

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	PC
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	PC
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 19, 2012

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 3—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act
(Speed Limits in School Zones)**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed Limits in School Zones); Loi modifiant le Code de la route (limites de vitesse dans les zones scolaires), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, this bill will give municipalities, First Nations and Northern Affairs communities the ability to adopt bylaws to deal with a very important matter of public safety, and that is speed in school zones. It is an approach that is followed in other jurisdictions, and we believe it's important to protect our children and to give local communities the ability to slow people down. And that's exactly what this bill does.

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

Bill 4—The Missing Persons Act

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), that Bill 4, The Missing Persons Act; Loi sur les personnes disparues, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: The Missing Persons Act is designed to provide police with timely access to information to help locate missing persons. In cases where police do not believe a crime has occurred, this bill will still allow police to apply for a court order to access records that might help them locate missing persons, including children, including vulnerable adults. This bill, Mr. Speaker, strikes a balance between access to important information concerning missing persons to ensure their safe return home and the privacy rights of individuals.

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

No other bills?

PETITIONS

Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba

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

And these are the reasons for the petition:

During early October 2011, parts of southeastern Manitoba were hard hit by wildfires. Thanks to the swift action of provincial and municipal officials, including 27 different fire departments and countless volunteers, no lives were lost and property damage was limited.

However, the fight against the wildfires reinforced the shortcomings with the communications system in the region, specifically the gaps in cellular phone service.

These gaps made it difficult to co-ordinate firefighting efforts and to notify the people that they had to be evacuated. The situation also would have made it difficult for people to call for immediate medical assistance if it had been required.

Local governments, businesses, industries and area residents have for years sought a solution to this very serious communications challenge.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the appropriate provincial government departments to consider working with all stakeholders to develop a strategy to swiftly address the serious challenges posed by limited cellphone

service in southeastern Manitoba in order to ensure that people and property can be better protected in the future.

And this petition has been signed by S. Graumer, N. Preteau and B. Lambert and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Newborn Universal Hearing Screening Program

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

More than three in 1,000 newborns are born with educationally significant hearing loss, but Manitoba's current hearing screening program does not allow for every child to be screened.

Without early detection, children are more likely to develop poor speech and language skills and also encounter social and emotional difficulties, which lead to poor academic performance.

Early diagnosis of hearing loss in newborns can make a considerable difference in a child's development because newborns can be provided with effective programs and support that foster developmental success.

While most other developed countries and many Canadian provinces have a newborn screening hearing program, Manitoba is lagging behind. There are only a handful of screening programs in the province while all other newborns can only be tested if they have risk factors of hearing loss or if parents specifically request a test.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the minister of healthy living, youth and seniors to consider implementing a universal hearing screening program accessible to parents of all newborns in Manitoba.

This petition's signed by R. Hartry, B. Sadler, N. Kelly and so many more Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

PTH 5—Reducing Speed Limit

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

Rural Municipality of Ste. Rose and the town of Ste. Rose have both raised concerns with Highway Traffic Board about the current speed limit 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 the lowering of the current 100-kilometre-per-hour speed limit on that portion of PTH No. 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 Turtle River Bridge to the south side of the access to the Ste. Rose Auction Mart to help better protect motorist safety.

And this petition is signed by A. Vandenbosch, J. Haun, E. Chaput and many, many other fine Manitobans.

* (13:40)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Third Report

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Chairperson): I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Third Report. Meetings—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- August 28, 2008 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)
- June 25, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)
- September 21, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)
- May 24, 2011 (5th Session – 39th Legislature)
- April 18, 2012

Matters under Consideration

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2008
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2009
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2010
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2011

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the August 28, 2008 meeting:

- Ms. BRICK (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Mr. REID
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mrs. TAILLIEU

Committee Membership for the June 25, 2009 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRICK (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. FAURSCHOU

- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSON
- Mr. SARAN
- Ms. SELBY
- Hon. Mr. SWAN

Committee Membership for the September 21, 2010 meeting:

- Ms. BLADY (Chairperson)
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mrs. TAILLIEU

Committee Membership for the May 24, 2011 meeting:

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)
- Mr. SARAN (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mrs. TAILLIEU
- Mr. WHITEHEAD

Committee Membership for the April 18, 2012 meeting:

- Mr. CALDWELL
- Mr. GAUDREAU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. JHA (Chairperson)
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. SARAN
- Mr. SCHULER
- Hon. Mr. SWAN

Your Committee elected Mr. Caldwell as the Vice-Chairperson at the April 18, 2012 meeting.

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on the record at the August 28, 2008 meeting:

- *Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer*

Officials speaking on the record at the June 25, 2009 meeting:

- *Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer*

Officials speaking on the record at the September 21, 2010 meeting:

- *Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer*
- *Mr. Jake Janzen, Board Chairperson*

Officials speaking on the record at the May 24, 2011 meeting:

- *Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer*

Officials speaking on the record at the April 18, 2012 meeting:

- *Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer*
- *Mr. Jake Janzen, Board Chairperson*

Report Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2008*

Reports Considered but not Passed

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

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2009*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2010*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2011*

Mr. Jha: I move, seconded by the honourable member from Brandon East, that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.**TABLING OF REPORTS**

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): It's my pleasure to table the 2011 Workers Compensation Board Annual Report, the 2011 Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel, and the Workers Compensation Board five-year plan for the years 2012-2016.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Holocaust Memorial Day**

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, today we join with people all over the world to observe Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day.

This day is dedicated to the memory of the six million Jewish people and the millions of other men, women and children murdered by the Nazis during World War II. These vast numbers can be difficult to fully understand. Every year, members of this House take part in the recitation of a handful of Holocaust victims' names and we come one step closer to appreciating the reality of the millions dead and gone forever.

Today, there are Holocaust survivors living in our province. With the Jewish population of around 15,000, Winnipeg hosts the largest Jewish community of Canada's prairie provinces. Thousands of Manitobans are relatives of Holocaust victims and today we remember them and renew our commitment to vigilance against this kind of human rights tragedy.

As the years pass, there are fewer Holocaust survivors still with us, and at times people may worry that their connection to these atrocities is growing weaker. This must not be allowed to happen. We will continue to observe Yom Hashoah to ensure we remember that people are capable of inhuman acts. As members of an international community, we must continue to work together to ensure that this tragic event is never repeated. Today we also have the opportunity to discuss the progress we have made to protect human rights around the world, as well as the challenges that still lie before us.

Mr. Speaker, following statements from my colleagues, I ask that all members observe a moment of silence in memory of those who suffered and died

in the Holocaust and those who continue to suffer persecution in our world today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Today we come together, along with millions of people around the world, to commemorate Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Memorial Day. Since the early 1960s, the sound of a siren on Yom Hashoah has stopped traffic and pedestrians throughout the state of Israel for two minutes of silent devotion. The siren—the siren blows at sundown and once again at 11 a.m. on this date. Jews in northern America observe Yom Hashoah within the synagogue as well as within the broader Jewish community. Commemorations range from synagogue services to communal vigils and educational programs.

It was a pleasure of mine to participate in the Yom Hashoah ceremony at the Legislature this morning with so many distinguished members of the Jewish community and province of Manitoba. The Holocaust was a systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of over 6 million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

The Nazis believed that Germans were racially superior and the Jews, deemed inferior, were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community. In 1933, the year that the Nazis came to power, the Jewish population of Europe stood at 9 million. By 1945, nearly two out of every three European Jews were murdered as part of the Final Solution, the Nazi police, to murder the Jews of Europe.

After the defeat of Nazi Germany, many survivors found shelter in displaced persons camps administered by the Allied powers. The last of these camps closed in 1957. In this period, hundreds of thousands immigrated from Europe to other nations, such as Israel, Canada and United States. The Holocaust is not only remembered for the tremendous loss of life it inflicted on European Jews but for its devastating effect on Jewish institutions and communities which have been a staple of eastern Europe for hundreds of years.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum takes the lead in organizing many of the Holocaust memorial days that are occurring all over the world today. Their theme for this year's Yom Hashoah, "Choosing to Act: Stories of Rescue," reminds us that many made a choice to intervene. Despite the risks inherent in aiding Jews, individuals and

communities across Europe made heroic efforts to rescue them from the tyranny of Nazi Germany.

Some of these stories are well known: the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest; the German industrialist Oskar Schindler at his factory in Poland; Miep Gies, who hid Anne Frank in Holland; and the Danish resistance fighters who ferried almost all of Denmark's Jews to safety in Sweden.

Most of these acts of rescue, however, went unrecorded. Most were undertaken by ordinary people faced with extraordinary circumstances: an official who forged identity papers, a housewife who provided food and shelter to a Jewish family in hiding, or a local farmer who provided Warsaw ghetto resisters with arms and ammunition.

In their uniqueness, these stories prove that we as individuals are capable of making a choice, of doing something to mitigate hatred and injustice. We must never forget, however, for that—for every person who survived the Holocaust, countless others were killed. As we honour their memories today, we are reminded that eternal vigilance must reign over indifference, action over apathy, and humanity over barbarity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: To everyone there is a name, that is, the ceremony that many of us participated in this morning. It is very meaningful because it speaks of the importance of every single person. It speaks of the importance of the name of every single person and the importance that we don't forget the individuals and the individuals, as individuals, who were killed during the Holocaust.

* (13:50)

As one who has visited both the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, and the Holocaust museum in Washington and been very moved by the experience, I can tell you that this ceremony, which we perform yearly, is extraordinarily important, not only in remembering what has happened in the past but in reminding us that we must continue to work very hard to prevent

genocide around the world and to prevent the racism and the hatred which spawns the genocide.

And we must remember this, not just in the Holocaust, but what happened in Ukraine in the Holodomor, what happened in Rwanda and in other places, because I think all of us want a better world, a more peaceful world where people can live side by side in dignity. And it is our chance to dedicate ourselves once more to this end.

Thank you.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I wish to draw the honourable members' attention to the logo to my left where we have with us this afternoon Candice Hoepfner, Member of Parliament for Portage-Lisgar; Shelly Glover, the Member of Parliament for Saint Boniface; and Joy Smith, the former MLA for Fort Garry and now Member of Parliament for Kildonan-St. Paul.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you.

And also, seated in our public gallery this afternoon, we have 14 adult education students from the Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre under the direction of Ms. Lucille Miller. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Budget

Government Record on Election Promises

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Tuesday's budget increases taxes on gasoline and imposes eight other tax increases on hard-working Manitoba families.

This budget comes only seven months after the Premier made a commitment, a promise to the people of Manitoba never to raise taxes if they gave him their support.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he admit today, after yesterday's slippery responses, will he admit

today that he broke his campaign promise to the people of Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the budget we brought forward was one that generated additional revenues without raising any major tax rates in Manitoba. It was one that continued to focus on affordability while protecting front-line services such as health care, such as education, such as services to families, housing and infrastructure, of course. And these things are the priorities Manitobans told us they wanted us to focus on, and, of course, we have done that.

And, in addition, this budget is one that continues to strive to grow the economy—to grow the economy—so there are more resources to meet the needs of Manitobans for essential services.

That's what the budget has done this week. That's what it'll do next week. That's what it'll do into the future.

Mr. McFadyen: The budget increases gas taxes plus eight other taxes on the families of Manitoba.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we reminded the Premier of the promise that he made during the debate in Brandon that was covered by CJOB. He tried yesterday to deflect and to suggest that the promise hadn't been made. Today, we'll table a so-called Fact Check that was put out by the Premier on September the 2nd, 2011.

And here's what the Fact Check says. Fact Check: 2010-11 Public Accounts show Manitoba's five-year economic plan on track. Today's release of the Public Accounts shows that the Premier's plan is on track to return the budget to balance without raising taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier: Since it wasn't an isolated slip of the tongue in Brandon—he put it in writing, his commitment not to raise taxes—will he admit today without any equivocation he broke that promise?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we are on track to balance the budget in 2014. That is the objective. And the member opposite will recognize that he wanted to stretch that out to 2018 because he had election promises of an additional \$225 million over and above what we committed in the election.

We're on track to do that. Yes, we had a flood that has caused additional expense. We've been ahead at certain points in the five-year plan. We've had some challenges with respect to the flood, but

we remain committed to moving forward on balancing the budget while protecting front-line services to Manitobans, services such as health care, education, infrastructure and for families and children. Those are our commitments. Those are the things we will follow through on.

Mr. McFadyen: This Premier's nine new taxes will hurt all Manitoba families. They will disproportionately hurt working families in the province of Manitoba. They will create financial hardship for people who are new arrivals to our province, those immigrants who have done so much to build the strength of Manitoba and the strength of our great country of Canada. Mr. Speaker, his nine new taxes hurt Manitoba families.

He promised during the election he wouldn't do it, and in fact the release they put out on September the 2nd, 2011, goes on to say, in addition to promising never to raise taxes, it goes on to say: Today's release ensures all Manitobans can see the details of Manitoba's finances before they vote.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier acknowledge that the information he put out on September the 2nd was deliberately designed to fool Manitobans for the purpose of the election?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the information we put out is audited by the Auditor General of Manitoba, as the member opposite knows. That Auditor General has had strengthened legislation that gives that individual and that office additional oversight for the finances of Manitoba and allows them to report on that independently from this office, and I can tell you they signed off on the public finances that we've put forward. They've acknowledged that they are accurate, and they will continue to be accurate on a full summary basis.

Everything will be included, unlike when the members opposite were in government and whole sections of the public sector were left off the books. They're all included now. They're all reported on. They're all independently reviewed by the Auditor General of Manitoba, and they will remain so as long as we're in office.

