is possible that the ability of our flood control systems to manage this water will be challenged.

* (13:40)

As we saw in 1997 with the early April blizzard, the weather is hard to predict and impossible to control, but it can quickly change the face of the flood threat that we are facing. As such, we are very closely monitoring weather forecasts to assess the potential implications on the flood situation and are staying nimble to react to different situations as they emerge. Any additional rain in already rain-soaked areas feeding the Assiniboine River would have a substantial impact on our ability to manage waters downstream.

With the well-above-average rainfall that we have seen, it's become increasingly clear that water levels in many parts of the province will remain extremely high for many months. We encourage all Manitobans to remain vigilant since situations can change quickly when dealing with a natural disaster of this magnitude. As always, we will continue to update the Assembly and all Manitobans on these developments as they unfold.

The course and severity of the flood from here on out is almost entirely dependent on future weather, and we will continue to do our utmost to incorporate the changing and challenging weather information into our flood forecasts and communicate that information to Manitoba families and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I thank the minister for the latest update on the flood situation.

Efforts to protect properties continue in many areas. For example, a call has gone out for volunteers to help build sandbag dikes in the Lunder Beach and Sugar Point over the next few days. People are also working to protect properties around Dauphin Lake and in other regions. Any assistance Manitobans can provide to communities like these will be warmly received as some lakes are not expected to crest for a few weeks yet, and the need to protect people and properties continues.

We note that information for residents with properties in the rural municipalities of St. Laurent and Woodlands that have been affected by flooding is going to be made available locally in the next few days. This should be beneficial for those affected.

We have received a few inquiries from people with questions about eligibility under the financial assistance programs being offered for flooding in different regions of the province. We recognize that provincial officials are busy receiving and processing claims, but we hope that these types of inquiries can be addressed in a timely fashion as—in as timely a fashion as possible so applicants can proceed with their claims with the information they need.

We also appreciate the information provided in the daily flood bulletins. Of particular use in recent bulletins has been the daily lake levels, which is a good reference tool.

Once again, I thank the minister for the report and look forward to continued updates.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, even as the claims for compensation get processed, and we hope this happens quickly, even as we are dealing with huge cleanup efforts in certain parts of Manitoba, particularly around Lake Manitoba, Dauphin Lake and so on, it is apparent, as the minister has indicated, that we could be facing a very, very difficult situation next week should the worst-case scenario in terms of the predictions for rain events next week emerge.

It seems to me that it is very important not just to have the predictions that the minister is talking about and the dire warning of what could happen; it's important to go beyond this course, that it's completely up to what happens with the weather and,

as in the past, to look very carefully at what we can do should this worst-case scenario occur.

And it seems to me, Mr. Premier, and to the minister, that it would be smart to have an all-party briefing once again if this situation—that it needs to be very clear what those worst-case scenario levels could be and what would be done if they were reached, and so that there needs to be clear communication of what's happening.

I continue to get concerns over the situation at Grand Rapids where communication could have been better, and I think we need to learn from that and make sure that the communication in terms of next week is as good as it possibly can be in case we have a bad situation. Thank you.

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 from Rossbrook House, we have Sister Maria Vigna and Phil Chiappetta and Warren Goulet.

And also from the immigrant and refugee community of Manitoba we have Faiza Hargaava and Angie Dooley and Muluken Tegegne, who are the guests of the honourable Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino).

And also in the public gallery we have from Red River College Language Training Centre, we have 25 adult English as an Additional Language students under the direction of Ms. Jillian Hoogland. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister for Labour and Immigration (Ms. Howard).

And also in the public gallery, from École communautaire Gilbert-Rosset, we have 13 students under the direction of Mr. Brahim Baba. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen).

And also in the public gallery we have from Souris School, we have 22 grade 4 and 5 students under the direction of Ms. Theresa O'Brien. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat).

And also in the public gallery we have from King Edward Community School, we have 34 grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Paul Vernaus. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Lake Manitoba Flooding Water Level Sources and Responsibility

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Having had a couple of opportunities now to view some of the damage that has taken place along Lake Manitoba and in other places around the province, this morning I and a couple of my colleagues had an opportunity to view from the air some of that destruction, Mr. Speaker, and it was shocking to see some of those homes, in many—in several cases cottages and others, farm buildings, in many cases either completely destroyed or being one storm away from being destroyed, with water literally right at the edges of those buildings.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier today acknowledge that the issues and the flooding around Lake Manitoba, which is obviously a very, very significant source of stress and heartache for many Manitobans, was and is caused by a combination of deliberate government action as well as provincial government neglect?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I just want to welcome all the young people here today. I see my friend Warren Goulet, les enfants de l'École Gilbert-Rosset. Bienvenue ici au Manitoba à la Législature. [*Warren Goulet, the students from École Gilbert-Rosset. Welcome here to the Manitoba Legislature.*]

And on this question of Lake Manitoba, it has been a very difficult time for all the families and all the young people that live there and the seniors and the cottagers, as this lake has seen unprecedented amounts of moisture flow into it from several sources, as well as these very high wind events, which in some cases have achieved 90 to 100 kilometres an hour, gale-force winds which have caused an enormous amount of destruction.

And that is exactly why we put in place a compensation program that goes beyond anything we've seen in the province before to help people protect their properties where they can, and many of them are still in the process of doing that with the help of volunteers, with the help of provincial and municipal officials and with everybody pulling together to make sure that they can do everything possible to protect them.

There are people that have seen very serious damage. We will work very closely with them to restore their properties and to give them the kind of compensation support that will make a difference in allowing them to rebuild.

* (13:50)

Mr. McFadyen: Well, and the Premier is aware that the operation of the Portage Diversion was flagged as an issue in a 2003 report to the government in terms of its contribution to raising the level of Lake Manitoba. There was awareness, because of the weather bomb last year, that the lake was already vulnerable, and the government's own forecasts showed risks of higher-than-1976 levels on the Assiniboine would contribute to significantly higher water levels on Lake Manitoba.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I was advised this morning that one of those families with property along the lake did, in fact, invite the former minister of Conservation. That minister, in fact, attended and visited those areas more than eight years ago and was advised of the issues that were starting to arise at that time and asked if the government could start to take some steps to protect those property owners.

Mr. Speaker, that meeting took place more than eight years ago. It was convened by property owners along the lake, and I think what people are looking for today is acknowledgement by the government that what they're suffering today is arising as a result of a combination of deliberate government action and provincial government neglect.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of hardship for the people up and down Lake Manitoba. Of that, there's no doubt. And that's—as we meet with people and see the struggling they're going through and the suffering, we also can only admire them for the efforts they're making to continue to work to protect their homes and, in some cases, their cottages and how well they're working together.

The member will know that when the Fairford outlet was constructed, it was constructed to above 17,000 cubic feet per second, and it was constructed prior to the Portage Diversion being put in place in the mid-'60s as well, which was constructed at a higher level of inflow to Lake Manitoba. So there was about 25,000 cubic feet a second that was built to go into Lake Manitoba at a time when there was only 17,000 cubic feet per second allowed to go out.

This has been one of the issues that we said we will address in our long-term mitigation program.

That is why we have put resources in place to continue to improve the infrastructure on Lake Manitoba, both in the immediate term as well as in the long term. We are committed to ensuring that there are improvements to all the infrastructure around Lake Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, the—you know, the Premier is saying today that things were done in the 1960s, and he's right that they were, but the issue of the erosion of the shorelines started to accelerate dramatically about 10 years ago, and, at that time, residents along the lake invited Cabinet members to come and visit. In fact, there were two members of Cabinet who went around both the Shoal lakes and around Lake Manitoba in 2001, as well, and were warned at that time that the gradually rising water was chipping away at the shoreline and creating a risk to these properties.

Mr. Speaker, with all of these warnings and the lack of action taken over the past eight years, these brand-new promises, after the damage has been done, are not particularly meaningful to people, and I think what they're looking for from the Premier today—whether it's a comfortable thing for him to do or not—is to acknowledge very clearly that what's happening today is happening as a result of a combination of deliberate government action and provincial government neglect.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we do believe that the people around Lake Manitoba require extraordinary support, which was why we put this program in place that goes beyond anything we've seen in the province before: program support for fixing up homes at an unprecedented amount of additional resources up to \$200,000 with a complete waiving of any of the co-payment or deductibles upfront when they improve their properties and mitigate them against future damage. For the first time ever, we've put up to \$92,000 in place for the structural improvements that can occur for cottages. We've put 100 per cent, up to \$2,000, for engineering support for people, and we have engaged engineering firms to look at issues, ways we can continue to protect property and families all along Lake Manitoba.

And we are moving on looking at improving the outlet which was built to a level less than the input through the Portage Diversion. These issues need to be addressed at a time when we're seeing historic amounts of precipitation in Manitoba, one-in-300-year event, never before seen in the history of the province of Manitoba.

Government Position on Property Buyouts

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

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, after a decade of warnings and a decade of failing to heed the red flags, the consequences are now being visited upon many Manitobans who are the victims of this 2011 flood. The Premier, two days ago, ruled out the possibility of buyouts for those people who are looking at that prospect of having great difficulty in being able to either move homes or rebuild them.

And I wonder if the Premier can confirm today that buyouts will be an option for property owners who have no realistic prospect of rebuilding, and will he confirm that those details will be made available quickly?

Mr. Selinger: We do not support the view expressed by the Leader of the Opposition that buyouts should be an option on a mass basis for everybody over there. We do support a program that protects property and families as much as possible. That is still the priority. There is much good work going on there with sandbagging and flood protection systems being put in place, with volunteers being mobilized, with civil servants being mobilized. All of these efforts continue unabated even though people have actually started to show some fatigue because of the duration of this event. And many civil servants are actually volunteering over and beyond their normal workdays to go out there and help, and I might add that federal civil servants also responded to that challenge as well.

We have said, in a specific situation where it is impractical to rebuild because of the impossibility of rebuilding on that piece of property, that a buyout definitely will be considered. We have also said that in a situation where financially it makes no sense to rebuild there and it's more logical and sensible to provide a buyout in the interest of the taxpayer as well as the interest of the property owner, that we will consider that as well.

That is a sensible approach which allows us to underline the need to protect and restore properties in those communities, and we will do this in consultation with the local municipality. We'll bypass—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, and the lack of clarity in that response has I think been a source of ongoing

anxiety for many individuals. What we saw this morning were some homes that had been completely levelled, others that were off their foundations, others that had water right to the very edge of the homes, one storm away from being completely destroyed. We saw piles of sandbags in different places scattered around behind properties. We saw destruction on a scale that was absolutely shocking and heartbreaking.

Mr. Speaker, the people involved have both suffered extensive losses to property. In many cases these are retired people who spent their entire lives saving, renovating and improving cottages to make them permanent retirement homes, people who are not at a stage in life to be able to realistically go back and try to rebuild.

Will the Premier indicate to them at this moment that buyouts are going to be an option for them?