Budget Dividend Tax Credit Decrease

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): The Premier said, and I quote: Our plan is a five-year plan to ensure that we have future prosperity without any tax increases, and we'll deliver on that. And that's what the Premier said, Mr. Speaker.

Well, clearly, he broke that promise, and one of the taxes that he increased is the dividend taxes that are—that Manitobans are paying. Mr. Speaker, by lowering the dividend tax credit, he is effectively increasing taxes on dividends by 4 per cent for Manitobans. That is an increase in taxes. Clearly, he has broken his promise.

Why did he break his promises to Manitobans?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I appreciate the member raising the question. There is no doubt that we have not raised the sales tax in Manitoba. We have generated more revenues off it. Those revenues are going to protect front-line services. With respect to the gas tax, every dollar raised in gas tax, \$2 are being invested in roads and bridges in this province, including the roads and bridges that were damaged throughout the flood.

So we have put forward a plan consistent with what we told Manitobans. We will maintain Manitobans' affordability advantage, and that has been done in this budget. Other provinces have said we're No. 1 for affordability; we say we're in the top three.

*(14:00)

We have protected front-line services, and we also have done those things that will increase the ability of the Manitoba economy to grow, including improving the research and development tax credit with greater refundability for in-house research by businesses that provide and generate new innovations in Manitoba that can be exported around the world. That's how they'll grow; that's how we'll move forward; and that's our commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Stefanson: Who's to say he's not going to break that commitment, too, Mr. Speaker?

Seniors, many of whom are on fixed incomes in Manitoba, purchase dividend-yielding stocks because they yield a steady source of income for those Manitobans. The government tax grab on dividends is an extra tax on seniors.

Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP government break its promise not to raise taxes? Why are they increasing taxes for seniors?

Mr. Selinger: This January we increased the personal deduction for all Manitobans, including seniors, by \$250. That went to every individual in Manitoba, their spouse or their dependents, all across the boards.

In addition, in this budget, we increased the education property tax credit for seniors to \$1,025; that's the highest in the country, Mr. Speaker.

We will ensure seniors are looked after. We will ensure also that they have affordable quality of life in Manitoba, and we'll do it both with making-taking measures on taxes which are fair and also providing the key services they want to have, such as health care.

Just this morning, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and myself announced a program which will make drugs for people on cancer available free at the point of need throughout all of Manitoba. And those cancer drugs are available to all Manitobans regardless of age. One of the people at the announcement was Mrs. Wise [*phonetic*], a senior citizen that will enormously benefit by having access to those drugs so she can maintain her lifestyle in her home. That's progress, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Stefanson: By lowering the dividend tax credit from 11 per cent to 8 per cent, this government is effectively increasing the tax on dividends by 4 per cent. Seniors, many of whom own these dividend-yielding stocks, rely on them for their steady source of income.

Mr. Speaker, why is the government breaking its promise to seniors in Manitoba? Shame on them.

Mr. Selinger: As I've just indicated, we have maintained increased deductibility for all Manitobans, including senior citizens—\$250. That will take over 20,000 people off the tax rolls over the next four years as we implement that commitment.

We have increased the commitment to seniors who are suffering from cancer as well as all Manitobans by making drugs available to them in their homes and in their communities free of charge. In some cases, seniors were paying between 30 and 60 thousand dollars a year for medications that would save their lives. They now will have access to those medications free. That's what we're doing—prioritizing resources to those that need them and ensuring they get them in a timely fashion. That's our commitment to Manitobans.

Child Abuse Registry Fee Increase

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): As all parents would agree, the Child Abuse Registry is an important protection for the safety of our children. Parents

should feel comfortable that their children are protected by the appropriate checks in the system.

Why, then, is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) increasing taxes by 50 per cent on the Child Abuse Registry checks that actually protect Manitoba children?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Of course, as the member opposite noted, the Child Abuse Registry is a very important tool to make sure that people who are working, not with—not just with children but with some of our most vulnerable citizens, to make sure that those checks are adequately done.

We know that the number of organizations who are using that service has increased—people like taxi drivers are now applying for those kinds of checks—as the society gets more sensitized to the need to make sure that there's public safety.

It is an increase from \$10 to \$15. I believe \$15 is still affordable for many people, and it is an increase that will help us make sure that those checks are done in a timely way, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Schuler: The Child Abuse Registry is there to protect our young and vulnerable children. Volunteers must produce the appropriate documentation that shows that they are not on the list. This is not a deemed benefit to volunteers but, in fact, to children. These children could be placed at risk without the checks.

So I ask again: Why is the minister increasing the cost of Child Abuse Registry checks by 50 per cent, in effect trying to balance the NDP budget on the backs of our young, vulnerable children? Why is he doing this?

Ms. Howard: Thank you very much again for that question, Mr. Speaker.

I think, as the members opposite know, the Child Abuse Registry has been challenged to make sure that it can get responses out to people in a timely fashion. I know many members opposite have written to me with those kinds of concerns on behalf of their constituents.

In order to respond to those concerns, we need to increase the staff that are working there so they can complete the turnaround in a timely fashion. I know many of the members opposite have relayed to me their concerns that if their constituents can't get these Child Abuse Registry checks in a timely fashion, sometimes their education can be compromised,

because many social work students and nursing students and education students need those, and so we have managed to bring those times down by hiring additional staff.

This is a cost-recovery program, Mr. Speaker, and it's a modest increase from 10 to 15 dollars that is going to make the program better able to function to protect children.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Paul, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, the Child Abuse Registry is important to our children who will change from street clothes into sports gear in their team locker room, or they might be on a road trip for a music or theatre program. In each instant, volunteers are present. This registry protects our children and is a benefit to our children.

My question to the minister is: Who benefits from this 50 per cent tax increase on those who access the Child Abuse Registry?

Ms. Howard: I think I answered that question in my last answer.

The beneficiaries of the Child Abuse Registry check are, of course, the children and vulnerable people who will be safe as a result, but also the beneficiaries will be many of the constituents of the members opposite who have written to me asking for a speedier process in the Child Abuse Registry check, and this funding will enable us to ensure that those checks are done in a timely way.

You know, the member opposite mentioned children and budgets. I recall budgets in the past where the members opposite, when they were in government, clawed back every penny of the national child tax benefit to poor families. We restored that money to poor families. That's what a government who cares about children does, Mr. Speaker.

WISE Math Initiative Consultations with Minister

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, this week is national Education Week and an appropriate time to focus attention on the state of math education in the province of Manitoba.

Earlier this week, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said that some math experts have been in direct contact with his Minister of Education, yet Anna Stokke and Robert Craigen, university math

professors and founders of the WISE Math initiative, report that repeated requests to meet with the Minister of Education went unanswered for weeks until the minister's assistant responded that the minister was too busy to meet with WISE Math.

Mr. Speaker, this coalition of math professors has successfully sparked a successful debate on declining math scores in Manitoba and the need to strengthen math education.

Will the Minister of Education explain why she is too busy to meet one-on-one with WISE Math to talk about this crucial issue?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Well, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to correct the facts in regards to this particular situation.

I had the opportunity to meet with Anna Stokke and Robert Craigen in January of this year. I was fortunate enough to have colleagues of mine with me when we met. I had the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. Selby) with me. I had the MLA for Kirkfield Park with me. I had several of my colleagues with me at that meeting. It was an excellent meeting.

They made—*[interjection]* Yes, they made a presentation, actually, to me about their concerns, about WISE Math, and it was an excellent discussion, an excellent dialogue. And not only have I met with them with my colleagues, officials in my department have also met with Anna Stokke and university presidents twice.

* (14:10)

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a question here in regard to one-on-one. WISE Math reports that they have—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the question that's being proposed here, and I ask all members, please, to ensure that the member is respected and has the opportunity to pose a question.

Mr. Friesen: The math here doesn't add up.

WISE Math reports they have not been granted a one-on-one meeting with the Minister of Education. Now, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stated that those experts in math in Manitoba, who had raised their voices expressing concerns, have been in direct contact with the minister.

Why'd the Premier lead this House to believe that the Education Minister had met one-on-one with Anna Stokke when, in fact, she doesn't seem to have?

Ms. Allan: Oh, boy. I would just like to congratulate the new MLA for being the Education critic. I look forward to working with him. When I was in his constituency, one-on-one with him in his constituency, in opening up the Schanzenfeld school and—[interjection] Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And then when I was with him two weeks later, one-on-one, breaking the sod for the new school that we're going to build there because of our growing immigration program here in the province of Manitoba, he said to me, Mr. Speaker, he said, you know what, you're here so much, you should open an office here.

Well, you know what? I meet with people one-on-one. I meet with people in groups. I meet with people in meetings. I meet with people with my caucus members. I meet with stakeholders all the time.

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

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, with a final supplementary.

Mathematics Education Minister's Consultations with Teachers

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Manitoba students ranked second last among provinces in math in the recent Pan-Canadian Assessment Program test scores and second last in math in the 2010 PISA results.

Manitoba uses the same math curriculum as Saskatchewan. Yet, when the Saskatchewan saw similar results in their student test scores, that government responded quickly and facilitated a consultation and engagement process with front-line teachers. This Premier (Mr. Selinger) has said we have no inhibition in taking good advice on how we can improve on math education.

Will the Premier commit today to consult classroom teachers here, as Saskatchewan has done, and solicit good advice from front-line teachers on why math education has gone off the rails and how to get it back on track?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I said when these—we received these results, we took these

results very seriously. I said we would work with our education partners, and we have been doing that. We put \$800,000 into new funding in our education funding announcement in January for numeracy and literacy. We will provide PD for teachers to support that funding.

And I want the member to know that in May—this May, very shortly—we are hosting a conversation on teaching and learning mathematics in Manitoba. Our education partners will be there. All of our representatives will be there.

And I'm pleased to tell the member opposite that Anna Stokke will be presenting at the conference, and I would like to invite him today to attend the conference. I'd be more than happy if he would like to attend the conference. I'd actually drive over there with him, one-on-one.

Assistant Deputy Minister Political Involvement

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): We know that this NDP government breaks promises and abuses their power. We have seen evidence of this yesterday as an assistant deputy minister in the Department of Immigration has been doing the NDP's political work, trying to corral an audience to the Legislature here today for an overtly political attack on the federal government.

How can this minister justify this abuse of an impartial civil servant's position for political purposes?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): The member opposite should not jump to conclusions about the—any resolutions in the House. The resolution in the House today and the outreach to the community is to protect what we consider a cornerstone of economic growth in this Manitoba: the Provincial Nominee Program and the settlement services that are integrated with that. We will have a chance to debate that later on.

But I can tell you, our public servants in Manitoba have very strong relationships with the organizations that provide the settlement services as well as the business community, as well as other ethnic organizations in Manitoba that have an interest in furthering the growth of the population in Manitoba. They act professionally; they act in the best interests of the province of Manitoba, and we hope they will continue to do that.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, I'm not surprised that the Minister of Immigration would not stand up and answer that question.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter here in the Legislature, which is an invitation to members of this House. I'd like to table this to members of this House. It's an invitation to people to come here today, and it's from the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Immigration.

I ask again: Why has an assistant deputy minister in the Department of Immigration been doing the NDP's political work? Have they run out of their own political staff?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, this is not about political positioning. This is about the economic future of the province of Manitoba.

And I am proud to stand with the business community, with the more than 100,000 newcomers who have chosen Manitoba, with the service providers and with all Manitobans to fight to keep settlement services in the province of Manitoba so that we build a better future for our children.

All Manitobans are standing together except those on the other side. Why won't they stand up for Manitoba?

Mrs. Taillieu: Last night, the minister was the person in—as a—she was the subject of a tweet that went out, Mr. Speaker, that said she's got her hair on fire. Perhaps the tweet tonight will be: blank, blank, pants on fire.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the email that came out from the assistant deputy minister, and it says: I would like service agencies especially to feel free to release staff and clients to attend tomorrow's session in the gallery of the Legislature if they choose. So I want to table this as well.

I, again, I ask: Why has the assistant deputy minister in the Department of Labour been doing the NDP's political work? Why did this minister ask an assistant deputy minister to stop work from being done—for those staff to stop doing their work and to be pushed to serve as the NDP's political pawns?

Ms. Melnick: The settlement services agreement under the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement, which was signed under the former Tory government in Manitoba with the Liberal government in Canada, which is continuing on under this government in

Manitoba in partnership with the current Tory government in Ottawa, is extremely important to Manitoba's economic future. We have seen over the last 10 years, when we've gone from a few thousand newcomers a year to almost 16,000 this year, that the economy has improved along with it. We welcomed last year people from 137 countries. We want to keep building Manitoba, and by the way, Mr. Speaker, a lot of these newcomers are choosing to go into the communities that these members represent.

Stand with the newcomers. Stand with their communities and stand up for Manitoba.

* (14:20)

Immigration Settlement Services Management by Federal Government

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, what a shameful exercise of divide and conquer, fear and smear politics this government is engaged in. Most troubling of all, it's aimed directly at those new Manitobans who came here to make a better life for themselves. Instead of working hard to try to make life more affordable, to make life better for those new Manitobans who've come here, all you're worried about is you won't be able to hand out federal cheques anymore after you cut most of the funding to the settlement program.

Why won't this government just stand up and admit today that their little political stunt this afternoon has nothing to do with helping new Manitobans, but it has everything to do with playing politics on the backs of new Manitobans?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): There's a rule that we often work on, and whether it's in government or in the private sector, if something's not broken, don't try to fix it. And that's what we have here.

We have a program which has been evaluated as being extremely successful, the most successful program in the country. Eighty-five per cent of the newcomers coming here through the integrated nominee and settlement program are getting work within three months. Within six years, they are homeowners. We're filling the niche market for labour skills in this province in close consultation with employers.