Mr. Selinger: In my last answer I gave a very explicit answer to that question. We do not support the Leader of the Opposition's view that without consulting municipalities and local leadership that a mass buyout program should be the approach that's taken.

The approach taken should be to continue to focus on protecting as many properties and families as possible from the potential effects of high water and high wind events on Lake Manitoba or, indeed, on other property—on other lakes around Manitoba. That is the focus of the emergency measures operation going on in this province, and people are working shoulder to shoulder to do this all across Manitoba.

It has been a very impressive display of human co-operation in this province, widely admired across the country, and we will continue to support those people with all of our means at the provincial level and mobilize resources from other levels of government, as well, as required to support them.

In cases where people cannot rebuild because of the practical impossibility of doing that on their site, of course a buyout will be considered. In cases where it does not make financial sense to do that, a buyout will be considered as well. But we also want to work with local officials on identifying which of these situations need to be addressed—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, people are skeptical about what is coming from this government, and that answer illustrates why that is the case, and in addition to the lack of clarity contained in that response and the lack of understanding of what people are dealing with, we see this morning, already, people with property around Lake Manitoba who have started to apply for compensation being denied that compensation.

There is a story that ran this morning on CBC Radio. The headline is: "Bureaucratic nightmare already plaguing flood victims in Manitoba".

Mr. Speaker, the last round of promises he made about compensation are now already not being followed through with for property owners who are being impacted, and in light of the fact that that is happening, I think it's important that the Premier be clear about what he's going to provide to others who are looking at these very, very sad and very serious situations, the damage to their property.

And so will the Premier admit today that he needs to put more attention into ensuring that there aren't more bureaucratic nightmares arising for these many Manitoba families who deserve to be treated better than second-class citizens?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, if the member or any other member—if this member or any other member of the House has a specific situation where there is a bureaucratic difficulty, I invite them to draw it to our attention and we will have it looked into immediately.

I do know that the special unit put in place to address the flood issues in terms of compensation in the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation has been fully seized of this matter and has been working diligently, and, as recently as last Friday, some of the first compensation awards were already made in Manitoba in a record period of short time, and they've moved on it very quickly.

This is a very extensive flood situation across the province, and officials have dedicated themselves to it with great, great commitment, great energy and great purpose and have really taken pride in trying to serve Manitobans as effectively as possible. And so when the member yesterday said that—called—said that they were disorganized and not doing a proper job, quoting another one-liner from another newspaper article somewhere, it was a great insult to

these people that have done such tremendous work in Manitoba.

So if he has specifics—if he has specifics—other than one-liners that he's picking up elsewhere, we would be very happy to respond to that, to look into those specifics and ensure that people are getting proper attention and service. We look forward to the information he will provide.

Autism ABA Program Reduction

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): We know that ABA therapy is a proven, effective therapy for children with autism.

I'd like to once again ask the Minister of Education why she continues to let kids age out of the program regardless of the progress that they're making. Why is she making the decision about their therapy based on their age, Mr. Speaker, rather than their needs?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): It provides me with an opportunity to remind members opposite about the comprehensive program that we have in Manitoba for children with autism.

We have been working with the MFEAT, which is an organization that advocates for their children with autism. And we had a program in place, and we met with them over the course of the last couple of years in regards to the transitioning out of services and we listened to their concerns, Mr. Speaker, in regard to them transitioning out of that program.

And we have put in place a program with St. Amant that provides services to school divisions for those students, and we continue to work with them to make sure that that programming is there for those students.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But that answer is cold comfort to parents of children with autism that have been waiting since November, Mr. Speaker, and begging for an answer from this government so that their children can receive the supports and services that they need.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Education why she thinks it's okay for her government to spend \$1.5 million on feel-good advertising that doesn't provide any outcome for children or families while 16 preschool children have been waiting since November to get into the ABA program.

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that we look at our record in regards to providing programs and services for children with autism. In 2010, we provided almost \$30 million in services for children with autism. That is an increase of almost 700 per cent since 1999.

We have worked with MFEAT in regards to providing programs and services for children with autism. We care deeply about those students that are in our classroom every day. We know the challenges that parents and educators have, and we want to provide programs and services for those children so that they can succeed in our education system, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But, then, again, parents have been waiting and pleading with this government for an answer since November, Mr. Speaker, and they don't have an answer from the Minister of Education, and the minister has said before that early intervention for autism is crucial.

Does she think today, Mr. Speaker, that spending \$250,000 on a website to provide information that's already available to parents, when there are 16 autistic preschool children that have been waiting anxiously, waiting since last November for an answer from this government—where are their priorities?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, our priorities are providing services and programs for all of our students in our public education. We've made phenomenal investments in programs and services for young children with autism, not only in schools but at the early intervention point for young students. We know that investing in our public education system is important. We've also put incredible investments into funding and programs and services for children with exceptionalities. We'll continue to work with MFEAT.

But I just want to remind members opposite that every time we've made those investments in those children, they have voted against them. We know what their record is. We'll continue to build Manitoba by providing programs and services for young children in our public education for all of our families in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Ambulance Services Patient Off-Load Wait Times

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, while the WRHA is empire building, this NDP government is turning our emergency rooms

into parking lots for ambulances. From September of 2010 to April of 2011, over a period of eight months, ambulance crews in Winnipeg spent over 24,000 hours waiting in emergency rooms in Winnipeg, the equivalent of 1,001 days not available to respond to calls, waiting to transfer patients into emergency rooms which are overflowing.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain why, when she is spending record levels of money on bureaucracies, why is it that she is leaving ambulances waiting for record periods of time with patients waiting to get emergency care?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): And, again, to address part of the question that the member has raised today, we actually have seen the corporate costs in our regional health authorities trending down. We know that, indeed, today in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, the corporate costs sit at 2.98 per cent, which is 0.02 per cent lower than the arbitrary target that members opposite cited during the 2007 election. We're not only keeping our promises, Mr. Speaker, we're keeping theirs.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I might note that in reference to what the member is talking about regarding ambulance wait times, she neglects to mention how many trips that ambulances make to our emergency rooms, roughly 5,000 per month. We know that this means it's an average time with a patient at the hospital between 61 and 67 minutes. We know that we can drive that down, which is why we just announced our recent investments.

* (14:10)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to focus on this really important issue because things are not improving in this area. When somebody is picked up in an ambulance and taken to a hospital, they deserve to get immediate care. They shouldn't be left waiting hours and hours, waiting for emergency help.

So, Mr. Speaker, with ambulances waiting over 24,000 hours, the equivalent of more than two and a half years, I want to ask the Minister of Health: Has she now created the new phenomenon of parking lot medicine?

Ms. Oswald: And, again, she does neglect to leave out an important number in that equation; that is, indeed, how many trips are made to the emergency room.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do think that the member also fails to neglect—to mention that a critically important part of the emergency process is triage. And, indeed, if somebody should arrive by ambulance but is not as urgent as a patient that is in the emergency room, they will be seen after, based on the assessment of our medical professionals.

Again, we don't want to have paramedics and ambulances waiting at our ambulance—at our emergency rooms for an undue amount of time. This is why we made recent investments with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority of two additional ambulances to work during peak times. We've made additional investments for a special unit for patients that need to have tests. We've made additional investments in having a 24-7 paramedic unit at Main Street Project, which is making an incredible difference in this process, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister to focus on the questions. She doesn't seem to be listening to what the questions actually are.

Mr. Speaker, we've got the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service billing hospitals for the hours that they are forced to wait with patients. In April, they sent 414 bills to Winnipeg hospitals to charge them for this wait time. That's money that should be going into front-line patient care.

In fact, on May 26, I've got a great picture of nine ambulances jammed into the Health Sciences Centre ambulance parking lot, and that doesn't sound like a problem that's getting better. They're squished in there like sardines.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: Is she now planning to create a parking lot health authority or just a vice-president of parking lot care?

Ms. Oswald: I would reiterate to the member that we have made an investment in partnership with our paramedics, with our fire paramedics, with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to add the Main Street Project, which has a paramedic station there 24-7 dealing with very complex needs, adding two additional ambulances to deal with peak times, allowing paramedics to take less urgent patients to Misericordia Centre, adding additional staff.

And, Mr. Speaker, I mean, we all have photographs. A personal favourite of mine is the member from Charleswood and a former Conservative premier walking through the hallways on a dare when there were 28 people languishing there day after day after day.

Regional Health Authorities Staffing Levels

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): While the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) fails to respond to questions about health care in the province, we continue to hear stories from Manitobans who can't get access to family doctors. We hear stories from Manitobans; we hear stories like the tragic story of Brian Sinclair who waited 34 hours in an emergency room. We hear from doctors and nurses and front-line workers that this government is more interested in building up their bureaucracy than delivering front-line care.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned now that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority now employs 17,044 people. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is now larger than the third largest city in Manitoba. There are more people in Winnipeg, more people in Brandon; the WRHA is No. 3 now.

I want to ask the Premier if he will admit that he's failed on health care because he's so busy building medical empires rather than meeting the needs of regular Manitobans.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there are, indeed, 3,000 more nurses working in Manitoba right now, no doubt about it. There haven't been 1,000 fired; there've been 3,000 hired. A thousand fired; 3,000 hired, no doubt about it.

There's 405 more doctors working in Manitoba now.

There are—enrolled in medical school, instead of cutting it down to 70 students every year, there are now 110 people enrolled in the medical school every single year.

So the member is right. There's more doctors. There's more nurses. There's more technicians. There's more home-care workers. There's more front-line people treating and working with the people of Manitoba every single day in Manitoba, and we'll keep it going that way.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little decorum here.

Mr. McFadyen: His tired rhetoric would mean something if it wasn't for the fact that there were tens of thousands of Manitobans who can't get access to family doctors. There are Manitobans who wait for hours in emergency rooms, including Brian Sinclair

who waited 34 hours and died in an emergency room.

If those things weren't happening, Mr. Speaker, they'd be right to applaud, but the reality is this: they put bureaucracy ahead of front lines.

And we now know, Mr. Speaker, that the health authorities in Manitoba employ 11 CEOs, 22 directors and executive directors. They're now up to 52 vice-presidents—52 vice-presidents in the health authorities at the same time as we have just learned that the Department of Health has grown by more than 18 per cent on top of all the bureaucracy within the health authority.

Mr. Speaker, 52 vice-presidents, 18 per cent growth in the Health Department, worse care at the front lines: How does he explain that to Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: I'll give him just one example of what's changed. The Selkirk Mental Health Centre has dramatically expanded the number of people working there because they've expanded services to people that require those kinds of support. That's in the Department of Health.

I've already mentioned the 3,000 nurses. I've already mentioned the 405 doctors, all the extra ambulances we have, all the extra people we have working on the front line.

And let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the member, the Leader of the Opposition, said he would hold health-care spending to about growth in the economy. That would have meant 9,000 less nurses in Manitoba, or 2,000 less doctors. His program would have resulted in massive layoffs and reductions of services to people.