The settlement service organizations, over 200 non-profit organizations, work very carefully in each community, with each employer, to provide the kind of support that will allow newcomers to put down roots, develop stability, stabilize their children

in schools, get support from family service agencies or the health-care system or the education system.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we have re-gearred the funding of our education system to provide English as an additional language. We have re-gearred our services in the family services area to support newcomer families when they arrive here. We have provided additional housing supports to newcomers when they come to Manitoba. And in the health-care system, through access centres and birthing centres and QuickCare clinics, we are providing, additionally, culturally appropriate services to allow newcomers to Manitoba to be successful.

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

Mr. Goertzen: Let's just look at how little this government cares about new Manitobans. They cut the funding to the settlement program to the point that the federal government now funds 97 per cent of that very program. They try to co-opt non-political civil servants and tell them, oh, shut the offices down, come down to the Legislature, don't worry about those new Manitobans who need services.

In contrast, what is the federal Conservative government doing? They're tripling Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program. The federal Conservatives are doubling immigration to Manitoba. The federal Conservatives are quadrupling funding to the Manitoba settlement program.

Why doesn't the NDP let Manitobans know that when it comes to immigrations, Conservatives get the job done; you just have cheap, political stunts?

Mr. Selinger: The success of the immigrant Provincial Nominee Program and the settlement program in Manitoba is because of the integrated nature in which it works. The settlement agencies work very closely with the provincial officials to ensure the labour market needs are met for the employers. That has been an outstanding success in Manitoba. Over \$21 million of additional resources in various government departments in the province have been allocated towards settlements being successful in this province of Manitoba.

The member opposite, if he would like to say that all the success of the Provincial Nominee Program is because of another level of government doing it, we say the following: The partnership that we have had has worked very well. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. You're trying to break it; you're trying to make it worse.

We think the control of the program and the management of program should be in a partnership between people in Manitoba, the employers in Manitoba, the government of Manitoba, and the non-profit organizations which have done so much to make it successful. It needs to continue because it works.

Mr. Goertzen: A 97 per cent to 3 per cent funding ratio is not a partnership, Mr. Speaker. It was a Conservative government in Manitoba that introduced the Provincial Nominee Program. The Conservatives in Ottawa tripled that program. The Conservatives in Ottawa doubled immigration to Manitoba and they quadrupled funding to the settlement program.

Mr. Speaker, provincial Conservatives led the way on immigration. Federal Conservatives continue to lead the way on immigration. I want him to admit that when it comes to supporting our new Manitobans, Conservatives lead the way. You're a distant second and you're fading fast, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Selinger: This is exactly—the performance from the member of Steinbach is exactly what our concern about is with taking over this program the way it's being taken over. They're making it into a partisan issue.

The partnership between the federal government and the provincial government has been extremely successful. The partnership between the provincial government and the settlement organizations and the business community has been extremely successful. We took a model that was developed in 1998 under the Conservative government of the day, the Progressive Conservative government of the day—Rosemary Vodrey was the minister of the day—and we all acknowledged that the local delivery of that program would lead to great success.

And last year, we had a record number of newcomers coming to Manitoba; 15,800 people came to Manitoba, 85 per cent of them were getting employment within the first three months, over 80 per cent are staying in Manitoba and over 80 per cent are becoming homeowners within six years. That model is working and has been considered a success by all the other jurisdictions in Manitoba, and the member opposite wants to say it's only one political party that's doing it.

It's a partnership and the partnership is working. Don't break it if it's working. That's the point, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: Honourable member for Morris, on a matter of privilege.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, a matter of privilege is a very serious matter. A breach of privilege infringes upon our rights and our abilities as members of this great House, as Her Majesty's Official Opposition and as elected representatives of our constituencies to perform our duties and our functions.

There are two conditions that have to be met to satisfy a prima facie case of privilege. First, this must be raised at the first opportunity, and, Mr. Speaker, having heard the answers here in question period from the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and from the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) and having conferred with my colleagues to confirm what was said here today, I submit that this is the first opportunity to bring this before the House.

Secondly, the other thing that needs to be met, is there sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House have been breached? I submit there is sufficient evidence and I will outline my reasons to the House.

Mr. Speaker, you have before you a copy of an invitation from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism which I tabled just in this House just now. It clearly shows that the Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism has released Immigration staff from their duties serving their clients to attend here instead this afternoon for this resolutions and the debate that is going to be attacking the federal government.

We need to know if this Minister of Immigration directed her assistant deputy minister to issue this request to staff which puts them in an incredibly uncomfortable and inappropriate position, Mr. Speaker. This is a position of abuse. She is in a position of power, and the people that relate to her—answer to her are being abused by this power. What can they do when they're told by their boss what they should do?

Shame on her for this, Mr. Speaker.

The email that was sent by the assistant deputy minister politicized—politicizing the government staff by taking them away from their jobs to be part of what is purely a political activity on the part of this

government. It's a political stunt, Mr. Speaker. They're taking these people away from their duties to serve the immigrant community for their own political stunt in this Legislature.

The Minister of Immigration clearly thinks it's okay for her staff to stop their work and do the bidding of their politics, Mr. Speaker. It's completely inappropriate for the Minister of Immigration or her senior staff to be encouraging staff to set aside their work to attend this session of the Legislature. Immigration staff are supposed to be serving immigrants. They're supposed to be working in the service organizations who provide this—settlement services to the new immigrants.

* (14:30)

Taking time off from their job today, away from their clients, is not what they were paid to do. It's unconscionable and a complete misuse of funds which the federal government has entrusted to the Province to spend wisely to assist new Canadians settle as they establish a new life here for themselves in Manitoba. I'm quite sure that this would not be seen as a good use of staff time or an appropriate use of staff dollars.

Staff, of course, are free to do whatever they like on their own time. But, Mr. Speaker, they are not to do the political wishes of their masters on the taxpayer's dime. I have to wonder how many client appointments were cancelled this afternoon for staff and organization representatives to come to the Legislature. How many people aren't receiving the assistance they should be receiving as a result of this very political decision to release staff to come here to attend today for the minister's own political purposes for this political stunt today?

Mr. Speaker, *Beauschesne's* citation 24 defines parliamentary privilege as a sum of the peculiar rights by each House collectively, and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers.

Marleau and Montpetit in House of Commons practice and procedure, chapter 3, lists the individual privileges of members as, among other things, the freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation.

Well, we know, Mr. Speaker, that most likely some of these staff have been intimidated into being here today. We know that the NDP have a track

record of politicizing the senior civil service, as we saw this last fall with the appointment of a high-ranking political staff to the position of Associate Deputy Minister of Education. So this is what their practice is.

Mr. Speaker, by sending this email invitation to staff, it is an abuse of the power for which this government needs to be censured. So the question: How are we, as opposition MLAs, to effectively do our jobs when we cannot rely on the impartiality of the civil servants, and in particular senior civil service? This impedes our ability to hold the government to account when the government politicizes the staff who are here to serve all Manitobans, not just the political masters on the other side.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that this House find the government in contempt for this blatant misuse of government staff.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing other members who may wish to speak to this matter of privilege, I would remind the House that contributions at this time by honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised, first, at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Well, it is certainly unusual that the opposition would interrupt question period, which is their time to ask questions, and I guess listening—in listening to the House leader opposite, listening carefully to her arguments, I don't share her view that we should not encourage people to come and witness democracy in this Chamber. I find that a very curious view for a legislator to suggest that people should not come to the Legislature. They should not witness the debates in this House. I mean, the only reason, I suppose, for making that argument would be if you're ashamed about your participation in that debate and you don't want people to see the position that you're going to take.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this discussion that we're going to have this afternoon, if the opposition permits us to get to that point in the agenda today, that discussion that we're going to have is not a partisan discussion. I think has been mentioned many times, the Provincial Nominee Program

crosses political boundaries. It's involved parties of every stripe. And our hope, our sincere hope, is that later today we will, all of us as legislators, be able to take a unified position, standing up for that Provincial Nominee Program.

Now, I have looked at the documents that have been provided by the member opposite, and I note, very clearly in one of the documents, that it states clearly that staff should come if they choose—if they choose, Mr. Speaker. So it's very clear that this is an invitation, and if people choose to come to witness democracy and to hear the debate of their elected officials, they're welcome to do that. And they're welcome to do that any day of the week.

There are folks here today in the gallery who have dedicated their lives to helping newcomers, to helping immigrants. There are people here in the gallery today who came to this province and have a built a successful life under the Nominee Program, and they have every right to witness this very critical debate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member from River Heights, on comments—[inaudible]

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): No, I have a comment on this matter of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, you know, first of all, just to be clear and before I speak on this matter, I stand as one—as the party who is very strongly in support of the delivery of immigrant settlement services by the Province rather than the federal government because I believe that that is the better way. But having said this—having said this, one of the problems that we are having with the immigration settlement services is concerns over the politicization of the delivery of these services.

And one of the problems, which in fact has been highlighted by this letter, is the fact that we have a civil servant, in this case a deputy minister, sending an email asking people in his staff, whether voluntarily or not, he's asking them to get involved in political activities. And, of course, he's also asking, I believe and I understand, organizations funded by his department to get involved in political activities.

You know, this, Mr. Speaker, is wrong, and it is one of the reasons that is so sad that this immigration settlement services issue is becoming a bit of a political Ping-Pong ball, being bounced back and forth between different levels of government and different parties. And we need to depoliticize this. We need to have politicians getting involved in the

politics and civil servants delivering the programs and delivering them well, as they know how to do.

You know, in my view this letter is totally inappropriate. You know, it makes the situation and the discussion of the situation worse, not better. And I believe that there indeed should be an investigation of what happened. And if it is found that the minister has directed her deputy minister to do this, then the minister should resign. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I thank all honourable members for their advice in this matter. Matters of privileges, all members, I'm sure, will know are very serious, and I take them very seriously as your Speaker.

I'm going to take this matter under advisement and consult with our procedural authorities and then return to this House with a ruling.

ORAL QUESTIONS

(Continued)

Immigration Settlement Services Future Support by Provincial Management

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My question, Mr. Speaker: We all know that immigration is absolutely vital to our province, and Manitoba Liberals are very strong supporters of the view that the settlement services are best delivered by the Province. But we don't actually always believe that the provincial government is doing as well as it could be. Indeed, we think they could be improved.

And, as a result, my question is to the Premier. Is he prepared to put more resources and improve the delivery of settlement services if the federal government reverses its decision and returns the responsibility of settlement services to the Province?

* (14:40)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for River Heights, the Leader of the Liberal Party, for his comments and support of the delivery model that is being put forward in Manitoba right now and has been in place for the last 12 years.

The short answer is yes. The shorter answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

And I just want to point out to him that in previous years, '08-09, we put an additional \$17.2 million into supporting settlement in Manitoba; in 2009 and '10, we put \$18.1 million in; and 2010 and '11, we put \$20.3 million, and we estimate that it'll be in the order of \$21 million.

So, as I said earlier in response to a previous question, we provide additional support through the education system, English as an Additional Language. We provide additional support through our housing programs. We had—provided additional support through family services. We provide additional support through the health-care system and we will continue to do that. And that's why it was—would have been very helpful before the federal government made the decision they did, unilaterally, without notice or discussion, if they would have sat down and had a conversation based on the successful evaluations of the programs, would have had a conversation with the community and the government about what their concerns were and what their intentions were, and we could have clarified these matters without the partisan political rhetoric we've seen from the members opposite. Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, we believe there's still significant room for improvement.

I would say this: Manitoba Liberals don't believe that immigrants should be treated as a political Ping-Pong ball to be battered back and forth between Manitoba and Ottawa. We believe that settlement services should be delivered in Manitoba, by Manitobans and not from Calgary or Ottawa.

I ask the Premier to tell us what he will do to work with all parties to improve immigration settlement if the federal decision is reversed and this immigration settlement responsibility is returned to the province. What will the Premier do to improve and to depoliticize the delivery of services?

Mr. Selinger: And, again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from River Heights for the question. I think it's a good question and that is the spirit in which the resolution, which we will debate later on today, was written.

To recognize when the original agreement was put in place, it was initiated between the federal Liberal government and the provincial Progressive Conservative government, and now it continues under a New Democratic provincial government and a federal Conservative government.

There's ample room in there for all political parties to join hands and do what's best for Manitoba. And we will continue to invest in these services whether it's in our schools, our health system, our family services system, whether it's in housing and community development, whether it's in labour

market agreements and labour market supports and directly through the agreement itself.

We think that approach to bring all the departments at the provincial level together in partnership with the 200 non-profit organizations which are delivering services to newcomers is a proven success in Manitoba; a proven success that is widely admired by provinces across Canada, and that is why so many of them have said, we would like to do the same thing and have come here to learn from our experience on—

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

Government Delegation to Ottawa

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I have learned from many years as an elected politician, both at the federal and the provincial level, that there's a very important principle of government, a principle which is called subsidiarity—that services should be delivered by the government best positioned to deliver those services, and in the case of immigration settlement services, I believe that's the Province.

I would ask the Premier: Is the Premier prepared to lead a delegation to Ottawa on the issue of immigration settlement services, including, hopefully, all parties and representative from organizations delivering settlement services in Manitoba to try and reverse the decision of the federal government?

Mr. Selinger: Again, I thank the member from River Heights for what I consider to be a very constructive question he's put forward, because he's really suggesting that we need to continue to come together as a community, the non-profit sector, the business community, the education institutions, the health institutions, all of us, including people here at the Legislature and show that we have a broad consensus in Manitoba about how we deliver these programs.

And I note the member has identified this principle of subsidiarity. It's a complicated word which means simply that the services should be delivered at the level where they will be able to be tailored most appropriately to meet the needs of the newcomers and the labour markets within which we want them to integrate. To be able to deliver the services closer to where people go to school, in their neighbourhoods—and I see that happening in my own neighbourhood where we have many newcomers going to our local school, and people that are coming here from around the world and participating in that school as volunteers and as teacher aides, and as they

get their qualification as teachers, so the suggestion he had puts on the table is one that I think is a good one. We will take it seriously and canvass the critic for support of each.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Cancer Treatment Oral Drug Coverage

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Health Minister made a very important announcement regarding cancer care.

Could the minister please inform the House how we are joining the Canadian Cancer Society fighting against cancer while at the same time working to ensure the life is affordable for cancer patients in Manitoba?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I was very privileged today to be with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the good people at the Canadian Cancer Society and CancerCare Manitoba to announce to all Manitoba families that are battling cancer that the full cost of approved oral cancer drugs and the support drugs will be covered in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, of course this means so much to families in urban centres, in rurals—*[interjection]* You know, it's interesting. I hear the member opposite chirping from across the way, the same person who refused to do it during the election.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we answered the call when the Canadian Cancer Society said, will you fund oral cancer drugs for all Manitoba families, for grandparents, for parents, for children, for newcomers? Will you do it? We said yes. They sent a letter full of sound and fury—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Southwest Cougars Hockey Team

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate the Southwest Cougars AAA Midget boys hockey team on another tremendous season. This was a bittersweet year as it was my son

Cameron's final year of AAA midgets with the Cougars. We have enjoyed being a part of the Cougar family and will miss those memorable road trips.

The Cougars finished first in the Western Division and became a finalist in the league, coming second to the Winnipeg Wild in the final. On a top-on top of making it to the AAA league finals for a second consecutive year, the Cougars played host for the regional Telus Cup on March 29th to April 1st in Virden. This was a great weekend and a wonderful opportunity for Virden to showcase the brand new Virden and district recreational complex. Congratulations to the organizing committee for a very successful event. The member for Arthur and Virden and I enjoyed a great hockey weekend and the celebrations that were adjoined with the hockey.

Congratulations—or hosting a prestigious tournament like the regional Telus Cup allowed for fans from Manitoba and elsewhere to enjoy elite level hockey with four teams, Southwest Cougars, Kenora Thistles, Saskatoon Contact and the Winnipeg Wild, competing for the title. Virden and district complex 'enjoyed' a week—a very exciting weekend.

As the host team, Southwest Cougars played an amazing tournament. With two wins and a loss in the round robin, the Cougars advanced to the regional Telus Cup final after winning a nail-biting game against the cross-provincial rivals, the Winnipeg Wild, on Saturday, March 31st. Tied after two periods and blessed with a two-man advantage in the remaining minutes of the third period, the Cougars scored to give themselves a 3-2 lead. For the remaining minutes the Cougars managed to hang on to their lead over the Wild and advance to the Cup final on Sunday, April 1st, against Saskatoon Contacts. Sunday's game ended with the Saskatoon Contacts advancing to the Canadian Telus Cup to represent the West. But what an awesome game for both teams.

Mr. Speaker, as one of the four western-Westman MLAs, which included Arthur-Virden, Spruce Woods, Brandon West and myself of course, Riding Mountain, I am proud to congratulate the Southwest Cougars and the town of Virden on a wonderful event. This year's regional cup was especially close to my heart. It was a great tournament and it was wonderful to watch Cameron and so many of his friends and teammates get the experience of a lifetime playing at this elite level of

hockey. What a great weekend and what a great way to end the 2011-2012 season.

*(14:50)

Hodgson Area Renal Health Centre

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, on April the 5th, I was pleased to preside over the opening of the Hodgson Area Renal Health Centre, attached to the Percy E. Moore Hospital in Hodgson. This health centre will serve the communities of Peguis First Nation, Fisher River Cree Nation, Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation and the RM of Fisher.

Many rural and northern Manitobans face extra travel time for medical services. This new renal health centre will provide an improved quality of life for patients and families in surrounding communities. It has six dialysis stations providing life-saving treatment close to home for patients with chronic kidney disease in addition to offering education and information essential to the prevention and early detection of diabetes.

The new facility demonstrates this government's strong commitment to the ongoing expansion of health services for all Manitoba families. This initiative also highlights the leadership of the First Nations communities involved, as the centre was made possible thanks to the collaborative effort between those communities, the Interlake Regional Health Authority, the Manitoba Renal Program, Manitoba Health and Health Canada's First Nation Inuit Health branch.

Mr. Speaker, receiving treatment close to home allows patients to benefit from the support of their family, the comfort of familiar surroundings and less disruption to their daily routines. It is estimated that approximately 3,100 travel kilometres per week, or over 150,000 kilometres a year, could be saved for those who need dialysis, thanks to the Hodgson Area Renal Health Centre. At the same time, we're investing in programs to promote healthy lifestyles so we can prevent diabetes and complications related to the disease.

I invite all members to join me in acknowledging the opening of a new pillar of health care in the Interlake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Brandon Chamber of Commerce Awards

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I rise today in recognition of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce's

2012 Business Excellence Awards and the 2012 President's Award for Business Person of the Year.

The awards were presented recently at the Brandon Chamber of Commerce's 129th annual dinner. Several members of the Legislative Assembly were in attendance, and I thank you all for coming to Brandon and attending the event, even though they couldn't stay in the House for this.

The business excellent awards honour businesses that achieve positive business growth, display superior customer service and embrace an exceptional commitment to quality.

D & B Sprinklers was the recipient of the business excellent award for a business with fewer than 15 employees. They began as a partnership between Jeff Fawcett and Todd Gudz and was run out of a parent's garage for several years. Their success is driven by maintaining a high level of service to their customers, both in Brandon and the surrounding areas. Both Todd and Jeff give back to the community, Todd as a coach and Jeff as a councillor for the City of Brandon.

B.O.B. Headquarters is the recipient of the Business Excellence Award for more than 15 employees. It is owned by Bob and Kim Ritchot. The Ritchots have been in business for 16 years and, together with their staff, they have built one of Canada's largest and well-known wholesale distributors of lifestyle products. They are committed to operating the best specialty retail and wholesale business in Canada and beyond. When I drive down our street on the way home, I often see Bob leaving for his daily run, training for yet another marathon.

The Business Person of the Year Award recognizes a business person that comparably demonstrates outstanding business practices and achievements and one who also shows leadership, vision, and produces economic growth while contributing to the community.

Borden Hadley was the recipient of this award. He is the president, owner and founder of Smooth Freight Limited. Mr. Hadley has operated his family-owned business for more than 25 years. It has terminals in Winnipeg and Brandon and serves more than 500 communities. He has the additional challenge and opportunity of bringing his daughters into the business, and I know he is up to the challenge. Borden is also a founding member of Westman Dreams for Kids, an organization that grants wishes for children affected by a serious

illness. If you ever have an opportunity to participate in their annual fundraising golf tournament, make sure you grab that chance. The stories of the children and families they have helped will pull on your heartstrings.

All three recipients of these awards emphasize the importance of customer service, finding dedicated employees, developing a business plan and having the discipline to see their goals through.

I would also like to recognize all the other nominees for their ongoing contribution to Brandon's business community. We are proud to have these talented businesses and individuals in Brandon. Their efforts are essential to growing the local and regional economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Convention

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, last month I had the privilege of attending the prospectors and developers 2012 international convention, trade show and investment exchange in Toronto, the mining conference.

The annual event is the world's leading convention for people, companies and organizations in or connected with mineral exploration. Since the event began in 1932, grown considerably, now attracting over 1,000 exhibitors and nearly 40,000 attendees from 125 countries.

Mining development and mineral exploration are extremely important to northern Manitobans, and I was able to meet with many people who were involved in the industry in Manitoba, and many others who are looking forward to investing in our mining economy. The Manitoba booth received a lot of traffic this year, and our partners are investing heavily in Manitoba's northern mineral wealth in a responsible way.

Mr. Speaker, regarding my own constituency of Flin Flon, I received a lot of interest from mining executives and companies who are looking forward to investing in the province. Flin Flon's abundance of natural resources and skilled labour force are two particular strengths that position the 'reeding'-region as a leading mining force. Mining is the economic lifeblood of the region, and is important to all northerners. With the scheduled opening of the northern mining academy upcoming, the times look prosperous for our constituency's mining sector.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to working together with our First Nations partners in order to ensure that Manitoba is a global leader in mining exploration. First Nations, northern Manitobans and the province as a whole stand to gain from the prominent level of international interest in our natural mineral resource wealth. I was honoured to represent Flin Flon's mining opportunities to an international audience last month in Toronto.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Education Week

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, April 16th to 20th is Education Week in Manitoba. This is a chance to celebrate Manitoba's public schools, and to remember how important education is for youth and all Manitobans.

As a joint initiative of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba School Boards Association and the provincial government, this year's Education Week theme of "Public Schools Are My Schools" lets us know that we are all responsible for, and must take ownership of, public education in Manitoba.

Education is an important part of a child's development and growth. Quality, accessible education is one of the most fundamental components to success in life. Education helps develop the confidence and skills necessary to be positive, contributing members of society. Education is the key to entering the labour force and being an active participant in civic society. Ensuring the accessibility and quality of education is something in which everyone has a vested interest.

Our efforts to improve the quality of education in Manitoba have been outstanding, and we are pleased that between 2002 and 2011 the graduation rate in Manitoba has seen a 17 per cent improvement, from 71.1 per cent to 83.5 per cent. All of those involved in this tremendous gain should be congratulated. By everyone taking ownership of our public schools, we ensure that positive gains like this continue into the future.

Mr. Speaker, everyone involved in the education of our youth are to be commended for the work that they do. This includes the teachers in the classroom, administrators, support staff, trustees, parents and the community who all come together to help our children learn. We should take time during Education Week to remember the roles we all play,

directly and indirectly, in the education of our youth. Public schools are truly our schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:00)

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): As announced yesterday in the House, pursuant to rule 32(5), we'll now be interrupting budget speech debate to consider the government resolution currently on the order paper regarding federal centralization of settlement services.

Mr. Speaker: As was announced yesterday, pursuant to rule 32(5), the government has announced that they will be calling the resolution, federal centralization and settlement services.

GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

Federal Centralization of Settlement Services

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino), the following resolution on federal centralization of settlement services:

WHEREAS in 1995, the provincial government took advantage of the Government of Canada's offer to develop devolved immigration settlement services and agreements;

WHEREAS in 1998, the governments of Canada and Manitoba signed the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with two critical components, a Settlement Annex and a Provincial Nominee Program Annex; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's business and community leaders were key architects of the Manitoba immigration model and continue to be strong supporters of this successful approach today; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's successful Provincial Nominee Program accounts for 77 per cent of all immigration to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS preliminary figures show that this program played a key role in bringing nearly 16,000 immigrants to Manitoba in 2011; and

WHEREAS since 1999, under the Provincial Nominee Program, over 100,000 new immigrants

have settled in Manitoba, with more than 25,000 choosing to settle in rural Manitoba, contributing to over 130 communities, including Brandon, Winkler, Morden, Steinbach, Dauphin and Neepawa; and

WHEREAS the settlement services component of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement has ensured an effective, integrated Manitoba model of settlement service delivery that is key to ensuring immigrants have the supports they need to be contributing members of Manitoba's economy; and

WHEREAS this important agreement enables the provincial government to work directly with over 200 not-for-profit and institutional service providers to ensure immigrants have arrival orientation, labour market supports, adult language training and integrated services; and

WHEREAS an independent evaluation of participants in Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program shows 85 per cent of respondents were working after three months, and 83 per cent of respondents were working in their fields or a related field; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has announced it is cancelling the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the Government of Canada to immediately reverse its decision to cancel the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with the provincial government in order to maintain the successful Manitoba immigration model.

Mr. Speaker: I draw to the attention of the honourable minister that she has indicated that her seconder would be the First Minister (Mr. Selinger), and I would ask that she would—*[interjection]*

Would you please clarify for the Speaker, then, indicating who your seconder is.

Ms. Melnick: The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino).

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism,

WHEREAS in 1995, the provincial government took advantage of the Government of Canada's offer to develop devolved immigration settlement services agreements; and

WHEREAS in 1998, the governments of Canada and Manitoba signed the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with two critical components, a Settlement Annex and Provincial Nominee Program Annex; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's business and community leaders were key architects in the Manitoba immigration model and continue to be strong supporters of this successful approach today; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's successful Provincial Nominee Program accounts for 77 per cent of all immigration to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS preliminary figures show that this program played a key role in bringing nearly 16,000 immigrants to Manitoba in 2011; and

WHEREAS since 1999, under the Provincial Nominee Program, over 100,000 new immigrants have settled in Manitoba with more than 25,000 choosing to settle in rural Manitoba contributing to over 130 communities, including Brandon, Winkler, Morden, Steinbach, Dauphin and Neepawa; and

WHEREAS the settlement services component of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement has ensured an effective, integrated Manitoba model of settlement service delivery that this key to ensuring immigrants have the supports they need to be contributing members of Manitoba's economy; and

WHEREAS this important agreement enables the provincial government to work directly with over 200 non-not-for-profit and institutional service providers to ensure immigrants have arrival orientation, labour market supports, adult language training and integration services; and

WHEREAS an independent evaluation of participants in the Manitoba's—in Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program showed 85 per cent of respondents were working after three months, and 83 per cent of respondents were working in their fields or related field—or a related field; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has announced it is cancelling the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the Government of Canada to immediately reverse its decision to cancel the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with the provincial government in order to maintain the successful Manitoba immigration model.