We've made a commitment to increase health-care spending to improve services to Manitobans, no matter where they live, whether it's in the north, whether it's in the inner city, whether it's in the suburbs, whether it's in rural Manitoba. We're committed to having more health-care professionals serving Manitobans, not laying them off.

Mr. McFadyen: The 36 cheerleaders make a lot of noise, but it makes no difference to the fact that they have hired 52 vice-presidents, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, through freedom of information they have just released, there are now 206 new positions under community and corporate. There are now 217 new positions in the medical remuneration branch. eHealth is up by 45 positions from last year.

They've added 468 new bureaucratic positions in just one year on top of the 52 vice-presidents.

It's no wonder nobody can find a doctor when they need one in this province. It's all about vice-presidents, bureaucracy and the growth in the upper levels of the administration at the expense of front-line care. That is why Brian Sinclair had to wait 34 hours in an emergency room.

Will they apologize for his failure in health care?

Mr. Selinger: It's very clear that the Leader of Opposition is going to take an axe to the health-care system. He's going to lay off more nurses. He's going to reduce the number of doctors we have in Manitoba.

You know, we've got more mental health workers at the community level through the PACT program, and he says it doesn't make a difference. I can tell him, every single nurse in that 3,000 additional nurses is making a difference. I can tell him that those 405 additional doctors are making a difference. I can tell him that those home-care workers are making a difference every single day, and you are going to lay them off and slash them, just like you did last time when you brought in Connie Curran.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Just a reminder to all members that questions and answers through the Chair, please, not to personalize the questions or the answers.

* (14:20)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the—no amount of shouting from the Premier opposite changes the fact that there are Manitobans who can't get access to family doctors, that they are now being told that they can't choose the pediatrician that looks after their own child. They're now being told that they have to wait in emergency rooms, as they put Brian Sinclair's family through the wringers.

And that, Mr. Speaker, has been enabled by the fact that they have 52 vice-presidents. They have 468 new bureaucratic positions paraded in the last year alone, and that is why we are hearing from doctors, from nurses, from health-care professionals, from families who can't get access to health care today, that after 11 years, after broken promises, after saying they would end hallway medicine, they've failed.

Why not just admit what everybody else knows?

Mr. Selinger: I want to give another example of how the member opposite misleads. He says there's more people in corporate. They're working on the electronic health record, a piece of technology that will allow patients and doctors and health-care professionals to have access to all the vital information required to offer treatment to people.

He complains about the new facility on Main Street, when it's an access centre, serving the people in the inner city. He complains about hiring more nurses and more doctors and more home-care workers. He complains when we invest money in long-term care facilities and assisted living and supported housing in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, his budget would have laid off the equivalent of 9,000 nurses. That's what he promised in 2008. We repudiated that. We will invest in health care to have better services for Manitobans regardless of where they live, regardless of their income, regardless of their specific socio-economic status.

All Manitobans deserve access to universal health care. We're committed to that. We won't privatize it. We'll expand it for all Manitobans.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, we've heard from 21 community pediatricians that they've now received a directive from one of the many people in the bureaucracy that they've hired that they can no longer provide continuity of care to their patients. Parents across the city and the province are distressed to learn that that choice is being taken away from them.

Mr. Speaker, we know that people are waiting in emergency rooms. We hear stories of families throughout the province who can't get access to family doctors when they need them, in the evenings and on the weekends and at other times when children come down with illnesses. That's happening under this government's watch. It's happening because, as they increase spending, what they're doing is consolidating bureaucracy, demoralizing the front line, taking power and control away from medical doctors, from nurses and other front-line workers.

Will the Premier now acknowledge that his strategy of 52 vice-presidents isn't doing it for Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, he raises the issue of pediatricians. The system that is being put in place through the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

ensures that the doctor who's providing the service to the child while they're in the hospital is the doctor that's working in the hospital. It's a clear accountability measure to ensure that children get the care they need and that if there's any need to talk to that physician, that they are clearly identified who they are.

This is a measure that's been taken all across the country. Only the Leader of the Opposition is misrepresenting that to the public. The pediatricians, themselves, have had to go into the media to clarify this situation. It's about improving services to children and families.

That's our commitment. We will improve those services. We won't hide behind misleading information. We will improve services to children and families, whether they're in hospitals, whether in the community, and that's why this budget had quick-care clinics. That's why this budget had more training for doctors. That's why this budget had more resources to retain doctors in the north and in rural areas.

And I remind the member again, it was just 10 months ago that they tried to cut one-half a billion dollars from the budget, which includes health care and education.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that they're very good at spin when it comes to health care on their side. We acknowledge that when they have put new money into health care, it's gone into building up bureaucracy at the expense of front-line care.

We hear it every day from nurses, from doctors, from other health-care professionals throughout the system. We hear it from families who are trying to get access to the system, Mr. Speaker, with his 52 new vice-presidents.

And, in addition to that, we're aware, Mr. Speaker, that former NDP political staff are receiving soft landings within the WHRA bureaucracy.

Why doesn't the Premier just acknowledge today that the doctors that he's hiring within the system are not medical doctors but spin doctors?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the additional 405 doctors in Manitoba will not take kindly to the way the member has characterized them today.

Just some examples on pediatric improvements: we now have a pediatric asthma and allergy clinic which was established in Manitoba. We now have a pediatric ophthalmology clinic at the Children's Hospital.

In this budget, we announced cochlear implant program for people with hearing difficulties, young children. We're building a new children's rehab centre; we're building a new Women's Hospital; we're building a new birthing centre in south Winnipeg. These are all things to help young families in the medical system, and then there's the Department of Healthy Living and a Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) that are doing prevention programs all across Manitoba. And what was the member's approach to dealing with Healthy Living? Get rid of it. He wanted to get rid of the department.

We will invest in prevention. We will invest in families. We will invest in health care, and we'll make Manitoba a better place to live, including professional hockey.

Homicide Rate (Winnipeg) Reduction Strategy

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, under the 12 years of NDP rule, Winnipeg has become one of the most unsafe cities in North America. Winnipeg's homicide rate has risen so high it's almost double that in Minneapolis-St. Paul south of us.

Maybe it's because the percentage of inmates on remand has risen from 54 per cent in 2003 to a whopping 72 per cent recently. Maybe it's because the NDP couldn't be bothered to hire more Crown attorneys until just before an election that Manitoba has become so unsafe.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) tell us why the NDP is responsible for making Manitoba among the most unsafe places to live in all of North America?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): It's an important question, how we deal with issues of public safety in Manitoba, and that is why we have believed that you have to have more front-line police officers, over 250 additional police officers in Manitoba.

But it's also the case that we need to improve the amount of supports we have for young people. I'm very pleased to see that Rossbrook House is here

today, an agency with an outstanding record of serving children and young people in the inner city.

And that's just one example of the many agencies that we fund that work every single day, seven days a week, working with young people in the neighbourhoods, working with the families, working with the young people to get an education. That's why we're committed to having the school-leaving age rise to 18 years old and more alternatives for young people to attend school.

We will be tough on crime, but we will do everything we can to help young people succeed and that's our commitment. We will not—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I, too, have supported Rossbrook House for the good things they do, but the fact remains that Winnipeg has a higher homicide rate than Boston, Massachusetts, a higher homicide rate than Salt Lake City in Utah, a higher homicide rate than Austin in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, maybe it's because the NDP has a policy of pulling resources from inner Winnipeg so that they can win elections in battleground suburbs.

Mr. Speaker, now that the NDP has caught up with the rest of the province and knows that Winnipeg is one of the most unsafe places to live in North America, will the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) admit that their neglect of inner Winnipeg has contributed to making Winnipeg so unsafe?

* (14:30)

Mr. Selinger: Just this morning, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), the Minister of Labour (Ms. Howard) and the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross) made another clarification in investment in our ALL Aboard poverty reduction strategy.

We've got more jobs. We've got more opportunities for young people to get training and jobs. We've got more investments in housing in Manitoba, including in the inner city. We've got more investments in the budget in the Lighthouse program. We've got more investment in our public schools.

We are doing those things that will create opportunity in Manitoba. We did not cut the budget when the other members, including the member from River Heights, wanted to 'catch' it—cut it. We said we would protect front-line services in the middle of a

recession and we have done that, and we have increased resources to support those agencies in the work they are doing.

They deserve recognition. They deserve support. They do not deserve the misinformation that the member from River Heights and the member from Fort Whyte continuously put on the record every day, like the Bobbsey Twins.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has more clarifications than there are feathers on a peacock.

Mr. Speaker, if you include the suburbs, Winnipeg has a higher homicide rate than New York City–New York City–and yet inner Winnipeg only has a graduation rate of 55 per cent, as we tabled last month, and the NDP has chosen to do nothing.

But the proof is in the pudding. The NDP doesn't care about the education in inner Winnipeg. They don't care about the safety of Manitobans. They're ineffective in reducing crime.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) admit that his party's indifference to the poor in Manitoba has led to making Winnipeg one of the most unsafe places in all of North America?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was at the Cabinet table in the federal government when they cut all the transfer payments for children and families and social services. We did not do that in the recession.

The member opposite voted against our commitment to keep front-line services going in inner-city Winnipeg. I'm going to give him a couple of examples of initiatives that have been mounted in the inner city that he voted against. One of them is the Pathfinders program. It's operating in inner-city schools and neighbourhoods all around the William Whyte area, all around Selkirk Avenue, into Point Douglas, William Whyte School, David Livingstone School.

That has created an environment, such has been created at Rossbrook House many decades ago, where young people can go after school to have a place where they can learn that to succeed in education is cool and acceptable, to get support for tutoring and mentoring, to get opportunities for employment, to get opportunities to put money aside so they can go on to the University of Winnipeg and other institutions like Red River College, which we are expanding.

We believe in opportunities for young people. We will make sure the inner city thrives. We won't cut the budget and then stand up and say we're in favour of poverty reduction. We will do it by putting our money where our mouth is every single day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Across Cultures Event

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Last month, the Rossbrook House and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba hosted what is now their annual Across Cultures event. I attended, along with hundreds of others, an evening of sharing food, music and culture. The event was an overwhelming success.

Winnipeg's central neighbourhood is home to many First Nations and new immigrants. Proximity has made them neighbours, but the relationship hasn't always proven to be easy. Communication and active dialogue are crucial in preventing conflict, promoting greater understanding between the two communities and creating a safer neighbourhood for everyone.

The Across Cultures event creates an environment in which both communities can come together to visit, share food and enjoy music and entertainment together; the cuisine and entertainments celebrated both communities. This initiative is just one of the examples of the important work that these groups do.

The landscape of this neighbourhood would be very different without the efforts of Rossbrook House and IRCOM. Rossbrook House was established in 1976 thanks to the efforts of the late Sister Geraldine MacNamara and a group of young people who knew first-hand the challenges of the street. Their work revolves around the belief that that no child who does not want to be alone should ever have to be. Programming aims to meet the needs of children and youth, focusing on education, employment and recreation as the most important vehicles of change. Their unique set of alternative school programs, including Wi Wabigooni, Eagles' Circle and the Rising Sun, are worthy of recognition.