I ask if the House is in agreement to accept the motion, as printed, in the *Hansard*? [Agreed]

WHEREAS in 1995, the Provincial Government took advantage of the Government of Canada's offer to develop devolved immigration settlement services agreements; and

WHEREAS in 1998, the Governments of Canada and Manitoba signed the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with two critical components, a Settlement Annex and a Provincial Nominee Program Annex; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's business and community leaders were key architects of the Manitoba immigration model and continue to be strong supporters of this successful approach today; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's successful Provincial Nominee Program accounts for 77% of all immigration to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS preliminary figures show that this program played a key role in bringing nearly 16,000 immigrants to Manitoba in 2011; and

WHEREAS since 1999, under the Provincial Nominee Program, over 100,000 new immigrants have settled in Manitoba with more than 25,000 choosing to settle in rural Manitoba contributing to over 130 communities, including Brandon, Winkler, Morden, Steinbach, Dauphin and Neepawa; and

WHEREAS the settlement services component of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement has ensured an effective, integrated Manitoba model of settlement service delivery that is key to ensuring immigrants have the supports they need to be contributing members of Manitoba's economy; and

WHEREAS this important agreement enables the Provincial Government to work directly with over 200 not-for-profit and institutional service providers to ensure immigrants have arrival orientation, labour market supports, adult language training and integration services; and

WHEREAS an independent evaluation of participants in Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program showed 85% of respondents were working after three months, and 83% of respondents were working in their fields or a related field; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has announced it is cancelling the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the Government of Canada to immediately reverse its decision to cancel the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with the Provincial Government in order to maintain the successful Manitoba immigration model.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Yes, certainly, I agree that it should be as printed. The mover read the motion wrong, and you, as well, Mr. Speaker, so I agree that it should be as printed.

Mr. Speaker: Thank the honourable member for the advice. There is no point of order.

* * *

Ms. Melnick: I am very glad that we are getting to this resolution this afternoon. It is an extremely important resolution in the province of Manitoba and it's extremely important that we debate this on the House—on the floor of this House.

To give some background, in 1995 the Manitoba government took advantage of Canada's offer to take over settlement services within the province so that it could be delivered at a very grassroots level. In 1998 the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement was signed. There were two critical components: a Settlement Annex and a Provincial Nominee Program.

At that time, the Filmon government agreed that it was important to have this signed to deal with labour shortages and to grow the economy, and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, this has been a very effective tool for us to build the economy in Manitoba. In fact, when we look at the number of newcomers increasing in the province of Manitoba, we see that the economy is increasing in pace. The key messages here are that this is important to the economic growth of the province of Manitoba.

*(15:10)

This is not a political partisan issue. We all need to stand together as Manitobans to ensure that the economy of Manitoba, which is so well complemented by the increasing number of newcomers in this province, remains. Last year we

had almost 16,000 newcomers come into this province through the Provincial Nominee Program that is complemented by the settlement services, which is an integrated program here.

This government partners with over 200 not-for-profits throughout the entire province of Manitoba, not just in the city of Winnipeg, not just in southern Manitoba, but throughout the eastern portions, throughout the northern portions, the western portions. Mr. Speaker, we are all Manitobans and that's why we need to be concerned about this and that's why we need to demand that the federal government keep settlement services here in Manitoba under the model that is the envy, not only of the country of Canada, other jurisdictions in Canada, but far beyond that.

We know the Provincial Nominee Program accounts for 77 per cent of immigration in Manitoba. Under this program, over a hundred thousand newcomers have come and welcome they are, Mr. Speaker.

Last year we were graced with people choosing Manitoba from over 137 countries. Right now in the city of Winnipeg there are 120 languages being spoken. This is a beautiful symphony, Mr. Speaker, the most beautiful symphony one could hear.

More than 25,000 of these newcomers have chosen to go beyond the Perimeter, Mr. Speaker, they've gone to over 130 communities around our province. We know that these people are not only the surviving of several rural communities, they are the thriving.

And since I've been in—the short time that I've been minister, and I know my predecessors would agree, going to these communities is a wonderful experience. You see people mixing, you see people talking, you see people working together to keep these communities healthy and moving forward and that's another reason why we need to be supporting, not only the newcomers who are within the city of Winnipeg, but those who are moving beyond.

The economics are pretty clear. In March 2012, immigrants in Manitoba and Alberta had the lowest unemployment rate, 6.4 in Canada, and Manitoba's employment rate amongst immigrants, 64.4 per cent ranked second only to Alberta at 64.8. In 2011, 21.2 per cent of Canada's employment was held by landed immigrants.

Also in the same year, landed immigrants had 17.8 per cent of Manitoba's employment. Manitoba's

immigrants had the second lowest unemployment rate in 2011 at 6.3 right after Alberta at 5.6.

Very recently, very recent newcomers to Manitoba had the third lowest unemployment rate, 9 per cent after Saskatchewan and Alberta. These people arrive with a job—if they don't have a job when they arrive, within three to six months they have employment, within three years they have jobs in their area of choice and within six years they're buying homes, Mr. Speaker. They are choosing Manitoba. We are honoured and they are making sure that Manitoba, for the next generation, will be even better than the Manitoba that we have today.

Even *The New York Times* can't get enough of the Manitoba PNP settlement model; they refer to us as the parka-clad diversity. It's an honour to know that a lot of those parkas are actually produced here in the province of Manitoba and that we are using them together even through the cold winters, although this winter wasn't so bad.

Closer to home, Mr. Speaker, we have the Business Council of Manitoba, Jim Carr of the Business Council, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 2nd, 2006, said: Manitoba is leading the nation implementing a visionary immigration policy.

The Provincial Nominee Program, established by agreements, negotiated by Ottawa and the provinces, gives provincial governments the bulk of the responsibility for recruiting and settling immigrants.

Just for the sake of comparison, Saskatchewan admitted 1500 immigrants in 1998 and only a few hundred more in 2004. Last year, Mr. Speaker, we brought almost 16,000 newcomers in, the highest level since records were being taken at—in 1946.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Mr. Speaker, who know full well the importance of maintaining the rural economy in this province, has said it is especially important that the Province take responsibility for supporting newcomers when they first arrive because they are more likely to move to another province if they have a negative experience in the first community they move to. That was in a briefing note to myself from the AMM, March 6, 2012.

And even the Council of the Federation has weighed in, Mr. Speaker. Provinces and territories are in the best position to assess the needs of their communities and regional economies and integrate

settlement and integration services with other human services including education, health, social services, and labour-market services.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

A number of premiers have expressed an interest in building on the success of devolved models in Québec, BC, and Manitoba. Premiers would be pleased to work with the federal government on how to address processing backlogs and the capacity to absorb immigrants into provinces and territories—Council of the Federation release, Vancouver, July 22nd, 2011.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not always a friend of ours, but a friend in this case is, in fact, the *Brandon Sun*, who yesterday said, although they don't always agree with us, they agree with the member from Brandon East—the administration of the PNP is one of the few things that we believe the provincial government has done remarkably well. Brandon at least is a more interesting and vibrant community because of it—*Brandon Sun* editorial, April 17th, 2012.

And I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spent last weekend in the fine, fine city of Brandon, and I was talking to newcomers and settlement workers and stakeholders, including the mayor, Shari Decter Hirst. They all agree that Brandon is a more vibrant community. Right now in Brandon there are 57 languages being spoken; that is incredible; that is the future. That is why we need to stand up for Manitoba and protect the settlement services and keep them right here at the grassroots level in the province of Manitoba.

You know, members opposite represent a lot of the rural communities who are benefitting from the 25,000 newcomers who have chosen their communities—and that's so, they are wonderful, vibrant communities.

I have a few other quotes. Mayor Chris Goertzen says: A lot of people have played a role in the growth of the Steinbach area. I'm proud of our city; I'm proud of our citizens. I'm proud of the businesses that are here that are making all of this happen. It's really a community effort; it's a group effort. We've all decided immigration is important. New people are important and supporting our local business is important. We've seen everyone pitch in and move in that direction. We can be a very proud city of it as it is. And that is the mayor of Steinbach, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In Neepawa—and I'm glad that the member representing Neepawa is in the House to hear this. In Neepawa the single biggest reason for the community's 10 per cent jump can be attributed to one employer. The town's most recent—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the member should know full well she's not allowed to make reference to the—whether a person is either in the Chamber or not in the Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the point of order raised—the Minister of Immigration, on the same point of order.

Ms. Melnick: Point well taken, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Opposition House Leader does have a point of order, and I acknowledge the words of the honourable minister and consider the matter settled.

* * *

*(15:20)

Ms. Melnick: In Neepawa, the town's most recent growth is somewhat tied to the growth of HyLife Foods, town councillor Monty Simon told the *Sun*. They've undergone a major expansion and there has been an onslaught of a number of new positions for employees, both locally and through immigration. That is from the *Brandon Sun*, February 9th, 2012. Another community that is doing well, and we know that the retired University of Winnipeg professor Tom Carter has studied the Provincial Nominee Program and its impact on Manitoba. He said it has brought, at that time, over 70,000 people to the province since it began in 1999, and he can't understand why the federal government would change it. To quote: It's been—it's brought in new jobs. They've started new businesses. So it's been a very instrumental program in the growth strategy of the province. Tom Carter, CBC, April 12th, 2012.

We know that the way forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to make sure that we keep this economy going. We know that we need to continue to bring people in. We also know that on June 29, 1998, the then-minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Rosemary Vodrey, signed the agreements with the

federal government to enable Manitoba to be more active in recruiting and nominating immigrants and assume responsibility for immigrant settlement services. At that time, the minister said, and I quote: Manitoba has the flexibility to provide services that reflect local needs and ensure new immigrants connect more effectively with provincial services such as training, education, and other services that help newcomers adapt to their new home. The Provincial Nominee agreement ensures Manitoba has a direct way of dealing with labour market shortages and supports our ongoing efforts to increase immigration in this province.

This is a very important quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it was a quote of vision around this agreement which took three years to negotiate. It was not done overnight. It was done in a very timely way. There were not unilateral decisions made. This is where the true partnership was formed, and I'm proud that we've maintained it for the last 15 years. And I want it to be maintained in the many more years to come.

To quote a current member of this House, the nominee program started out as a test program. That—as a test program. It was the way—it was negotiated with the federal government. I give a lot of credit to the former minister of Labour under the New Democratic Party. She made it very clear that she would take the great ideas of the Conservative government and the Filmon government and work with them. I was her critic and on numerous occasions we had the opportunity to talk, that this was a program that had to continue to grow and to be successful. This was the way to help the economy in Manitoba. It has still been a very good program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to end my words by saying that many of us, if we are not newcomers ourselves, we are maybe first generation, maybe second generation. Many of us are very, very close to the immigrant experience. We know it is only with courage that people choose to leave their homeland and arrive somewhere else. It is an honour. It is a privilege to welcome those people of courage into the province of Manitoba to establish roots that can grow very, very deep in this rich and fertile prairie soil, in this soil that has proven to be the breadbasket of the world and has proven to be an example of so many good things on other levels.

We welcome the newcomers. We want the newcomers. We remember our own experience of struggle. Let's not make it hard for them to be here

by losing these services to Ottawa. Let's make sure we're working at the grassroots level.

I also want to pay honour to the service providers who know their home communities so well and who learn about the newcomers who are joining them and straddle that divide so that instead of us and them, it's all of us, it's all of Manitoba. We are all Manitobans. Let's stand united to build this great province. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Just to—advice to the gallery, they're not to participate in the debate, and that includes clapping. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And just before I begin I want to make it pretty clear here that the minister is confusing two different things: she is confusing the Settlement Annex and the Provincial Nominee Program annex.

The problem is the resolution today is regarding the Settlement Annex and all of her comments were regarding the Provincial Nominee Program annex. So they're two different things. I don't think she realizes that, but they're two separate things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So all of her comments in regard to the Provincial Nominee Program are very valid, but that is not the subject of this resolution, nor is there anything to change in that program.

She's just trying to really much confuse the issue here and fearmonger throughout the immigrant community, which she's wont to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I go any further though, I would like to welcome again my colleagues from the federal government, Shelly Glover and Joy Smith, Candice Hoepfner was here earlier, as was James Bezan. And I want to say that this must be a first to have distinguished members of the federal government, so many, in attendance here today.

I also want to recognize all the people that are here in the gallery because I know how important it is to you to be Manitobans. Manitobans have been founded on immigration from the very beginning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we value the tremendous work the immigration—immigrants do and the hard-working families, and that will continue on in this province. This government is simply fearmongering that this is going to come to an end, when it is not going to come to an end, not whatsoever. This resolution is regarding the Settlement Annex, not the Provincial Nominee Program, so it has nothing to do with that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, newcomers are extremely important to our economy and our social fabric, but they don't deserve to be lied to by this NDP government. They don't deserve that; they deserve the truth.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable House leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look to you, but I do believe the accusation that the member just made is unparliamentary.

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

Mrs. Taillieu: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not name anybody in that regard.

I simply suggested that there was untruths, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I did not say any member of this House said anything, so I don't believe it's a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, we will take this under advisement for the time being and we will review *Hansard* to check the—exactly what the member said. Then we'll return to the House with the decision. Thank you.

* * *

Mrs. Taillieu: And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member did—the minister did outline the timelines involved in how this Settlement Annex began and it was a Conservative government here in Manitoba that signed an agreement with the federal government of the day. And it is a Conservative government that will continue to administer the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement, now and into the future.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the member for Minnedosa—the former member for Minnedosa, Mr. Harold Gilleshammer, both Conservatives, were initiators of this program here in Manitoba. And when the NDP, back in that day in 1998, when this was initiated, they voted against it.