The work of IRCOM focuses on empowering newcomer families by providing them with the tools they need to integrate, such as affordable transitional

housing, language classes, youth programming and other services. IRCOM's much celebrated after-school program provides opportunities for newcomer children and youth to foster leadership and learn life skills.

I would like to thank Rossbrook House and IRCOM for their work for all these years and congratulate them on the success of the Across Cultures event. Together, I know you will continue to do great things for the central neighbourhood.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Southwest Cougars

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): As the MLA for the Minnedosa constituency, I'm honoured to rise in the House today to congratulate the Southwest Cougars of the Manitoba AAA Midget Hockey League on yet another outstanding season. This year, the year of 2011, is one that will be truly in the record books when it comes to the Southwest Cougars.

The Cougars finished first in the western division and were the finalists in the league, second to the eventual 2011 National Telus Cup winners, the Winnipeg Thrashers. Both teams played hard and each game of the series was played with excellence and was close in score.

The Cougar team draws from a number of communities within the southwest region to fill its roster. Each of these communities has demonstrated a significant amount of support for the Cougars over the years.

Mr. Speaker, on—to top off the amazing year the Southwest Cougars had on the ice, on June 7th of this year, Manitoba officially named the Southwest Cougars as the host team for the four-team 2012—sorry, for the four-team 2012 Midget AAA Telus Cup Western Regional Tournament.

The Southwest Cougars will begin the 2011 and 2012 Manitoba AAA Midget Hockey League season knowing they will already be—have a berth in the Telus Cup Western Regional Tournament next year. The tournament will be held March 29th to April 1st, 2012 at the new Virden and District Recreational Complex. The regional tournament will be a wonderful opportunity for the community of Virden to showcase their new facility that provides seating for 1,200 hockey fans. Hosting a prestigious hockey tournament like the Western Regional Telus Cup is a wonderful opportunity to kick off the opening of a

new facility within a wonderful region of the province.

Mr. Speaker, in partnership with my fellow MLAs from the southwestern part of the province, the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen), the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), I can say quite confidently that we believe that the region will provide a wonderful home for the 2012 Western Regional Telus Cup. The new facility in Virden will provide the ice, the committed volunteers will ensure a class act and the teams throughout the western region of Canada will provide great hockey for all the fans to enjoy.

Once again, congratulations to the Southwest Cougars bid committee for their successful efforts in being named the official host of the 2012 Telus Cup Western Regional Tournament.

Go Cougars go.

Farewell Speech

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is with some difficulty that I rise today as this could well be my last opportunity to address this Chamber.

I want to thank all members for their part in making my time here such a glorious and exhilarating experience.

I want to thank my husband, Gerald, for his encouragement to run in 1999 and continued support to this day. I thank my family for their support while often having to take a backseat and without complaint.

Of course, I thank—and also thank my executive and all the volunteers who offered their time and effort for these past 11 and a half years. I especially thank my constituency assistant, Paul Pododworny, for his loyalty. And mostly, I want to give thanks to my constituents who continued to vote for me over the past three elections.

*(14:40)

I give heartfelt thanks to former Premier Gary Doer for giving me the—gifting me with the position of Special Envoy for Military Affairs. This role has become my passion. Our current Premier (Mr. Selinger) has continued to support our government's role in this area, and I thank him for that and for allowing me to continue to be a proud part of this government under his leadership.

I also want to thank those who have helped me define and develop this position: Mr. Gary Solar, in the gallery, as special adviser; and Mr. Bob Vanderwater for referring him; also, Vicky MacLellan and now Val Hudson, also in the gallery, as executive assistants. It's been a most rewarding and fun-filled adventure, and it has been an honour.

Upon arriving here in 1999, the first few months had their moments of fear, punctuated by those of sheer terror. It was a new world with no learning curve, straight into the deep end of the pool. My caucus colleagues and staff played an instrumental role in keeping my head above water.

You, Mr. Speaker, have been a source of support throughout my entire time here. I have learned much from you in my roles as Deputy Chairperson and Deputy Speaker and as caucus Chair. And, I must say, after being involved with choosing the new interns, I have a great respect for their abilities and an appreciation for their work. They are the cream of the crop.

I thank you for your support of women in this Chamber by helping to establish the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. What I appreciated most about CPA trips, just an aside, was getting to know my colleagues on both sides as people, as persons, sans politics.

I also thank the Clerks in the Legislative Assembly Chamber Branch for their invaluable help over the years. And last, but not least, of course, our silent *Hansard* staff.

The Women's Memorial Tribute building, I believe, is my legacy in St. James. Eternal gratitude goes to all the people from the Deer Lodge Centre and our government for helping make this dream come true.

Mr. Speaker, every day I walk through this magnificent building, I never cease to appreciate its beauty and its spirit and the gift I have been blessed with, to be here serving the people of Manitoba.

The swearing-in of our government back in 1999 happened to be my birthday. That day I thought, what a gift. This year, the day after the election will also be my birthday, and I will no longer be an MLA. However, rather than feel like I've lost something I love, I prefer to think of it as a chance to re-gift my best experience of my life. I wish my successor, and all of you, the same joy and fulfillment I take with me now. I thank you all.

Jake Epp

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for St. James on her comments.

I stand to pay honour to, and tribute to, another Manitoban who has deservedly earned one of the highest honours in this nation. On May 27th of this year, the Honourable Jake Epp was made an officer of the Order of Canada for his contributions to public service and for business leadership.

While many associated Mr. Epp with his time in federal politics, residents of Steinbach remember him as a high school teacher, where he taught in the city for many years, and as a deputy mayor of the community. In 1972, Mr. Epp was elected to the House of Commons for the riding of Provencher. He was first appointed to Cabinet by Prime Minister Joe Clark as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and later he became Minister of Health and Welfare in the Brian Mulroney government.

As Minister of Health, Mr. Epp championed various initiatives to prevent disease and illness, including anti-smoking campaigns. He was the driving force in encouraging Biovail to open a plant in Steinbach, and it has grown over the years, although now under a different name, to become one of the largest employers in the southeast.

In his political life, Mr. Epp also championed programs to fight addiction and combat illegal drugs. He was also a leader in both his public and private life, in ensuring life-saving medication and health supplies were made available to impoverished citizens of disadvantaged countries.

Mr. Epp has been successful in his many private initiatives after politics, including as senior vice-president of TransCanada Pipelines and president of TransCanada Pipelines International for many years. The City of Steinbach Library, renamed the Jake Epp Library some years ago, and it's a fitting tribute to his legacy, an individual who did so much for the region and community.

On a personal note, in the times that I've been with Mr. Epp over the years, he's always been a true gentleman both he—both during the time that he was in office and in the years since. The words of encouragement that he and his wife, Lydia, and other members of his family have offered me and my wife, Kim, have been more meaningful than I'm sure he knows.

The Order of Canada is made more dignified and distinguished by Mr. Epp as a member, and I offer on behalf of all members of this House our congratulations to this most honourable gentleman.

Henteleff Park Foundation

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to pay tribute to a dedicated group of volunteers in our community. The Henteleff Park Foundation is comprised of generous, thoughtful and committed individuals whose mission is to develop the park as a place to preserve nature and provide an environment for quiet reflection and low-impact recreation.

Since 1996, this group has worked to establish and develop a park on the former site of Winnipeg's Henteleff Tree Nursery. They opposed a housing development that would limit future access to an extraordinary landscape, so the group made a plan, executed it with passion and intelligence, and today we have a gorgeous rezoned park space for all nature lovers to enjoy.

The 30-acre park is located on the river at 1980 St. Mary's Road. Remnants of shelter plantings from the former tree nursery and the natural riparian forest combine to make it a breathtaking enclave for families to enjoy. Normand Creek provides an important spawning area for several fish species, and the trees, grasslands and wildlife are a sensational backdrop to celebrate the rich history of Aboriginal, Métis and agricultural activities on the land. Yude Henteleff, staunch environmentalist, whose family owned the former farm in south Winnipeg, calls the park a dream that has become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, today the Henteleff Park Foundation arranges annual tree planning–planting events, including one this Saturday, June 11th, which encourages families to participate in the beautification and preservation of the park. They arrange birdwatching tours, guided walks and wildflower transplantation activities, and apply annually for the—for funding for the Green Team youth employment program. The foundation and community volunteers are passionately committed to the completion of the trail system.

I hope all members of the Chamber will join me today in celebrating and congratulating the splendid volunteer efforts of the Henteleff Park Foundation and its many friends, for their hard work and their unwavering caring for our environment and, indeed, our planet.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business.

Would you please canvass the House to see if there is agreement to transfer Bill 15, The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Amendment Act, and Bill 33, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, from the Standing Committee on Human Resources to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development for this evening's meetings, so that the Government House Leader doesn't have to be in two rooms at the same time tonight?

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Is there agreement for the House to transfer Bill 15, The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Amendment Act, and Bill 33, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, from the Standing Committee on Human Resources to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development for this evening's meeting. Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on further House business.

I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Private Bills will meet on Tuesday, June 14th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 204, The Consumer Rights Day Act; Bill 205, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Mammography Accreditation); Bill 217, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Expanded Grounds for Early Termination); Bill 220, The Justice for Victims of Child Pornography Act; Bill 222, The Sexual Assault Awareness Month Act; Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act; and Bill 301, The Providence College and Theological Seminary Incorporation Amendment Act.

* (14:50)

Further, I'd also ask if you would canvass the House to see if there's leave that, if these bills are reported back to the House on June 15th from the

Standing Committee on Private Bills, is there agreement for these bills to be considered for concurrence and third reading on the afternoon of June 16th?

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's been announced that the Standing Committee on Private Bills will meet on Tuesday, June 14th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 204, The Consumer Rights Day Act; Bill 205, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Mammography Accreditation); Bill 217, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Expanded Grounds for Early Termination); Bill 220, The Justice for Victims of Child Pornography Act; Bill 222, The Sexual Assault Awareness Month Act; Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act; Bill 301, The Providence College and Theological Seminary Incorporation Amendment Act.

And, also, is there leave that, if these bills are reported back to the House on Wednesday, June 15th, from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, is there agreement for these bills to be considered for concurrence and third reading on the afternoon of June 16th? Is there—would there be agreement on that? *[Agreed]*

Okay, the Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Monday, June 13th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 22, The Securities Amendment Act; Bill 45, The Statutes Corrections and Minor Amendments Act; Bill 47, The Accessibility Advisory Council Act; Bill 48, The Planning and Land Dedication for School Sites Act; and Bill 49, The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's also announced that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Monday, June 13th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 22, The Securities Amendment Act; Bill 45, The Statutes Corrections and Minor Amendments Act; Bill 47, The Accessibility Advisory Council Act; Bill 48, The Planning and Land Dedication for School Sites Act; Bill 49, The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment.

Okay, the honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce, for the information of the House, that the Opposition Day motion will be considered on Monday, June 13th.

Mr. Speaker: It's also announced that the Opposition Day motion will be brought forward on Monday, June the 13th.

Okay, that's for information for the House.

The Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, today would you call for second reading of Bill 50.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 50—The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, second reading on Bill 50, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): I move, seconded by the Minister of Child and Family Services, that Bill 50, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act; Loi sur la viabilité de la ceinture nickélique de Thompson, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Administrator has been advised of the bill and I table the message.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister for Innovation, Energy and Mines, seconded by the honourable Minister of Child and Family Services, that Bill 50, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Administrator has been advised of the bill and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, of course, all members of this House will—are aware of the significant impact that mining has in the province of Manitoba. And all members of this House, I know, are concerned about the future and the viability of the city of Thompson, and the north, in general.

Of course, with the recent—the announcement in the fall of the potential closure of the smelter and refinery in Thompson, some doubts about the future viability and sustainability occurred. One of the responses, Mr. Speaker, of the government was to discuss, negotiate, co-ordinate and assist, in any way

or fashion that we could, in order to ensure for the sustainability and future of the community and the town and the province.

As a consequence, this bill was tabled in the House. I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the City of Thompson and Vale have announced agreement for payment of grants in lieu for the next two years, which means half of the purpose of this—half of the content of this bill will not be required to be passed into law, and, in fact, I'm giving indication to the House now that when this matter goes to committee, we will be removing the provisions dealing with grants-in-lieu, insofar as those issue—that issue has been dealt with.

With respect to the second part of the legislation dealing with the need for an ongoing sustainability fund for the future, I think it speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker and we will be proceeding with that.

And I also want to thank members of the community, members of the—in fact, members of the public, members of the mining association-related entities, for working with us on this bill, as well as my colleague in the Legislature for his words, his assistance in this matter but, of course, most of all, the unflinching commitment of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) to his community and to the province to ensure that Thompson, which to quote from—as I said, several occasions in this Legislature, when looking at the operations of Rolls Royce in Thompson, the vice-president of Rolls Royce said it was the best place in the world to do business, and that reference was to Thompson, Manitoba. And that, to me, sums up the—both the past and the future of that community.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that this matter can go to committee. We will deal with the—some of the amendments that I've already pointed out and, hopefully, this matter—we can continue to build and ensure sustainability of Thompson both present and into the future. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable—I have two here. The honourable member for Brandon West.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): And I do appreciate the words that are put on the record by the Minister for Innovation, Energy and Mines. He and I have had a number of conversations over the last couple of days. They've been interesting conversations, to say the least. We do recognize, Mr. Speaker, just recently we had the Provincial Mining

Week here and a proclamation telling this House and also the province just how important it is—mining, the mining industry—how important it is in the province of Manitoba, how many jobs it does create, the wealth that it creates for the province.

And it's very important that we in this House recognize that corporations and mine companies are very important to the economy here in the province of Manitoba, and, in fact, this legislation speaks specifically to that, the investment, the involvement and the contribution to communities within the province of Manitoba, and we talk about the community of Thompson. It is certainly very fortunate to have the mining industry there. It is a mining town, no question, and certainly its livelihood is derived from that particular industry.

This legislation, when it came through, Mr. Speaker, was done with the best interests of Thompson, certainly, and with, at that time, the company in mind, but since then there has been some successful negotiations that have taken place between the corporation and the town of—the City of Thompson, successful negotiations that have, needless to say, made this—a portion of this legislation moot, or, as was described by one member during bill briefings, redundant, and it is redundant, and when you have a redundant piece of legislation, there's no sense going forward. Therefore, as been admitted to, or committed to by the minister, that there will be at committee changes to the bill.

* (15:00)

There are two sections to the bill. One will be, I'm told, removed. The other section is a reasonable one. It certainly sets up an economic development fund, which is important when you're dealing with a one-industry town in the city of Thompson. It's very important, and that part of the legislation will go forward with the first part of the legislation obviously being changed quite dramatically. And I do thank the minister for, certainly, discussing the changes to this piece of legislation, and I look forward to it going forward to committee, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest when it does go to committee we will support the portion of the bill which is the economic development fund.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to put a few comments on the record with regard

to this bill, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act.

First of all, I want to say and talk about the importance of Thompson to the province of Manitoba. Thompson was established in—around 1955, '56, and it was actually under a Liberal government that there was an agreement set between Inco and the government of Manitoba, which allowed for the development of the city of Thompson. And it has done very well in the years since then. It has been a wonderful place to visit, a really good place for people to grow up, and a lot of people have worked both in the mine at Thompson and serving the nearby area in many, many different ways.

So I think, first and foremost, it is very important that we are here today and talking about the city of Thompson, the future of the city of Thompson. And I want to make sure that there is a very strong future for the city of Thompson and, certainly, that is something that I am very concerned about.

I will certainly be supporting, Mr. Speaker, the economic development fund that is being set up. I think that the general concerns that I would have, in terms of this fund, is making sure that this—there is the proper accountability process, that the appropriate process is in place to deal with conflict of interest issues, which are very important. And that there are appropriate, you know, rationale and reasons for providing and operating the fund. That we want to make sure that, you know, every dollar that is spent from this fund is spent well. We want to make sure that every dollar that is in this fund is contributing to the well-being, the economic development of Thompson and the citizens of Thompson. And that, I think, while in general I'm very supportive of the fund, that I would hope that there might be some look, at the committee stage, at mechanisms that might be incorporated to ensure the level of accountability that I think every citizen in Manitoba, and every citizen, certainly, in Thompson, would want to ensure that every dollar under this fund is well spent.

The second point I would like to make is that, you know, often we have bills like this coming forward, Sustainability Act, and why? Because the government is concerned that there may be some questions about the sustainability. And let's be frank, you know, if there were not questions about what's happening in Thompson under this government, it's

unlikely this government would have rushed to bring this forward immediately before an election.

The minister has brought forward a bill but, at the same time, you know, we were led to understand that the minister was negotiating a situation moving forward for Vale and for the mine and for the smelter. And we were expecting some plan to be laid on the table in terms of what the future of the smelter is, because Vale has said that they are going to discontinue it and the government has said that they don't want it discontinued. And we're not even, from this minister, getting an update on what the situation is, and are we to be led to believe that there is no resolution of this?

And is that why the minister has now, you know, laid this bill on the table and brought it forward quite quickly? So quickly that the ink is hardly dry on the paper on this bill before the minister is removing half the bill. And, certainly, we would have expected that this government would be laying on the table a plan and a forward-thinking agreement with Vale in terms of what's going to happen. And that is not here and, of course, that is a big disappointment, because we've been led to understand that the minister and his government have been working very hard to get some sort of a resolution. And we were hoping that such a resolution might be put forward at this time.

Of course, the other reason that there may be some concerns about the future of Thompson and the north and the port of Churchill relates to what is happening at the federal level, the concerns that the Canadian Wheat Board may not be around at some point in the future, and, given that a high proportion of the cargo, of the freight that goes to the port of Churchill, is a result of the activities of the Canadian Wheat Board, there is, of course, a lot of concern about the Bay Line, the line to Churchill and what the future is.

And we had anticipated that the minister might provide us with a vision moving forward in terms of what is going to happen with the line and what his government is—the stance his government is going to take. And it is a disappointment that we don't have a clearer picture of what's going to happen.

Certainly, as I've indicated that we're ready to support this bill—half of this bill which is going to be going forward, but, at the same time, I want to put on record that we believe that the government is bringing this forward because, in fact, under this government, there is uncertainty about the future. And we would have preferred that, together with this

bill, there be a clear direction, a clear plan, both for the smelter and in terms of what's going to happen with the Bay Line to Churchill.

And it's disappointing that there's not more details presented at this time. And, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this bill going to committee and to further discussion, then, and for the debate at third reading. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 50, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Mr. Speaker: Government House Leader, on further House business.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on further House business, would you call for us to resume debate on second reading of Bill 44, Bill 51, Bill 27 and Bill 46.

Mr. Speaker: The order of business will be—we'll resume debate on second readings of bill—in this order: 44, 51, 27 and 46.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 44—The Civil Service Superannuation and Related Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: Second reading of Bill 44, The Civil Service Superannuation and Related Amendments Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. Okay, it will remain standing.

Do we have any speakers?

* (15:10)

Bill 51—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2011

Mr. Speaker: Okay, seeing none, I'm going to move on to Bill 51, The Budget Implementation and Tax

Statutes Amendment Act, 2011, standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo? Remain standing?

Okay. So it will remain standing.

Do we have any speakers?

Bill 27—The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, I'll move on to Bill 27, The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act, and it's standing in the name of the honourable member for—the honourable member for—the honourable Minister for Agriculture and Food (Mr. Struthers), who has 25 minutes remaining, and it's also standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

First of all, we'll deal with the honourable member who has 25 minutes remaining—the honourable Minister for Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): It is a real—it's an honour and a pleasure to stand and speak on this bill, Bill 27. I'm really very pleased that my colleague the Finance Minister, the MLA for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), brought this bill forward.

I want to say that I think, from time to time, in this building, we do take on some very big, very historical issues, and over the years of my 16 years in this Chamber, I've been very impressed when both sides of the House can come together on something as important as this issue and speak with one voice, Mr. Speaker.

So, before I go any further, I will again, I've said it before and I'll say it again, I want to pay particular attention to the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) on this topic as a whole. In past, I know that he has worked well with members of this side of the House, and particularly the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), to bring forward very important pieces of legislation that acknowledges the contributions and the challenges faced by Ukrainian Canadians in our province of Manitoba.

So I'm—I do want to be clear on that, and I want the member for Russell to know that I'm sincere when I include him in the list of people who, I think,

have done great service to the Ukrainian community in Manitoba.

I do, too, want pay the same kind of regard for the sponsor of this bill, the—our Finance Minister. My friend from Swan River has worked very hard over her career not just in this, her career in this Legislature, but also her contributions predating her time in this Legislature and the kind of work that she's done in her home area of Cowan—her and her family for generations living in that area, homesteading in the Cowan area. I know the MLA for Swan River was very instrumental, very psyched up about working on the Cowan homecoming and doing a family history, and not just the family history for the Harapiaks, but the—working on the history of Cowan and that district.

And, when I read through that history, it was very clear, it was very plain to see the kinds of hardships, the kind of successes, the kind of celebrations, the kind of quality of life that the Ukrainian community in her area, in her beautiful part of Manitoba, have contributed, and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, those kinds of examples of Ukrainian heritage and Ukrainian tradition that we see, that I saw in that work conducted by the MLA for Swan River have been repeated over and over and over again in all parts of Canada, but, in particular, here in Manitoba.