You know, we recognize that with the great number of new immigrants here in the province, how important it is, and we recognize that it's a wonderful

thing that we have so many people calling Manitoba home. And more are welcome, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:30)

Certainly, it's important to provide the services that people need to learn about their communities and about the social and cultural fabric of their communities that they choose to live in, as well as share their social and cultural norms with the community that they have chosen to live in.

But it is sad, Mr. Speaker, that this NDP government has, in large count, ignored some of the concerns of newcomers. Immigrants are not getting the same access to social services, whether that be in hospitals or clinics or in schools, and they are certainly not being able to get work in their chosen profession because of a delay or outright inability in getting their credentials recognized. We know, though, that Manitobans are not fooled by the political spin and myths spread by this NDP government.

Although there are over 200 not-for-profit organizations that do fantastic work here, providing services, trying their best to help new immigrants, they are simply not supported by this NDP government, Mr. Speaker. The truth is—but while the federal government has put in \$10 million towards settlement services beginning in 1998, the provincial government only put in \$1 million at that time. This year, the Conservative government will invest \$36 million into the program, into the settlement services program, while the NDP are only putting in the same \$1 million. And, when you factor inflation into that, that is equivalent of cutting \$300,000 out of that amount.

Of course we know that the NDP love inflation—just look at how they've inflated the gas tax this year, Mr. Speaker. But the question is: How interested are the NDP in settlement services when funding for this program has remained stagnant by the NDP, has remained stagnant for the last 15 years? At the same time, in the last five years, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC have all increased their investments in settlement services, yet Manitoba has not. That speaks volumes.

The truth is that the federal Conservative government has been funding the settlement services annex 97 per cent, Mr. Speaker, while the NDP have only been funding it 3 per cent. So I ask you, if you're putting 97 per cent of the funds in, don't you

think that there's a vested interest in administering the program?

And that's the change, nothing's being cancelled here, Mr. Speaker. Nothing is being cancelled. They're fearmongering by saying that. It's simply a transfer of administration. Simple.

After all, immigration falls under federal jurisdiction, and the federal government means to assume the administration and—to ensure—they want to ensure some uniformity across the country. And I know that the minister did try and enlist—she did try and enlist the support of groups like the business council, chamber of commerce and AMM. She went to them outraged, trying to enlist their support. They saw through that, Mr. Speaker, and they were not duped into following her. They know, after consultation which they should and did do with the federal government, that this minister was wrong. It was simply a campaign of fear and schmear.

And now, the big untruth in all of this, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government says that the federal government has cancelled the Settlement Annex of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement, and this is simply not true. The truth is, as I said, nothing has been cancelled. The federal government is assuming the ministrations. Nobody's going to go anywhere. The Canada-Canadian government funds this settlement services 97 per cent.

Jason Kenney, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, has stated that this administrative change will not affect one cent that is used for settlement services in Manitoba. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe him rather than this NDP government, who told the public before the election that they would not raise taxes and they were on their way to balancing the budget, and now look at what they've done—\$184 million more in tax increases and nowhere near balancing the budget.

So I ask you: Why should we believe them on immigration, Mr. Speaker?

They also say they put more money in but, Mr. Speaker, the federal government gives this government almost 40 per cent of their income, so we can thank the federal government for their contributions, no matter where the money comes from now that there's—*[inaudible]*

What is really happening here, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP are trying to make this a political issue and putting people who deliver and receive

settlement services in the middle of this and that's just unfair. They are paying the politics of fear and 'schmear.' They are fearmongering among the immigrant communities and the really sad part of this is why should the immigrant communities suffer for the mistakes of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, is it not a mistake to bite the hand that feeds you? Shouldn't the two levels of government work together to ensure the best for new immigrants, instead of this government attacking the federal government at every opportunity they can? Then why not work with the federal government now? Why won't you work with the federal government now? You continually risk the good relationship you have with the federal government.

Well, it's not difficult to see why this NDP Minister for Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick) is so hysterical over this, Mr. Speaker. Half of her department will now be administered by the federal government and the other half could be put into another department. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) has an opportunity to reduce one of his Cabinet ministers and save another \$130,000.

This is—if this is purely self-interest on behalf of this minister, then shame on her for using the new immigrants as her political pawns, Mr. Speaker. I suppose that she is also miffed that she's not going to be the one handing out the cheques now. That job is going to be given to the federal Conservative MPs.

These are the ones—this NDP government has the one that made this into a political issue, Mr. Speaker. We are responding and putting the true facts on the table.

Mr. Speaker, we could never support a resolution that contains an untrue statement but, in good faith, we will propose an amendment which makes this a valid and truthful resolution and one we can vote for.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler),

THAT the government resolution on federal centralization of settlement services be amended by deleting the final WHEREAS and THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the federal government funds the majority of the Settlement Annex and the provincial government has not shown a commitment to provide adequate funding for these needed services,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba encourage the federal government to strengthen and improve settlement services in Manitoba which have been lacking under the provincial government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), seconded by the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler),

THAT the government resolution on federal centralization of settlement services be amended by deleting the final WHEREAS and THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the federal government funds the majority of the Settlement Annex and the provincial government has not shown a commitment to provide adequate funding for these needed services,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba encourage the federal government to strengthen and improve settlement services in Manitoba which have been lacking under the provincial government.

The amendment is in order. And we'll now proceed with debate on the amended motion—on the amendment itself.

*(15:40)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to address the Legislature today on this very important issue.

And, you know, the members opposites' member from Steinbach, in his usual loquaciousness, has said that this isn't a hill to die on. This is an issue of fundamental importance to the growth of our economy and the prosperity of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and if the member from Steinbach doesn't recognize that, it's another sad day for members of the House of the Legislature.

The reality is this: It's the most successful program in the country and it has transcended partisan politics up until the recent decision by the federal government to unilaterally cancel the program and the agreement that we have operated under since 1998. And at the time the agreement was entered into, it was a Progressive Conservative government, who was the provincial government of the day, and it was a federal Liberal government that

was in office at that time. They signed that agreement.

In 1999, the New Democrats saw the value of the work that had been done there—recognized that value, acknowledged that in terms of what the provincial government had done—and worked with the new government when it came into Ottawa—the new Conservative government, when they came into Ottawa—to continue the program. So it has crossed all political boundaries at the federal and provincial level and is widely considered successful.

Now, the reality of this program is as follows. It has been a program that—Rosemary Vodrey, when she was member of this Legislature for Fort Garry and a Cabinet minister, said: Manitoba now has the flexibility to provide services that reflect local needs and ensure new immigrants connect more effectively with provincial services such as training, education and other services that help newcomers adapt to their new home. That was on the record, read into the record, June 29th, 1998, in a press release. We maintained that agreement and we made sure that that agreement ramped up and worked even better.

So what are the statistics? What are the statistics about the program since it's been initiated in Manitoba? The Provincial Nominee Program and its settlement services account for 77 per cent of all newcomers who come to Manitoba. Under this program, 100,000 people have come to Manitoba to call it their home. Twenty-five thousand of this 100,000 people have settled in rural Manitoba.

And an independent evaluation of participants in this program showed that 85 per cent of the respondents, the new people that came here and responded to the survey, were working after three months. And 83 per cent of those respondents were working in fields of their choice, related to their skills, or very closely related to it. That's a remarkable achievement.

In 2002, 1,526 people came under the Provincial Nominee Program. In 2011, we achieved 15,800 people in the province of Manitoba. It's a remarkable story.

What has it meant for population growth? In a community like Steinbach, the population has gone from 8,478 people in 1996 to 13,524 in 2011, a growth of over 5,000 people or 60 per cent. That is a remarkable achievement for the good people of Steinbach and the success for this program.

And I was out there doing an announcement—as I recall, just last summer, actually, even earlier than that, I believe the summer before that—where the Chamber of Commerce was working with the non-profit sector there to help people settle in the community of Steinbach. The program was extremely popular, very well received, and everybody thought it was working to the benefit of the good people of Steinbach.

Morden community: in 1996, 5,689 people; in 2011, 7,812 people, a growth of 37 per cent, or over 2,100 citizens, largely due to this program.

The community of Winkler: 7,241 people in 1996; and in 2011, 10,670 people, growth of 47 per cent or over 3,400 new people moving into that community. A great story of success down there.

The community of Brandon: in '96, 39,175 people; in 2011, 46,061, growth of 18 per cent or over 6,886 people. And when I visited Brandon, went in the schools as I did in Winkler, I saw newcomers in all the classes, newcomers from all over the world that were getting English as an additional language training, extra support from teachers and teachers aides in that school. The schools and the communities are doing a tremendous job of helping these people fully integrate and become Canadian citizens here in Manitoba.

And the community of Winnipeg: in 1996 a population of 618,000; in 2011, 663,617, a growth of over 45,000 citizens, newcomers, population growth of 7 per cent. Those are outstanding statistics, which have driven the economy in Manitoba.

The New York Times, when it wrote about this remarkable program here in Manitoba, said Manitoba is a hub of parka-clad diversity—a hub of parka-clad diversity—it's a tremendous story. And we are a welcoming community and it has been a non-partisan project from the very earliest days. People of all political stripes all across the spectrum of Manitoba: business community, chambers of commerce, non-profit organizations, communities all over Manitoba north and south east and west have welcomed these people to the province and it has been successful because the nominee program and the settlement services have worked hand in hand with the communities, with the chambers, with the employers and with the provincial government to ensure that things were done in a co-operative fashion to maximize the success of those newcomers when they came here. It's an outstanding example of what can be done when we work together.

Now there's been comments by the members opposite, which we appreciate because they are usually wrong, that there hasn't been sufficient investment. We've documented, so far, further work to be done, at least \$21 million of investment, \$21 million in: programs like education, where we provided money for English as an additional language; programs of over \$7.8 million in immigration; programs in housing and community development, where we seen that in housing and community development we're building projects with \$6.3 million into new housing for newcomers that come to Manitoba with an IRCOM project; a peace tower project with the Chinese community—of which there is a federal contribution as well—where we are building new housing for newcomers in Manitoba. Another project, the Living Gospel Church, which has also forged a partnership with the community and government to provide housing there. And, you know, it's just a remarkable story of co-operation everywhere we go.

Last night, I know there was a meeting with respect to the MPI, and even the—our Crown corporations are providing not only job opportunities, but in the case of MPI they're providing training so people can get a driver's licence in Manitoba and allows them to do their job of being a citizen and participate in the economy.

Every way you look at it the Manitoba model where people come together across departments—the health-care system in the Access centres, for example, the birthing centre, in the hospitals many people are working that are newcomers and they're being hired, and part of the hospital system we're training nurses. We've recruited nurses from all over the world. Just a couple years ago we recruited 120 nurses from the Philippines to come to Manitoba working mostly in Manitoba health facilities, and I visited with those newcomers when they've been here. We've talked in the lunchroom about how they liked being in Manitoba.

This program has been a unqualified success in Manitoba because of the ability to work across all of our systems, the health system, the education system, the school system, our housing programs, our community organizations, the chambers of commerce. Everybody has said this program is an outstanding success. So for the federal government to come along and unilaterally decide that they're going to rip that part of the agreement apart related to settlement services and operate it separately where

management will be coming from outside the province is a great shame.

We hope that in the days and weeks ahead that the federal government will find a way that we can work together to maintain the success we've had, that it'll be a non-partisan support from all members of this Chamber, from all sectors of the community, from the private sector, the non-profit sector, from all communities around Manitoba. We hope everybody will come together and stand as one and say this program is essential to the future prosperity of the province. When we do that I'm confident we'll be successful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I look forward to the positive support from the members opposite on this very important motion.

* (15:50)

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I am very pleased to be getting up today and being given the opportunity to speak to one of my favourite topics in this Legislature, and that's about immigration. And over the years that I've been a member of the Legislature here, I've had the opportunity to give a little bit of an account of my background.

My mother came in 1949 to this great country on a displaced person's pass. Now, I don't know how many here today came on one of those. That point in time, there was no real authority in Europe, other than a military authority. It was the Allied authority. So she actually was a person without a country, and she so wanted to get out of this war-torn, balkanized, destructive Europe, that she decided it was Canada and she would get out at any cost, and all cost.

And she was given the opportunity to go to Churchbridge, Saskatchewan, and for two years she would work for free, she would work for free on a farm so that she would then work off her trip from Europe to Canada, and that's what she did. And I still have—I still have that passport, that displaced person's passport, and I treasure it, and I hope someday to pass it on to other generations, my children, because it shows the kind of determination that people have to get away from situations that are less than pleasing.

So she came to Churchbridge, Saskatchewan, worked her two years, not getting paid, had two seat-suitcases, one in either hand, that's all she had, no money, and worked on the farm, and paid off her way here to Canada.

My father came in 1952, here to Winnipeg, also with nothing from a war-torn Europe. And at that

point in time my mother was here in Winnipeg, and they met and got married in 1953. And they decided that they were going to start a life here together. And they actually didn't want what was in Europe; the balkanization, the divisions, the animosity, the kind of racism that took place, the kind of hierarchy, if you were a lower caste you weren't allowed to move up. They didn't want any part of that. They wanted a strong, united, good Canada to start a family, and they did. I'm the youngest of six. So they certainly did start a family here in Canada.

And I have a picture that I just found. Unfortunately, my parents died young, and so I found this photo the other day, and it's a photo of—soon after my parents' wedding, of my mother—beautiful dress. She was wearing just a beautiful dress, and my dad was dressed in a suit and tie and he had the most fancy socks on, and he looked so dapper. And what's so amazing about this picture is how happy they were. Now, keep in mind, it had only been three, four years previously, that they had left this carnage in Europe. And they were so happy in this picture. It is such a beautiful photo, that that's the kind of thing that Canada offers; it offers you hope, it offers you an opportunity that you can turn your back on what was bad behind you, and you can look forward and you can build something for yourself. So, needless to say, we cherish these moments, and I'm so happy that they came to Canada.