When you look at the way our province has developed, has grown, every member of this Legislature can point to the contributions in their local areas of the Ukrainian community in our province. I just had a conversation with the member from Emerson, and we were talking about Vita and communities in his area, an area of the province where my family, the Struthers family, came to Manitoba in and around, just around the end of World War I. And I can remember the stories that my grandparents would impart to my brothers and sisters and I about the contributions in—from in that southeast corner of Manitoba and how important the Ukrainian contributions were in that part of the province.

So every part of our province, every constituency, has been touched by Ukrainian Manitobans, and I would say, improved by Ukrainian Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of Vita, one of the attractions at the Manitoba Museum for my nine-year-old when we make our treks through the

Manitoba Museum is that part of the museum that depicts the Ukrainian settlement down in that part of our province in the Tolstoi-Vita area. It's a favourite of my nine-year-old and I'm glad that he's—I'm very glad that he's interested in that and learning about the contributions of Ukrainian Manitobans.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that this bill has come forward today for second reading. I'm particularly pleased, I'm particularly honoured to represent, amongst other communities in my riding, the community of Dauphin. Our city hosts the Canada National Ukrainian Festival, which was born in 1966 and has been running every year, getting bigger and better every year since 1966, changing and evolving as it goes along to, I think, to even better represent the contributions of Ukrainian Manitobans in—not just in Manitoba, because this is a national Ukrainian festival. It represents the story of Ukrainian Canadians, really. And I'm proud that I have constituents who take on that role, that volunteer and organize and work very hard to put forward not just an event that is fun and can be exciting and thrilling and colourful, but also an event that can be very educational in terms of the traditions and the cultures—the culture of Ukrainian Manitobans.

But also, Mr. Speaker, when you walk up to the hilltop, past the hilltop stage and onto memorial way, it becomes, I think, a very sombre walk as you make your way along memorial way at the top of the Selo site. Up at that site, there's a number of monuments, a number of cenotaphs, a number of ways in which we honour some of the challenges that Ukrainian Canadians have faced here in Manitoba and across our country. The tomb of the unknown Ukrainian soldier is one example; a cenotaph honouring the victims of the Holodomor, something that we've spent some time in this Legislature talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I'm—I really think that it's worthwhile. I really think it's an important step for us as a Legislature to set aside this day. I think it's a very wise day to set aside, being the Saturday of that National Ukrainian Festival for Canada. I am absolutely thrilled that it is that day, and that we do take some time to talk about the contributions and the challenges faced by Ukrainian Canadians here in Manitoba, Ukrainian Manitobans who've done so much for our province and I think deserve to have the kind of attention that this bill brings forward, that this bill acknowledges, and that this bill does pay tribute to.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, in addition to my few words from the other day, I'm really very proud that we're bringing forward this bill, and very proud that we were able to work together in this Legislature to make it happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Russell, I will deal with the next—because it's also standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield.

So what is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield?

* (15:20)

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Okay, so it won't be.

Okay, now, the honourable—I'll recognize the honourable member for Russell, to speak.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the issue of The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act, and I certainly thank the people who have contributed in the Chamber, who have contributed to the discussion on this bill and have made comments on this bill.

This particular issue is not one that belongs to me or belongs to any of us in this Chamber. This is an issue that belongs to people of Ukrainian heritage in the province of Manitoba and in Canada. The reason I brought the Bill 214, which is The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act, forward was to, Mr. Speaker, not to simply put a focus on myself as the sort of spokesperson for the Ukrainian community but rather to ensure that this bill reflected the wishes and the hopes of people of Ukrainian origin within the province of Manitoba and beyond Winnipeg and beyond just one or two communities, but, indeed, people throughout this province, and to give it some continuity with what was being contemplated in other jurisdictions and, indeed, passed in Ontario.

And, so, Mr. Speaker, after I had introduced the bill, I was approached by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) who indicated to me that she, too—and this was about a week after I'd introduced this bill—was considering bringing in a bill that mirrored what I had, in essence, brought in under the two—under Bill 214. And, you know, it kind of embarrassed me and embarrassed, I think, the

Ukrainian community that we did not have the same co-operation in working together as we had previously engaged in in working on issues like this. But, nevertheless, the government does have the majority in the House, and it is, you know, understood that because of the majority, the government bill would prevail over a private member's bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, I looked at Bill 27 and my only—my regret is in two areas. One is that the title of the bill now narrows it down to The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act. This is almost a misnomer, but it would be preferable if this bill could be renamed The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act, because that's really what it is that we are celebrating. It's the Ukrainian heritage within this country that we are celebrating. So it's not Canadian heritage; it's not Manitoba heritage. It's Ukrainian heritage that we want to celebrate and acknowledge through this bill.

And so I don't know whether the minister would be, you know, open to an amendment to the title of the bill, but, Mr. Speaker, it's a friendly amendment, and one, I think, that reflects the views and wishes of people of Ukrainian heritage in our province. I don't, you know—my bill will die on the Order Paper, because that's just the way that things work in the House here, and that is understood. But I think it would be better for the people of Ukrainian origin in our province if this bill could be renamed The Ukrainian Heritage Day Act, which simply talks about the heritage of Ukrainian people.

The date that was chosen by me in this bill was not my date. It was a date that came to me from people who honoured the first settlers who came into this province and into the country because these people came in on a particular date into this country. And it is for that reason that we wanted to honour that particular day. It was in commemoration of those pioneers who struggled beyond our imagination to be able to come to a land that offered them freedom, that offered them opportunity, and it was this first entry into this country that provided those of us of Ukrainian heritage the opportunity to participate in this great democracy, this great country of freedom, and these are our forefathers who laid the first steps into this country, followed by many of our forefathers and our great-grandparents. And, indeed, the entire Ukrainian population in this country has made its mark on society, has made its mark on the quality of life throughout our nation.

And it's for that reason that I thought September the 7th was an appropriate day to celebrate this particular event. In addition to that, it gave an opportunity for schools and children within our school system, especially those in the bilingual school programs, to be able, with their parents, their teachers, to, on an annual basis, celebrate this day with programs and with activities within the school system. And so it provided an opportunity for exchanges between provinces and between schools and in jurisdictions, whether it's Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, to also connect through technology, through other means on that particular day to celebrate Ukrainian heritage.

But, in addition to this, Mr. Speaker, we have other opportunities in other communities, whether it's the Dauphin National Ukrainian Festival, which I think all of us are extremely proud of, and I've attended that event on—I don't know on how many occasions, but it's always a learning experience. It's just not a celebration, but it's a learning experience to learn the quality of life and the—also the struggles of Ukrainian people through various stages of the history of our province and our country. And to me, that is an important element of the celebration of the Ukrainian national festival which is sometimes overshadowed by the dance, the songs, the celebrations, and that's fine and we are very proud of those things as well. But in—within that, I think, is the importance of underlining the contributions and the struggles that these people endured in coming to this new land from a land of—where they were in many ways persecuted for being—for wanting to be free people.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Dauphin Ukrainian national festival is an important event and I think it's recognized throughout Canada, the United States and beyond as an important event, and so, yes, we should celebrate Ukrainian heritage on that day. But I think because there are people living in other communities, in Winnipeg, in other smaller communities around the province, that I considered in this bill that September 7th best reflected the day when the first pioneers entered this country and was one that we could combine with the school education system to celebrate a day that was important to all of us, and it's that day that means something to Ukrainian people in that this was the day that people from Ukraine arrived in the country of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I, of course, will support the bill, Bill 27, and I want to acknowledge not only the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) for her

contributions—and I want to thank her and her caucus for the support that I have received on initiatives that I have come forward with as a member of this Legislature in the past that refer and have some connection to the Ukrainian community—I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) for his comments and his words that he put on the record.

And, certainly, I understand why people in Dauphin and surrounding area would want to connect themselves to this particular day of commemoration and celebration. And so, Mr. Speaker—but I do still have that gnawing in myself that says I should try to do my part to try to convince the government that perhaps another look at the date of celebration would be worthy and another look, perhaps, at the title would be worthy. And I will pursue this on another occasion, perhaps in the committee stage of the bill, and I will certainly try to make my argument at that point in time, with the hopes that, indeed, we can continue to work together as a Legislature, as legislators, and find common ground.

But, in the event that we do not, I do want to indicate very clearly that this is not a bill that I would oppose. It is not a bill that I find offensive. I—it's a bill that almost mirrors the—Bill 214 in many ways. I mean, we could use different whereases and elements of the bill, but, in essence, basically, the intent is the same and it is to celebrate a day of Ukrainian heritage within our province and within Canada.

* (15:30)

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by indicating that I am hopeful that, whether it's in private or before we reach the committee stage, that we can have a discussion with members of the government and try to find a—some common ground with a friendly amendment that will allow for this bill to be strengthened, allow this bill to really reflect what is important in celebrating a national day of Ukrainian heritage in Manitoba and one that we can all look back at, at some point in time, with pride. Because my—one of my fears about having the last Saturday of—before the Ukrainian national festival as the day of celebration is that, in the event that the Ukrainian national festival stops at some point in time in the future, whether it's 50 years from now or a hundred years from now, what do you do with that day of celebration? And I think, although that's looking very far into the future, and one that I hope

that never comes, but it, in fact, may and we've seen those kinds of things happen before. And so you have to think about those things as well, whereas the 7th of September is something that can be done in perpetuity.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I want to lend my total support to the concept of us passing legislation that celebrates Ukrainian heritage day in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise to talk about Bill 27, and to lend my support to having a Ukrainian heritage day for Manitoba and make sure that we are recognizing the extraordinary contributions that people of Ukrainian background have made to Manitoba. And also recognizing not just the past, but into the future, and wanting to make sure that all Manitobans have an understanding of the heritage, Ukrainian heritage, which we, in fact, jointly share. Because we are a province with a very large number of people who've come from the Ukraine and the Ukrainian heritage, now, has become a major part of Manitoba heritage. And that is why we should have this Ukrainian heritage day act and why we should have a Canadian heritage day that we can celebrate and spread the word and understand the history of Ukraine and the Ukrainian peoples in Manitoba and the contribution that so many people of Ukrainian background have made to the life and the work and the quality of life here in Manitoba.

I want to say a few words about the Ukrainian national festival, which I have been to almost every year since I have been Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party. I think it's an extraordinarily important event for Manitoba. It's an event which celebrates Ukrainian heritage. It's an event which brings people from around the province and it's an event which is a major event in Dauphin.

And I remember, you know, many wonderful moments from the time that I have spent at the Ukrainian festival. For example, I think it was probably in about 2002, when Peter Liba was Lieutenant-Governor, and getting together around the monument there to recognize what happened in the famine and the Holodomor. And to be able to talk about that and have a monument in memory of what happened, to remind people that this terrible event had happened and that it was important that everybody know about it, and that we, in fact, by knowing about it and understanding what happened,

that we make sure that such events do not happen anywhere in the world.

I am well aware that this is going to the committee stage. It has the support of all parties to go to committee. I believe this is an important opportunity for people who are of Ukrainian heritage to come before the committee and to talk about the options in terms of what day will best work for people of Ukrainian background to celebrate the heritage day, whether, in fact, this day or the day proposed by the MLA for Russell. And, I mean, in looking at this, I think it is important that we consider, you know, the festival on the one hand, but on the other hand, the opportunities for a day which would be a school day when we can, in fact, make sure that schools throughout Manitoba are recognizing and learning about Ukrainian heritage. And I think it is also important that, you know, we consider that it is important to celebrate the Canadian Heritage Day all over Manitoba and that, when we are looking at celebrating Ukrainian heritage day around Manitoba, that there are advantages to both options.

But, whichever option is chosen, Mr. Speaker, it would have been highly desirable if this bill had included the resources within it to make sure that there would be adequate support for Ukrainian heritage around the province and for the celebration of Ukrainian heritage. And I would hope that this would be an item that might be brought up by—at the committee stage, and people could feel free to talk about some of the things that we can do, not just in Dauphin—but certainly in Dauphin—but around the province to make sure that there is a full recognition and understanding and knowledge of Ukrainian heritage and how important it is to all of us as Manitobans.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this bill going to committee and to hearing from people, particularly those of Ukrainian background but not just those of Ukrainian background. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 27, second reading, Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 46—The Save Lake Winnipeg Act

Mr. Speaker: Now, we'll move on to Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name in the name of the honourable member for Morris?

No? Okay, it's been denied.

Do we have any speakers?

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It's my privilege to stand in the House and speak to this bill today, Mr. Speaker, to The Save Lake Winnipeg Act. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, on a more serious note, the save-the-Lake-Winnipeg bill is a very important bill, as we all want to save Lake Winnipeg from the—some of the concerns that arise in it today, but—outlined by this bill.

And I'd like to start out by thanking the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie) and his staff for providing myself and my colleague the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) with a briefing in the legislation—on this legislation on Wednesday—or pardon me, on Tuesday, Mr. Speaker. The minister committed to provide us with some additional information in response to some of the questions that we had about specific aspects of this legislation, and we look forward to receiving that information in a timely manner so that we can make judgments on this bill in a more informed manner.

However, the bill outlines—Bill 46 outlines a number of steps aimed at helping protect and restore the health of Lake Winnipeg, which are certainly laudable goals, Mr. Speaker, and ones that I know all members of the House are concerned about. The bill amends five different pieces of legislation, including The Crown Lands Act, the environmental act—The Environment Act, rather, The Mines and Minerals Act, The Planning Act and The Water Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, key provisions are proposed that include extending the ban on construction and expansion of hog operations to the entire province unless certain conditions are met, and I'll talk about that later. Prohibiting the—they also have a provision to prohibit the use of disposal fields under certain conditions in certain regions of the province. There's requirements for the development of drinking water and waste-water management plans with respect to

planning authorities within the Capital Region that are subject to The Planning Act, and allowing the—for the designation of Crown lands as provincially significant wetlands, and there is great discussion throughout Manitoba in regards to these issues.

* (15:40)

The provisions of the act also allow for the placing of a two-year moratorium on new quarry licences and quarry permits for peat and peat moss, and the specific requirements regarding Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre in regards to nutrient management with that new facility are enlisted in this bill as well, and, as I said earlier, 'plaudable' comments in regards to the issue of moving forward towards cleaning up Lake Winnipeg.

Looking at Bill 46 in a bit more detail regarding the hog industry, the provisions include that the province-wide ban on the hog industry expansion is extended to being province-wide, the one from Bill 17 before, unless, of course, under advanced environmental practices being used to deal with manure and its distribution, Mr. Speaker. And we understand this may include the use of anaerobic digestion and other approved technologies, and this was some of the information that we were asking the minister to provide to us, just exactly what qualified under those particular circumstances, because he indicated that it wasn't their objective to stop the growth of the hog industry; it was merely to control the use of the manure on this particular concern, which I think is a concern of many of the farmers in Manitoba today, and certainly others.

The government has promised to double, as well, in this bill the funding for best environmental management practices to protect water and to introduce a new tax credit to help farmers acquire new environmental technologies to treat manure, as well, and we look forward to seeing the additional details, as I've said, about these initiatives in the very near future, so that sound decisions of the type can be made for the people in this billion-dollar industry in Manitoba, once was a billion-dollar industry, Mr. Speaker.

I have to acknowledge that there is—has been a great decrease in the number of hogs in Manitoba due to the country-of-origin labelling, higher dollar values and the number of trade irritants with our American neighbours that have caused the—many hog producers to rethink the future of expansion in

the industry, although those prices have come back, somewhat, over the last several months.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to say that Bill 46 includes provisions to modernize sewage treatment in Winnipeg and around Manitoba by requiring the City of Winnipeg to replace its North End Sewage Treatment Plant with a full biological nutrient removal plant, referred to as a BNR plant, to help keep pollutants out of Lake Winnipeg, and within a year of the bill, Bill 46, being proclaimed—then it comes into force on royal assent—it requires the City to produce a plan on how it will meet the strict limits of pollutant removal.

The plan will go to the Clean Environment Commission for review and also to the Public Utilities Board, which will examine the costs of these types of facilities before they move on, and, of course, there's been a debate in the House, Mr. Speaker, about the values that have been placed on phosphorus and nitrate removal—nitrogen removal, through these systems, and we're pleased to see that the government has changed its mind in regards to some of these concerns and gone with the practical analysis that was provided to them in the area of costs in this area. But we are also cognizant that phosphates are the key issue, as pointed out in one of the studies that the government responded to in regards to the establishment of blue-green algae in Lake Winnipeg, which, of course, is the goal of everyone to have that removed from the lake.

Within a year, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, the Clean Environment Commission and—or the City, rather, would put that plan forward, and we would hope that there would be expedient movement forward to take action to eliminate this—these phosphate levels and other nutrients, so that the lake could be cleaned up in a more appropriate manner.

Mr. Speaker, there's also wetland management included in this bill and I respect—with respect to the measures targeted at wetlands protection, it's been indicated that existing rights on Crown lands will continue and that includes agricultural use of these Crown lands. The wetland designation will also not affect Aboriginal or treaty rights. And powers under The Water Rights Act will still prevail, such as the licensing that are required under The Water Rights Act for anything to do with the movement and retention of water in the province of Manitoba.

Bill 46 also has provisions banning the rapid expansion of peat extraction from wetlands. It includes a two-year moratorium on permits or leases

for peat and peat moss operations, Mr. Speaker. The minister has indicated that existing operations will continue to operate, that they will essentially be grandfathered under this particular bill.

And so we look forward to hearing others coming to committee to discuss a number of these areas, Mr. Speaker. And so, as we discuss these strategies to help protect Lake Winnipeg, it's always important to note that there are multiple point sources of nutrient loading on the lake, some of them inside Manitoba and some of them outside Manitoba. And I've—and some of them are within our borders and controlled—controllable by us and others are a part of the greater Lake Winnipeg watershed management area.

I've had the privilege and opportunity to be, as the critic of both Conservation and Water Stewardship and climate change issues in the province of Manitoba. In my responsibilities I had the opportunity to attend the Lake Winnipeg summit on November 30th and December 1st and hear first-hand some of the concerns and potential opportunities to look at how we would come together as industries and citizens throughout the province, to deal with cleaning up some of these tributaries and lakes, Mr. Speaker, that we have in Manitoba.

But I think that discussion is carried much broader, because that was a more international type of meeting, Mr. Speaker, with those there from—with a few from our neighbouring states to the south as well as across the whole prairies. Because, of course, we know that the watershed for the Lake Winnipeg takes in the area right from here to the Rocky Mountains. It goes down the Red River to Lake Traverse in the northeast part of South Dakota. It takes in some of the northern area of Minnesota, as that water comes in through Lake of the Woods and through Lake Winnipeg, and a number of other tributaries that enter our province as well from the west.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think, as well, that, you know, I had the opportunity of being at the Red River Basin Commission meetings, which is truly international, in Fargo, last January 15th, 16th, in that area, 17th. And I know that there is a great amount of work being done on looking at things like retention of water by our American neighbours, to take off 20 per cent of a peak flood, perhaps, that they might have on the Red River in the future. And if they do that, it's certainly a benefit to us, as well, in regards to the control of the flow of those waters, not

to mention the devastation and the cost of that devastation that it would do, but also in the management of resources and nutrients that go along with that flow, and slowing it down and opportunities that are there. And various processes that the—that our American neighbours have put in place in regards to establishing mechanisms that would pay water holders, if you will, in their states, for the control of this nutrient-laden material.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd just like to say that we trust that the government consulted extensively with stakeholders prior to introducing this legislation, and I certainly look forward to hearing what the citizens have to say and their input when Bill 46 goes before the committee.

And, with those few words, I would ask that this bill be moved on to committee.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Pardon me.

Ms. Howard: I'd like to request a recorded vote.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: Okay, a recorded vote having—order. A vote having been requested, okay, now, all those in favour of the motion, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the motion, say nay.

Sounds unanimous to me.

* (15:50)

Formal Vote

Ms. Howard: I'd like to request a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your request recorded—a recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is second reading, Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Blaikie, Braun, Brick, Briese, Caldwell, Chomiak, Cullen, Derkach, Dewar, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Korzeniowski, Mackintosh, Maguire, Marcelino, Martindale, McFadyen, McGifford, Melnick, Mitchelson, Oswald, Pedersen, Reid, Rondeau, Rowat, Saran, Schuler, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Taillieu, Wiebe.

* (16:40)

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 46, Nays 0.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business.

I'd like to announce that Bill 50, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act, is being added to the agenda of this evening's Standing Committee on Human Resources meeting for the committee's consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's been announced that Bill 50, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act, is being added to the agenda for this evening's Standing Committee on Human Resources meeting for the committee's consideration.

The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on further House business.

I'd like to announce that, in addition to the bills already referred this afternoon to the Standing Committee on Human Resources meeting on Monday, June 13th, at 6 p.m., the following bills will also be referred to the same meeting: Bill 27, The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act.

Further, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, June 13th, at 6 p.m., and, if necessary, on Tuesday, June 14th, at 6 p.m., to

consider the following: Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act.

I'd also ask if you would canvass the House to see if there is leave that these bills are reported back to the House on Wednesday, June 15th, from the Standing Committee on Social, Economic Development. Is there agreement for these bills to be considered for concurrence and third reading on the afternoon of June 16th?

Mr. Speaker: It's been announced that, in addition to the bills already referred this afternoon to the Standing Committee on Human Resources meeting on Monday, June 13th, at 6 p.m., the following bill will be referred to the Standing—or referred to the same meeting: Bill 27, The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act.

It's also announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, June 13th, at 6 p.m., and, if necessary, on Tuesday, June 14th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act.