Now, many have come to this country in different ways—my mother as a displaced person, my father as an immigrant. And over the years there've been different programs and different ways that people came here. And I, as one Manitoban, I was born here of immigrant parents, decided that I would get involved and give back to my province, and give back to my community. And in the '80s, I was appointed by the then-minister of Multiculturalism, the now-member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) sitting over here, and I was pointed the chair of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. And it was a great organization. In fact, I watched with great interest how the minister of the day, the member from River East, negotiated the Provincial Nominee Program.

And, if I may be so bold as to say, that the mother of the new immigration as we know it today, the mother of the Provincial Nominee Program, the woman who had the courage and the strength to stand and say, this is something that we need for Manitoba; it's a member from River East, she's the one, and a great program it is.

In fact, the minister got up and read a quote from a member of the opposition, and that member was myself, and I believe in the PNP program that was started and negotiated by the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), and I supported it when the member for St. Vital was the Minister of Labour and Immigration. We had many, many good discussions.

In fact, Becky Barrett was the first minister under the NDP and I was her critic at that time, and I complimented her for taking a great program created by the Conservatives and furthered by the NDP. The PNP is a great program.

What is unfortunate, is the members on the NDP benches voted against it. They voted against it. Now we are all allowed to have that conversion, that coming over to the right side, and I am happy it started with Becky Barrett, moved on to the member for St. Vital and others who now recognize that the PNP is a great program, even if they originally voted against it.

It is a great program and the best news is, it stays as it is and I would comment—I would make the comment to this House, don't believe everything you hear from members opposite, don't believe everything you hear, because the PNP program, the program started by the member from River East, started in her office, is going to stay.

So then the question is, so, what's the issue? Why are we all here today and what is the debate about?

It is about settlement services. And I mentioned that, certainly, my parents left a balkanized Europe. You know, there just comes a time when a human being says, I've had it with this system, I want to go to a country where I don't have to face this nonsense over and over again, how many world wars do we have to suffer through as families? How many times do we have to lose our loved ones? How many times do our homes have to be burned down? How many times do we have to lose everything before we say, it's time to get out. And they pick a country that is stable, that is unified, that is got the 'greatnits' of Canada; that's why they come here.

That's why my parents came here, because they wanted a strong Canada and what concerns me is we've heard now several speeches from the NDP; they want to go back to a European system. The federal Conservatives are saying, we need a settlement services program that's across the country, that's got a unity across the country. The PNP states:

But, when it comes to settlement services, you should expect the same standard of services in Manitoba as you have in Alberta, as you have in Ontario, as you have in Québec, as you have in the North, as you have on the East Coast. It shouldn't matter where you go, the settlement services should be the same, and they will be run out of Ottawa.

I am very proud of what has happened over the years with the PNP program, I am very proud of how the federal government has been taking on issues; we want a fair system. In fact, three, four years ago, I had the opportunity to go to India and I went to the Punjab; I was at a wedding. It was just the most amazing experience I ever had, what an opportunity that was. And I was surprised at how many individuals in the Punjab came to me and said, we want to get to Canada on the right way, working through the system properly, because they know that when they come to Canada, they want to be proud about how they got there. And they said to me, make sure you continuously have a country that is a unified country, that isn't balkanized, that isn't divided. And that's one of the reasons why our federal government has decided that they are going to have a nation-building exercise. This is going to be a pan-Canadian program. It will be the same settlement services whether you are in Morden or whether you are in Thompson. Should make no difference if you're in Drumheller or you're in Montréal. It's going to be the same service wherever you go, and I compliment—I compliment the federal government for nation building, because that's why Canadians come here. Canadians want a strong—strong, healthy and free Canada. That's why people come to this country.

* (16:00)

I'm disappointed at how political this got. It's one of those things that happens. And for those who are observing today, it's what goes on at time in politics, and this is politics at its rawest form. This is it. This is a political Chamber. It's too bad that this turned so political.

We've had ministers forcing staff, I dare say—fine line between ethical breaches. You should not be phoning up members of the public service and telling them to get involved in politics. I'm disappointed in the minister.

I have been the critic for many ministers of Labour and Immigration. In fact, the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), we spent many, many hours debating Estimates—many, many debates one on one. She even drove me to a function, and I will have to

say I bought her a latte for it. I did. So, you know, I actually have come to know—I have actually come to know many labours—many ministers of Labour and Immigration, and I'm disappointed that the current minister would have gotten so political.

In fact, the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan)—I, one time, approached her about a case—about an immigration case. And do you know what she said to me? In the hallway, she said, actually, I'm not going to get involved in individual cases. I am going to pass that on to my assistant deputy minister. In fact, she encouraged me to do it myself. She said, as minister, I am not going to interfere politically in my department. Maybe her colleague who sits behind her could take a lesson from her instead of making this political.

The member for St. Vital, the former minister of Labour, knew not to make this political, and she didn't. And the new Minister of Labour (Ms. Howard) should learn something and not be putting pressure on staff, because everybody in this Chamber and anybody who wants to come into this country wants to do it fair and square, above board and not have politicians—political people putting pressure on staff one way or another. That is very unfortunate and it shouldn't have happened.

And I'd like to conclude by saying that the good news is the PNP program is staying in Manitoba. It's going to be enhanced. It's going to be the way it is, and we're going to have—when it comes to immigrant settlement, the other good-news story is it is going to be pan-Canadian. It is going to be the same whether you're in Victoria or whether you're in Halifax, the same if you're in the Yukon or if you're in Emerson. It doesn't matter where you're going to be. It's going to be one program. It's going to be administered by a strong central government to ensure that services are there when people need them, properly funded, not cut and slashed like the NDP did and then tried to backfill with federal Conservative dollars. No. It's going to be a properly funded and properly run pan-Canadian program like we want it to be, and I thank members for this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Family Services and Labour.

Ms. Howard: Actually, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Family Services and Labour, on a point of order.

Ms. Howard: Yes, just cognizant of the time—I know there are many members left to speak on this—I wonder if you could canvass the House to see if there's leave to sit after 5 until all members who wish have spoken.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock at 5 until all members have had their opportunity to speak to this matter? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

* * *

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): What a pleasure it is to rise in this House.

I know there's been a number of things already said about Steinbach by the Premier (Mr. Selinger). I want to address some of those misleading comments that he left on the record before he ended his speech here. But, before I do, I want to welcome all of those who are joining us in the gallery. I know many have left already, but I'm glad to see that there are many who came, leaders within the immigrant community, many within the settlement services branch—of course, they were asked to come by by the government, to close down their offices. We had members of Parliament here—we still have the honourable member for St. Boniface here—and we're glad they've come and joined us for this debate as well.

I do want to speak a little bit about how Steinbach became the third largest city in Manitoba. Obviously, it had a lot to do with new Manitobans who have come and that's something more recent. Certainly, since the 1990s we've seen that growth, mid-1990s, and it's really become almost exponential since then, but it's important to remember why that's happened. And it's already been noted, but I'll—it bears repeating that the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), of course, brought forward the Provincial Nominee Program and, in many ways, when I talk to people in Steinbach I give her credit for the fact that Steinbach has grown.

I don't do that in exclusion, of course. The member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) acknowledges that the former New Democratic opposition voted against the Provincial Nominee Program. We were very, very disappointed by that. They wanted communities like Steinbach and other communities to remain small and not to grow, and they didn't want these great new Manitobans to come and add to the mosaic of our province. And that's something that they're always going to have to live with, that they were

opposed to the Provincial Nominee Program. It was a shameful, shameful vote and I hope that in their hearts they've actually changed their view, although I'm not so certain that they have.

I also want to recognize other members of the provincial government at that time. We had Harold Gilleshammer, who's gone on to a distinguished career as a citizenship judge and is still very much involved with ensuring that people who come to Manitoba can become new Canadians. Vic Toews, who's a member of the federal government, was a member of the provincial government at that time. He's still working in Provencher to support new Manitobans and immigrants who are coming to our country. And also Merv Tweed, who is also a member of the federal Conservative government. So they've taken their great love for ensuring that we have new Manitobans come to this province—taking it to other levels, the federal level or, in the case of Mr. Gilleshammer, other ways. So they've continued on. It wasn't a moment in time for them. It wasn't a dot. It was a line they've continued on to support new Manitobans in different areas. And I want to commend each of them for what they've done.

In fact, when you look at, particularly, the federal government, the great support that the federal Conservative government has given immigrants who've come to Canada looking for a new life—it's really unprecedented. They've quadrupled the funding for the settlement program here in the province of Manitoba. They've doubled—doubled, Mr. Speaker—the number of immigrants who've been allowed to come and seek a new life in this great province of Manitoba. And, in fact, they've tripled the Provincial Nominee Program, no doubt because many who are in the federal government came from the provincial Conservative government and they brought the message that we need to support those who are involved in bringing new Manitobans and new Canadians.

And what has been the response of this provincial government? Well, they have cut the services, the settlement services funding to the point now where the federal government actually pays for 97 per cent of the services. And yet they want to run the services even though they barely give any money to it. It would be a little bit like if I went up to somebody and I said: You know, I've got a business idea. I want to start a new business. All I want you to do is to put in 97 per cent of the funding for that business and I'll run it. Don't worry. Just turn it over to me.

Well, I think anybody would know that that's a pretty raw deal, and it doesn't make a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker. And it certainly was a raw deal for those who are involved in federal government. And, as the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) said, they simply want to have consistency across the country. And I know that given their track record on supporting—supporting—immigration here in Manitoba, that not only will things remain as they are, I suspect, and my prediction is, they could even get better in the future.

*(16:10)

I mentioned I wanted to speak a little bit about Steinbach because the Premier put some misleading words on the record in terms of support for—I know that will come as a shock to many members here, that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) would have put misleading words on the record regarding support to Steinbach.

You know, the image of the city of Steinbach is really 10 years behind the reality. We've seen incredible growth, obviously, in the numbers but in the makeup and the diversity of the city of Steinbach. I was told, in fact, that the riding that I represent is the second most—or sorry, the most diverse, ethnically diverse riding outside of the city of Winnipeg. And if that's true, I'm quite proud of it, and it doesn't surprise me as I drive around the city and see the many new faces who are there. In fact, I think that the growth rate is somewhere around 25 per cent every four years and that it's quite, quite a different community than I grew up in.

But it's—I would say it's enhanced, a better community, Mr. Speaker. You know, I have had the opportunity to develop some very good relationships with the Filipino community in the city of Steinbach. Some great friends have developed from the many hundreds of Filipinos who have come to Steinbach and to make it home. In fact, my five-year-old son, his new best friend in kindergarten—and I know that best friends sort of come and go in kindergarten—but right now his new best friend is a fellow named Sebastian and he's a young boy from—that originally came from the Philippines and made a home. And one day a few days ago, he came home and he said to my wife, Kim, he said, Mom, are we Filipino? And my wife said, well, no, we're not Filipino. And he said, that's too bad because I really like the Filipino community. And I thought, well, you know, that's great to see that sort of integration within the community.

I had the opportunity to have a Filipino co-chair for my campaign during the election and, you know, 20 years ago, if you'd ever said that somebody running for election in Steinbach would have a Filipino co-chair, they'd have been surprised. They would have been shocked. They wouldn't have believed it, but that's how much the community has changed.

And I loved going door knocking with many of my Filipino friends in Steinbach, and I look forward often—I would invite you, Mr. Speaker, to the Summer in the City Festival that'll happen again in Steinbach, and if you come to that festival, we close off Main Street—I think actually Burton Cummings is singing this year. He's doing the main stage, but if you come to the—if you can—taking care of business. If you come to the festival, make sure you go to the centre of Main Street because right—you'll find there is a great big Filipino barbecue, and the Filipino community, the Southeast Filipino Association, puts on this wonderful barbecue. I often join them in that and it's a great thing.

If you come to Pioneer Days—and I would invite you, Mr. Speaker, as well, to come out in your new role and represent the Legislature in your new capacity. Come out to Pioneer Days which really represents the heritage of our community. What you'll find there—there'll be a display—the Colombian community has set up a food booth and they have different things that they sell. And they're just wonderfully welcoming within that, and they really want to be part of the community and they make that evident.

And the community has really embraced, Mr. Speaker, all of these new Manitobans. If you go to my son's school, you'll find that in the gym there are flags that wrap around the gym, and each one of those flags represents a student who was born in another country and has come to Manitoba. And it's quite remarkable to look around that gym and it grows, you know, almost on a weekly basis, and to see all the different countries that are represented in the school and, by extension, in my community. So I want to just say that the new Manitobans that have come have just greatly enriched our lives. We've just loved becoming friends with many.

You know, I had to learn to karaoke and I have to admit that. Because of my close friendship with many Filipino friends, I had to learn how to karaoke and I've done that a number of times. I also make sure they, you know, turn the phones off and turn the

video off because I don't want anybody taking any video of that. You won't find it on YouTube. My Filipino friend, Jorie, says that my voice is like Elvis. Now, she's very kind because it certainly isn't like—

An Honourable Member: Old Elvis or young Elvis?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I'm not the young Elvis. I can assure the minister of that. But we certainly, you know, appreciate those great friendships, and they have really added to the quality of life and my quality of life personally, and I wanted to leave that message with the many individuals who are here from the ethnic community.