And is there leave that if these bills are reported back to the House on Wednesday, June 15th, from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, and I'm asking if there's agreement for these bills to be considered for concurrence and third reading on the afternoon of June 16th.

First of all, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

And is there agreement for the bills to be considered for concurrence and third reading on the afternoon of June 16th? *[Agreed]*

So agreement on both.

The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, would you call for the report—debate on the report stage amendment of Bill 31.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Bill 31—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, report stage amendment to Bill 31, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act. And it's in the name of—whoops—and it's in the name—there's one amendment; there is an amendment; there's one amendment, and it's in the name of the honourable member for Morris.

So, if you'd like to move your amendment.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

THAT Bill 31 be amended in Clause 3 by adding the following after the proposed subsection 161.1(2):

Compensation may be withheld

If, in relation to an accident, a person is charged with an offence referred to in subsection (3), the corporation must, until the disposition of the charge, withhold payment of compensation under this Part to the person.

Entitlement to interest

When a compensation payment has been withheld under section (2.1) and the person is ultimately not convicted of the offence or of another offence referred to in subsection (3) in relation to the accident, the corporation must pay the person interest on the unpaid portion of the compensation payable to the person. The interest rate to be paid is the prejudgment rate of interest determined under section 79 of *The Court of Queen's Bench Act*, computed from the day on which the person was entitled to the payment.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Morris, seconded by the honourable member for Steinbach,

THAT Bill 31 be—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The honourable member for Morris—the amendment is in order and debate can proceed on the amendment.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm happy to speak to this—bring this amendment and speak to it, and what this amendment does, Mr. Speaker, rather than pay benefits to car thieves and then try and recover it if they are convicted, this simply withholds the payment until a person is cleared of the crime and would then be paid with interest. It's the same principle as any other insurance.

For example, if someone was to burn down their garage, say, for example, to collect some kind of insurance, the insurance company would certainly not go to that individual and pay them upfront and then try and determine if there was arson, Mr. Speaker, and then determine that they would go and collect the money back. That's not how it would work. They would not get paid or compensated in

any way in insurance form until they were cleared of that crime of arson. They would not be able to benefit from their crime.

It's the same thing if someone were to do away with someone to try and collect an insurance policy, Mr. Speaker. That insurance company would certainly not pay the individual. That insurance company would have to be assured that that person was not convicted of the crime before any money would flow to them. So they would not be able to benefit from a crime.

I don't think that there's any difference here with car thieves. They really shouldn't be able to benefit from their crime either, and it must be a very difficult thing to be able to actually recover money once it's paid out to someone, Mr. Speaker.

We are looking very closely at the Saskatchewan bill, Bill 173 in Saskatchewan, which was just enacted, Mr. Speaker. It's very similar in—in fact, it's quite similar to the—in this particular area—to the private member's Bill 212, which was first introduced under the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, Mr. Gerald Hawranik, three years ago, when there was a number of issues with the intensity and escalation of what was going on with people stealing vehicles and joyriding and actually injuring and killing people.

So what this—what their bill in Saskatchewan does, it does exactly the same thing, Mr. Speaker. It allows benefits to be withheld from occupants of stolen motor vehicles until the disposition of the charge. And this bill was—on May 11th, this bill was read a second time, and, in Saskatchewan, the NDP opposition said, there is no question about our support for this particular piece of legislation.

So the NDP in Saskatchewan support this idea that benefits should not be paid out to car thieves and then try and get recovery for them. They should actually be withheld until disposition of the charge, in which case, if a person is innocent, they're entitled to collect the benefits with interest. Interesting, the bill passed on to Committee of the Whole on the same day and passed third reading without amendment, and royal assent was given on May 18th, Mr. Speaker. So it appears that the NDP in Saskatchewan have a different view than the NDP here and are actually willing to support that notion, as do we.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, I give a lot of credit to the former member for Lac du Bonnet who had the foresight to actually bring this bill forward

three years ago, but what did we hear at the time? Well, we heard the government people say that this was a malicious bill—a malicious bill. They were, of course, supporting the criminals, and, of course, we support the victims of this particular crime.

But what happened? What changed the tune, Mr. Speaker? Well, in March, a CTV news story broke a story about auto thieves collecting benefits from MPI, and there was such a public outcry over that. The public was outraged over what was happening, and guess what? The government flip-flopped on the issue and then decided, well, even though there was a private member's bill before the House which would have cleared up this issue, they decided that they would bring in their own bill, and this bill really still allows the criminals to collect money.

*(16:50)

And, in fact, I just want to say that—I'll quote from one of the particular car thieves that happened to be interviewed on CTV back in March—and they don't even think they should get the money because he said, I don't think I should have gotten any money and, I think, I guess, the crash is our fault, but I guess it's the insurance system, right?

So, Mr. Speaker, the legislation that was introduced in 1994 certainly was meant to ensure that Manitobans would be covered regardless of who was at fault in an accident, but it was never intended to provide those involved in criminal activity the benefit to—the ability to benefit for their criminal actions. There was never any intent in that legislation where—the legislation was meant for those ratepayers that would be involved in an accident and there was—regardless who was at fault. It was never intended at that time because at that time—what we've seen is an escalation of the number of car thefts in—under this government's watch. And, in fact, in 2004, the—it had almost doubled in the last 10 years, and it was 13,425. It was so high at that time that's when the government decided to bring in some legislation—didn't go all the way. They had the opportunity in 2004 to go all the way with this legislation, but they didn't.

And still, Mr. Speaker, even now, in fact, Manitoba reports the highest rate of motor vehicle theft for 11 straight years. We're still the car theft capital of the country even though—even though—they brought in the immobilizer program, again, but they're—we're still higher than any other city per capita in the country in terms of crime—stealing cars. And why has this escalated? We've seen the

gang activity increase under this government with the Hells Angels moving in in 2000, as soon as they took over—increased gang activity, increased car theft and a lot of other things.

And the intensity—the intensity—of the crashes, Mr. Speaker. Stealing vehicles just to joyride, sometimes one every 10 minutes and crashing them—joyriding, crashing into each others—actually chasing police cars, actually mowing down joggers on the roadway. This has escalated to the point of—just incredible escalation under this government's watch.

So, again, I think that this amendment would go some way—a long way, Mr. Speaker, to say to the public, yes, we support the innocent ratepayers of Manitoba. We are on the side of the victim here. We're not on the side of the criminals. If you are convicted of a car theft you should not be able to have those benefits and do whatever you want with them and then have the insurance company try and collect them back. What needs to happen is those benefits need to be withheld, and once the person is cleared of any conviction, then they're entitled to the benefit with interest. I think that sounds very fair in terms of any other kind of insurance policy that one would get. I think it says volumes to the hard-working ratepayers, motoring public of Manitoba knowing that their premiums are going to be put to the use that they were intended to be put to.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Well, Mr. Speaker, so much misinformation to correct, but I'll make it very simple.

You know, back in 1994, the then-government of the day decided there shouldn't be any reduction in benefits for anybody, whatever crime they committed—whether they're stealing a car [*interjection*] well, and there's the member across the way. He doesn't even know what decade he graduated from high school, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). But I'll digress. I know many of us didn't want to—I know many of us on this side didn't want to relive the '90s, perhaps the member for Steinbach didn't either.

You know, every day, pretty much, we watch the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) come into this House and bring in a petition—petition's not a political document, petition is really a—desires being put forward on behalf of constituents. And I listened

very carefully every day to when that petition was being read, and there we had the will of the member for Carman's constituents, presumably those of other Manitobans saying very clearly that they believe that benefits should not be paid to convicted car thieves.

We agree with that. That's why we moved in 2004 to take steps to close the door that was left open by the government of the day, the Conservative government in the '90s, and we're tightening that door and closing it tightly today. And I'm looking very forward to this bill being passed.

But, you know, the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) just can't leave well enough alone. She has to go on and give me the opportunity, once again, to demonstrate how little she understands about the car theft epidemic which was created back in 1990 in this province.

And, of course, what did the member stand up and say in question period? She said, well, there was no auto theft before this government was in power.

Well, in 1999, she only missed it by 8,865. Back in 1992 there wasn't an auto theft problem. I mean, there was a number of 2,489; it skyrocketed in 1993 to 6,587 and continued to rise every year since then.

And it's only been with this government in power that the epidemic of car theft has been turned around. Since 2004, car theft is down by more than 80 per cent, and every month I get the numbers and I see it continuing to go down. And, in fact, car theft, despite the fact there's more vehicles on the road as more and more people come to this province, car theft is actually less of a problem at any time than it's been in the last two decades.

We have rolled this back to where it was when the government of the day did absolutely nothing on the issue of car theft. And it was interesting, of course, that the member brought in a bill in this House, a bill that she wants to talk about today, she didn't realize the federal government had created a new stand-alone offence of car theft that her bill wouldn't even apply to.

It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, and, as well, the member opposite didn't think that it was a good idea to cut off benefits to individuals who flee from peace officers and get injured in those accidents. We thought that was necessary. That's where we're closing the door on those kinds of claims.

And, as well, the member opposite didn't think it was necessary to close the door on individuals who also get involved in street racing. Well, we're tougher than they are; we're smarter than they are. And that's why we're closing the door once and for all on those kinds of claims. So we're closing the door on those claims as well as convicted car thieves; and, of course, we will move so that individuals are convicted of car theft. The unit already operated by MPI which recovers monies from those individuals convicted will also take on these cases. Right now, MPI collects several hundred thousand dollars a year in damages from individuals who they pursue for being involved in car theft and they will also claw back those benefits as well.

The difficulty, of course, is that charges don't always happen as soon as someone's injured; it can be weeks, could be even months depending on the police investigation before charges laid. I'm not sure if the member opposite thinks that you should pay benefits and then stop paying benefits and then maybe start paying benefits again. But, then, if there's a problem with the charge and it has to be relaid, do we start paying benefits in the meantime?

You know, if you look at the amount of money we'd be spending on the MPI lawyers, this actually has no—makes no sense and actually would cost more than the limited amount of money that's been paid out.

So, quite frankly, we are moving ahead to close the door, fixing the Tory mess from the 1990s. We're fixing the mess at MPI; we're fixing the auto theft mess they had nothing to do; we're fixing the gang

mess when the Hells Angels and other gangs rolled into town; and we're going to fix this too.

So I'll be urging members not to support this resolution. Let's get this bill passed and let's do the right thing, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) would do better than to try and politicize everything that comes up.

The fact is that it makes a lot more sense to withhold the benefits where you've had somebody who's stolen a car and gets into an accident, and this, in fact, was something which I raised. I raised this at second reading, and the fact of the matter is that this report stage amendments makes reasonable sense and should be supported instead of the member trying to politicize things.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Once again we have the Attorney General siding with car thieves in the province of Manitoba. You know, he had the opportunity—he had the opportunity to stand against car thieves and he is firmly, firmly on the car-side of car thieves with his comments here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

And the hour now being 5 p.m.—order.

And the hour now being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 9, 2011

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