But here's where the record needs to be corrected because the Premier indicated, you know, what great support that they've been giving the new Manitobans in the city of Steinbach, and this needs to be corrected because when you look in the city of Steinbach and some of the services there and we're talking about services here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Let's examine that for a little bit. You know, six years ago, I went into the Steinbach emergency room, and I saw individuals who were lined up down the hallway. That'll surprise members opposite, because they indicated they did away with some of these practices, but they were lined up down the hallway. And when I walked down the hallway at the Bethesda emergency room, you know what I saw? Many, many new Canadians, immigrant families there waiting, waiting for three, four, five hours. And I went then to the Premier, the then-Premier, Mr. Doer, and I brought to him a letter signed by virtually every doctor in the city of Steinbach. And I said to him, Mr. Premier, this is unacceptable, not just for long-term residents of the city of Steinbach, but for all those new Manitobans who have made Steinbach and the region their home, lined up in these hallways. How can that be?

In fact, some of them asked me, how can this be in this rich and prosperous country that this is the kind of health-care services we have? And, you know, to the premier's credit—and I don't want to make this overly political, that's not my style. But to the premier's credit, he indicated, Mr. Speaker, that this has to be changed. It's completely unacceptable. And so he made an announcement, he made an announcement that there would, in fact, be a new emergency room. That was six years ago. Do you know how much dirt has been turned on the new emergency room? Not a single teaspoon.

They have allowed those new Canadians that they say they support, oh, that they want to ensure that they have the good services—they've allowed those new Canadians to sit in those hallways for one, two, three, four, five, six years since that commitment was made. And we're supposed to believe that you care about new Manitobans? We're supposed to believe that you're the party that is going to build up new Manitobas—new Manitobans in Manitoba?

You know, you send out the news release. Oh, I've seen many news releases from this Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) and from others saying, oh, there's great growth in Steinbach. Well, there is and we're happy for that, thanks to the minister—or the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson). But where's the support?

You can still come today—and I would welcome any of the members of the NDP. We'll go to the Bethesda ER, and you can explain to those new Manitobans who are often sitting in there with five or six of their children, waiting two or three hours to see a doctor, why it is that you haven't given them any support. The great supporters of new Manitobans, the great supporters of immigrants—that's what you pretend to be, but we've seen the reality.

But let's not stop there, Mr. Speaker. I would encourage him to come and take a look at the roads in Steinbach, the provincial highways that go right through the city and nearby. Unfortunately, you know, I've lost some immigrant families on those roads, those deadly roads, because of the increased traffic, heavy truck traffic, more people living there. And there are some individuals, some families that don't have mothers and fathers, in part because those roads don't have the kind of support and the kind of upgrading that they need with the growing population.

The—and I've gone to the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Ashton), this one and the previous one, and said to him many times, you need to address this issue. The city of Steinbach has begged, has pleaded with this government to do something about dangerous intersections, some of the most dangerous intersections in the province of Manitoba. All of those new Manitobans, all of those immigrants are driving on those roads.

And what has this government done? Next to nothing. The local highways department would say, we can't get any funding from this government. And

so on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, they stand up and they say what great supporters they are of immigration, that they're defending the services. And yet they do nothing to protect those new Manitobans in my community in the southeast region who are driving those dangerous roads. That is the hypocrisy of this government. They say, we're going to protect those services and yet, in their own jurisdiction, they provide none of it.

I want to talk about education. For the last 10 years, myself and my predecessor, Mr. Jim Penner, a man who I have eminent respect for, have been and had been asking this government to provide more schools in the Steinbach area. For 10 years that plea went unanswered, even though they knew all the new Canadians who were coming from all the countries around the world. I would visit the schools and I would see young children, both who were originally from Steinbach, from other parts of Canada and from around the world, running from hut to hut in the middle of the winter, because there were eight, nine, I think, at the end, 15 huts on a school. And this government ignored it. This great defender of these new Manitobans ignored that need. They talk about Steinbach, but they did nothing to provide support for those new Manitobans who needed the support.

* (16:20)

I would go visit the schools, and these young children would say to me, how come we have to have all these huts? Why aren't we able to have a school? Why do I have to cross the street and go to gym in a church because our own gym doesn't have enough—we can't utilize it fully because there are so many people? Why do we have to cross the street—and, thankfully, the church allowed them to use the gym—but why do we have to do this in the province of Manitoba?

These great defenders of the NDP of these new Canadians did nothing to address that for 10 years. When they finally got around, when the situation became so dangerous and so bad, Mr. Speaker, that they had to announce a new school. Now I'm told that when the new school opens up, none of the huts will come down because there's been so much growth over that last 10 years—these great defenders of the new Manitobans here in our society.

Public safety. You know, with the growth of a community often comes a lot of things that we don't like, and it's a natural, unfortunate thing sometimes where you'll get more drugs in the community, more

crime. And nobody likes to see that, but it often happens when communities grow. When this government announced new police officers for rural municipalities, which city was left out? Which was one of the cities that was left out in funding for new RCMP officers? The city of Steinbach. Oh, but the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stood here and said how great it was to have all these new Manitobans in the city of Steinbach and other places, and yet when it comes to ensuring they might have public safety and some protection, he did nothing. He specifically shut them out. This great defender of these new Manitobans turned his back on them, and didn't provide a service directly in the purview of this provincial government.

Let's talk about accreditation. I can't tell you how many new Canadians have come to me and said, I was trained in my country to be a veterinarian, or some other sort of skill, and yet here I am. I'm working now in a barn—an honourable occupation, to be sure, Mr. Speaker, but not what they were trained for, well below what their training was, and they can't work in the occupation that they were trained in in their home country.

I've written innumerable letters to the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick) and saying, well, how can we help these individuals so that they can actually use the skills that they came to Canada with? And I get the letters back, well, we don't want to interfere with the college of this or the college of that. You know, they don't want to step on any union members toes this, or union members that. The great defenders—the great defenders—of the new Canadians, the new Manitobans, don't want to actually do anything to ensure that they can use the education that they have in the occupations that would benefit residents.

And so we have all of these skilled individuals who have come from other countries working in jobs that they do—you know, I give them credit, because they do it with a happy heart. They're happy to be here. They come to work every day. They give a full day's effort. Every day they show up for work, but it's not the job they want to do. It's not the job they trained to do. And these great defenders, the NDP, who say that they're going to help our new Canadians, do nothing to help them. They sit there. They instead pick political fights instead of doing the job that is right in their purview.

So why are we here today, Mr. Speaker? Only one thing has changed—only one thing has changed—

and that is that this New Democratic government won't be able to hand out cheques that are written by the federal government; that's it. Nothing else has changed. On the ground nothing will change. Systematically nothing else would change, but the ministers over there won't be able to go to these communities which they don't support, and all these other provincial areas, they won't be able to go to them and hand out federal cheques.

Well, you know what? I don't feel sorry for them. I might feel a little worse for them if they actually did the job in the different areas that they have responsibility for. So now the federal government, which has been a great advocate of the immigrant program across Canada, will be going and providing the funds that they are providing. Well, that seems to make a lot of sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

And so, you know, I heard yesterday—and I don't hear as much chirping today—but I heard, yesterday, members from the NDP saying, oh, how are you going to vote? How are you going to vote? Steinbach? All the individuals? I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, this will be on the main motion. This will be one of the easiest votes that I have ever participated in as a member of the Legislative Assembly. Because I get to look at two sides. I can decide, well, do I want to vote with a federal Conservative government that tripled—tripled—the number coming under the Provincial Nominee Program? Do I want to vote for a federal government that doubled the amount of immigration in Manitoba? Do I want to vote for a federal government that quadrupled the amount of funding to the settlement services program, or do I want to vote on the side of a government that voted against the Provincial Nominee Program in the 1990s; that cut support for the settlement program, that left my constituents, those new Canadians, sitting in a hallway for six years and still counting, Mr. Speaker; that let my constituents, these new Canadians, drive dangerous roads in my constituency; that have left my constituency's new Canadians in overcrowded, and in many times, unsafe schools; that have left and underfunded the safety portion of our community in Steinbach; that have kept these new Canadians, these new Manitobans, in jobs that don't match up with the skills that they came with.

Why in the world would I vote for a government that has done that to the citizens of my area, more broadly, to the citizens of Manitoba? I say, Mr. Speaker, this will be the easiest vote I've ever participated in because I will vote with a federal,

Conservative government that stands up for immigrants and doesn't make politics out of a situation that should never have become political.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this resolution and the amendment.

I, first of all, want to welcome those who are—have come here as immigrants or who are involved in immigrant settlement. Clearly, immigrants are very important to Manitoba and we welcome you.

And I've spent a lot of time over many years welcoming and working with immigrants, and I daily get calls from people in my constituency and outside my constituency who need help with one issue or another. And I'm very pleased to provide that help and that service whenever I can.

Certainly, immigrants have been tremendously enriching for our province in terms of culture; in terms of global connections; in terms of stories and in histories; in terms of what we see in the summer in Folklorama; in terms of what we see economically in our province; the growth of—in the number of immigrants and the growth of the economy.

They have certainly—immigrants have certainly contributed in a major way and it's important that we acknowledge that, and it's important that we talk first and foremost, from my perspective, of the fact that what we are about to today, and what we need to be talking about most and foremost, is, in fact, improving the immigrant settlement services to our province.

And, that's why, indeed, I asked the Premier (Mr. Selinger) earlier on today, you know, if the immigration settlement services come back to be delivered by the Province, what will the Premier do to enhance and improve these services? Because, I think, we need to be always looking at how we can improve them and how we can enhance them, and how we can make things better in terms of welcoming immigrants and in terms of transition of immigrants, to a life here in Manitoba.

I hear quite frequently of issues with immigrant settlement. I'm not going to talk about these in detail, but they exist and I hear about them on a regular basis, of areas where we can improve. And to suggest that we are where we need to be, I think, is wrong. There are still too many immigrants who run into problems, of one sort or another, who are not

helped in the way they really need to be helped, and so on. And so I believe there is yet a lot more to do in the way of immigrant settlement.

I believe the essential question here, and I touched on it earlier on, is which government can, in fact, deliver this service, the immigrant settlement services, the best? The provincial or the federal government?

And as I've talked about earlier on, there is a principle involved here; a principle which is called subsidiarity. Which means that the government, which is best positioned to provide those services and can provide those best and most cost effectively, should be the one which does that. And I believe that that is the provincial government.

* (16:30)

And I think that it's interesting to look back to when the first immigration settlement agreements came up, and that was in the '90s. And it's interesting to note at that point that when the Conservative government was in power provincially that they believed then that these immigration settlement services were best provided by the Province. And I think that that has not changed from my perspective, but clearly from the perspective of the current Conservative Party in Manitoba that they've decided that they want to give away this function which has been provided by the Province and which I believe can best be provided by the Province to the federal government.

From my view—and this is a service which is far better delivered for Manitobans by Manitobans and not as we hear that it may actually be delivered out of Calgary instead of out of Manitoba. But be that as it may, I think it's important for us to ask why it is happening. Why is the federal government now taking over control of immigration settlement services? And I believe the answer is not because they can do it better. I don't believe there's any evidence or reason to believe that they will deliver from Ottawa or Calgary services which are better. As I pointed out, the Conservative government of 15 years ago believed that Manitoba government could deliver it better, and I agree with that view.

What has happened with the provincial government and what has happened to the federal government since then? And I believe the answer in part—and I touched on it earlier on—is that this NDP government has chosen to politicize the immigration services in a way that is detrimental. It appears to

have been done progressively from one year to the next, and I hear this from different parts of the province and I think it is a—now a problem. And because of this politicization, the most recent example of which is an email from a deputy minister writing to staff under the deputy minister's department and organizations funded by the department and asking those individuals to become engaged in political activities. You know, the deputy minister should be non-partisan. The deputy minister should be focused on providing services to immigrants, not be engaged in political activity. And this is one of the examples, sadly, of how the NDP have politicized immigration services, and, sadly, by politicizing them have actually put them at risk of not being delivered as well by the federal government instead of being delivered by the Province as they have been delivered to date.

Now, unfortunately, in their move recently the federal Conservatives have further politicized this issue to the point where it is almost like a ping pong ball being batted back and forth. And that is why I spoke earlier today to ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger) what he would do to depoliticize and improve the delivery of services, should—be—the decision be made to reverse the federal decision and return the services to be delivered by the Province.

As I have said earlier on, there is a need to improve the immigration settlement services to have them the best that they possibly can be. I believe that this option is better under the Province than under the federal government and there are various reasons for that. I believe that we should be focused on giving immigrants the very best possible services and the best possible settlement, and that's why I will support the resolution but not the amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Has the House any further speakers on the amendment? Seeing none, the House is ready for the question on the amendment. So then read back the amendment.

It's been moved by the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), seconded by the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler),

THAT the government resolution on federal centralization of settlement services be amended by deleting the final WHEREAS and “therefore it be resolved” and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the federal government funds the majority of the Settlement Annex, and the provincial

government has not shown a commitment to provide adequate funding for these needed services.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba encourage the federal government to strengthen and improve settlement services in Manitoba, which have been lacking under the provincial government.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Speaker, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mrs. Taillieu: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we'll ask for a recorded vote, please.

Mr. Speaker: Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please.

* (16:50)

The question before the House is the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

Division

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

Yeas

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.

Nays

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gerrard, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 19, Nays 35.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Now we turn to the resolution. Are there any further speakers to the resolution?

Is the House ready for the question? The—shall the resolution pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the resolution, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Formal Vote

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, I want to be the first to call a recorded vote.

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

Order, please.

* (17:00)

The question before the House is the resolution proposed by the honourable Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.

Madam Clerk: Yeas 36, Nays 19.

Mr. Speaker: The resolution is accordingly passed.

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 19, 2012

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